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COLONEL LAMBERT CADWALADER,

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THIS sketch was written at the request of the editor of some forthcoming memoirs of the New Jersey officers of the Revolutionary army, and a few copies have been privately printed.

PHILADELPHIA, June, 1878.

COL. LAMBERT CADWALADER,

OF TRENTON, NEW JERSEY.

THE paternal emigrating ancestor of Lambert Cadwalader was his grandfather, John Cadwalader, who, after his arrival here, joined one of the settlements of his Welsh countrymen near Merion, a few miles west of Philadelphia. He is said to have been a man of high character and much literary culture. His marriage, in 1699, to Martha Jones, appears among the records of the Radnor Monthly Meeting, and the names of those who, according to the custom of Friends, subscribed the record as witnesses, eminently suggest all that was Welsh in their parentage.

The father of Mrs. Cadwalader was Doctor Edward Jones, an emigrant from Merionethshire. Her mother was the daughter of Doctor Thomas Wynne, "sometime of Caerwys, Flintshire, South Wales, surgeon," who, an eminent and successful physician both at his home and in London, had come over with Penn in the *Welcome*, was made Speaker of the first Provincial Assembly held at Philadelphia, and was, Proud tells us, a preacher among the Quakers, a person of note and good character, and an author in defense of his sect.

From Merion, John Cadwalader removed to Philadelphia. In July, 1705, he was admitted a freeman of the city; in October, 1718, he was elected a member of Common Council, and in 1729, a member of the Provincial Assembly, which offices he held until his death in 1733.

His children were four—three daughters, and one son, Thomas Cadwalader.

The son, who was born in the year 1707, adopted the profession of his maternal grandfather. He began his medical education at his home, and, what was at that early day more unusual than it afterwards became, completed it in London. He returned to Philadelphia, rose to professional eminence, and in 1738 was married, in Trenton, "after the manner of the people called Quakers and according to the good order used among them," to Hannah, daughter of Thomas Lambert, "late of the county of Burlington, in the western division of New Jersey, deceased," and the names of Andrew Hamilton, John Dagworthy, Thomas Hopkinson, Owen Jones, and a score of others are found upon the record as relatives or friends of the contracting parties.

After his marriage, he made Trenton, at least for a time, his home. He became a large land-owner in and near the town, and in 1748 was elected its first chief burgess after it had received its borough charter. In 1750, he offered large quantities of his land for sale, and returned to Philadelphia. There he was chosen a member of the Governor's Council (an office held only by those foremost in the colony), and so continued until the fall of the proprietary government in 1776.

From the beginning of the troubles between the colony and its parent to the day of his death in 1779, his patriotism and devotion to the country of his birth was unswerving. Of his liberal education—his professional eminence—his prominence as a citizen both in Trenton and Philadelphia—his energy in starting and fostering institutions which are to this day among the best in the land—his social intimacy with the first men of his time—his public spirit—his gentle, courteous manners and his great personal coolness and courage, there is much which is both matter of history and tradition.

Of the seven children of Doctor Thomas Cadwalader, two were sons; John, the distinguished general officer of the revolutionary army, and Lambert, the subject of this sketch.

Lambert Cadwalader was born in Trenton in the year 1742. Both the brothers received at Philadelphia, after their father's removal there, a fine literary and classical education. After they grew up, the first record of the stand which afterwards distinguished them is their signature near that of their father, to the Non-Importation Agreement of 1765. Of Lambert's intense feeling upon what was becoming the great political question of the time, something may be judged from his letter in the following year to his friend, George Morgan, afterwards a distinguished officer in our army.

"I have now," he wrote, on May 18th, 1766, "the pleasure of communicating to you the joyful news of the repeal of the stamp act; news that almost calls back youth to the aged, gives health and vigour to the sick and infirm. The act to repeal the stamp act received the royal assent on the 18th March, and a copy was brought here in a vessel from Poole. If ever the Americans should fall into paganism, place dead men among their gods and worship them, there is scarce any one that will have a better chance of being enrolled in the number of them than Mr. Pitt. This great man, by his abilities, virtues and extraordinary courage, has gained a never-dying name. * * * America is again free! God bless her; long may she remain so. As to the act asserting the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, we shall regard it as waste paper. Let us only enjoy liberty but half a century longer, and we will defy the power of England to enslave us."

The country had not to wait so long. Within less than eight years, the day on which the Boston Port Bill was to take effect was observed throughout the continent as one of fasting, humiliation and prayer, "to implore the Divine interference to avert the heavy calamity which threatened destruction to their civil rights, and the evils of civil war, and," in the same breath, "to give one heart and one mind to the people, firmly to oppose every invasion of their liberties."

What followed is trite history. Boston's hope for aid and comfort from Pennsylvania was fulfilled. Governor Penn declined to convene the Assembly, and the people acted without it. The committee to correspond with the other counties and provinces led to the convention which met at Philadelphia in July, 1774, and this to the Congress of Delegates and the Committee of Superintendence and Correspondence. To the last, both John and Lambert Cadwalader were sent from Philadelphia. The latter was also a member of the Provincial Convention which met the next January. To the call to arms which rang through the land after the tidings of the battle of Lexington, both brothers promptly responded. The indignant people who met at once upon the news reaching Philadelphia, resolved "to associate together to defend with arms their property, liberty and lives against all attempts to deprive them of it," and forthwith organized into companies, which at once set to work. Four of the companies thus formed were called "The Greens," and of one of these Lambert Cadwalader was chosen captain.

Before going into actual service, he was still actively employed in public civil duties. His name is seen as one of the commissioners on the bills of credit authorized by the Provincial Assembly. He was re-elected to the Committee of Correspondence. And later in the year, the war began in earnest.

The Congress of Deputies called on Pennsylvania for four battalions. The Committee of Safety at once selected the officers, and Cadwalader's name headed the list of those sent in on the 3d of January, 1776, for lieutenant-colonelcies. The appointment was promptly confirmed, and he was attached to the battalion commanded by Colonel Shee. Of the three others, that which served with Shee's was commanded by Colonel Magaw. There were early difficulties as to recruiting, but towards spring the two battalions were well filled, well armed and well officered, and constant and steady work made their drill and discipline exceptional. Graydon, a captain in Shee's battalion, says, in his

striking memoirs, with pardonable pride, that in point of all exteriors by which military corps were tested, "ours was on a footing with the most promising on the continent."

It would seem that, whether from hearsay or observation, this was known to the commander-in-chief. For in May, Washington had left his headquarters at New York on the visit to Philadelphia to which Congress summoned him, and on his return, expecting, as he wrote to his brother, "a bloody summer in New York and Canada," he sent word to Congress on the 10th of June, 1776: "I submit [*i. e.*, question] the propriety of keeping the two continental battalions under the command of Colonels Shee and Magaw at Philadelphia, when there is the greatest probability of a speedy attack upon this place from the King's troops." The suggestion was at once acted on by Congress, the battalion transported by water to Trenton, thence marched to Elizabethtown, and again transported by water to New York. On the 18th of June General Heath wrote in his diary: "The Pennsylvania regiments, commanded by Colonels Shee and Magaw, were arriving in the city. They have the appearance of fine troops." There they met a somewhat motley army, remarkable for "irregularity, want of discipline, bad arms and defective equipment in all respects."

Meanwhile Washington had determined upon the lines of defense. "I have been up to view the grounds about King's Bridge," he wrote to Congress on the 20th of June, "and find them to admit of several places well calculated for defense, and esteem it a place of the utmost importance. I have ordered works to be laid out, and shall direct part of the two battalions from Pennsylvania to set about their erection immediately. I will add to their number several of the militia when they come in, to expedite them with all possible dispatch."

In the last days of June, the battalions marched toward Kingsbridge, were placed under the command of General Mifflin, and encamped on the site of the future Fort Washington, which they

were at once set to work to erect, under the direction of Colonel Rufus Putnam as engineer. Here, for many weeks, they worked with the spade, with no great help, says Graydon, "to our improvement in tactics, which, nevertheless, was assiduously attended to. In the course of three weeks our labors had produced immense mounds of earth, assuming a pentagonal form, and finally issuing in a fort of five bastions." But it had no ditch, casements, well nor barracks, no outworks except an incipient one to the north, it required no parallels to approach it, and at a short distance back of it there was ground at least as high. On the right bank of the Hudson, opposite and crowning the Palisades, was soon afterwards erected another work, at first called Fort Constitution and afterwards Fort Lee, and these two, together with a line of sunken hulks and *chevaux-de-frise*, would, it was thought, command the river and prevent communication above and below. The heavy work, under the sun of a hot, dry summer, and in clouds of dust, told hardly, and by August scarce half the troops were fit for duty. But those who were so, were very fit. "General Mifflin," writes Heath to Washington, on the 17th of that month, "has about five hundred men at a moment's notice to aid you in case of need. They were the last evening drawn out, when I reviewed them. They are of Colonel Shee's and Magaw's regiments, and the best disciplined of any troops I have yet seen in the army."

Within ten days they were sent for in haste. Washington was fighting the battle of Long Island, which was not going on well. An urgent messenger commanded the immediate march of Shee's and Magaw's regiments to New York. When they reached it in the afternoon, the battle had been lost and the firing ceased. Early in the morning of Wednesday, the 28th, Mifflin crossed the East river and reached the camp. "He brought with him," says Irving, "Shee's prime Philadelphia regiment and Magaw's Pennsylvania regiment; both well disciplined and efficient, and accustomed to act together. They

were so much reduced in numbers, however, by sickness, that they did not amount in the whole to more than eight hundred men." With them came Glover's Massachusetts regiment—Marblehead fishermen and sailors, mostly. Cheers went up as the detachment briskly marched along the line and was posted on the left of the Brooklyn intrenchments extending to the Wallabout.

A dismal day and night followed, with a drizzling rain, no shelter, fire nor cooked food. All that night Washington waked, and he and Mifflin went the rounds, for the enemy had, at evening, encamped in front of our works, and in the night broke ground within a few hundred yards of them. By daylight of Thursday, Washington saw the intention to force his lines by regular approaches, and then, confiding only in Mifflin, issued through him two orders for water transportation.

Later in the day, all having been arranged for the retreat, a council of war was called, and Mifflin, as had been arranged, proposed it. Though ignorant of what had been already done, it was unanimously approved, and Mifflin claimed from Washington his promise that if a retreat should be agreed upon he should command the rear, and if an attack, the van. All day there had been incessant skirmishing. After dark the regiments were, to their amazement, ordered to be ready to attack the enemy that night. Worn out and dispirited, their arms well nigh useless from rain, many hastily made nuncupative wills as they got under arms. Mifflin's men were to remain at the lines to cover the retreat. By eight o'clock the embarkation commenced, Glover's regiment manning the boats. The rawest troops were first sent off, and all night Washington watched the embarkation. Some time before dawn, in his anxiety he sent to hasten all the troops that were *on the march*. The aid blundered, and gave the order to Mifflin also. Pickets and sentinels were hastily called in, and down came the covering party towards the ferry. "Great God, General Mifflin," cried Washington, "I

am afraid you have ruined us by so unseasonably withdrawing the troops from the lines!" "I did it by your order!" he retorted. The mistake was soon seen, and the command hastily resought the lines which had been left uncovered nearly an hour. "The order to resume their posts," says Bancroft, "was a trying test of young soldiers; the regiments wheeled about with precision, and recovered their former station before the enemy perceived that it had been relinquished." Nearer dawn, a heavy sea-fog rolled in, shrouding the British camp. At last all but the covering party and Washington himself had embarked. He was the last of all to leave. The fog lifted and the enemy rushed in, but the retreat had been effected. This was on the morning of Friday.

Next day, Mifflin's detachment marched beyond Kingsbridge towards the Sound. While here, Colonel Shee went home on leave of absence and did not return. The Third Battalion, originally enlisted for a single year, in October re-enlisted for the war, and was called the "Fourth Regiment of Foot in the Army of the United States," and Cadwalader, who had been in command since Shee had left, was, on the 25th of October, commissioned its colonel.

Before this, the battalion had been marched to its old ground at Fort Washington, upon which deep interest was now beginning to centre. Early in the erection of the works which were to command the river—as far back as the 12th of July and while Fort Lee was still incomplete—two English ships of war, the Phoenix and the Rose, had, with their tenders, run up the river with a fair wind and tide, passed the forts with an exchange of fire and anchored in Tappan Bay. Here they lay until the 18th of the next month, when, after a gallant attack on them by fireships, they ran down the river, passed the batteries without material harm, pushed through the obstructions where the passage was still open, and joined the fleet below. Again upon the 9th of October, three ships with their tenders stood

up the Hudson, received a brisk fire from both Forts Lee and Washington, and passed beyond in safety. The mortification was great. At once Congress instructed Washington, "by every art and at whatever expense," so to obstruct the river as to prevent the regress of these vessels or their receiving succor from below. Then came a council of war on the 16th. There was much discussion—it was conceded that the works had proved insufficient—it was thought impossible to prevent communication being cut off, of which the result must either be to fight at all disadvantages, or to surrender at discretion—but the order of Congress seemed imperative, and it was agreed that Fort Washington should be retained as long as possible. Accordingly, Washington's solemn instructions to Magaw were to defend it to the last extremity.

Eleven days after, two frigates moved up from below towards the fort, while Lord Percy's troops appeared on Harlem Plains, and both opened fire. The ships were driven back by the guns from both shores, and the troops by the garrison at Fort Washington. The belief of Green and Lee and Putnam in the strength of the works increased, and the former, at Putnam's earnest request, strengthened the garrison, at first by a few hundred men, and, a few days after, by the Maryland rifle regiment. But from the first Washington had not been deceived either as to the possibility of the forts successfully commanding the river, or of their own defense from an attack properly conducted. And he was now, from Howe's movements, sure that the latter was intended. As it was Congress who had ordered Fort Washington to be held, so to Congress he wrote on the 6th of November, his belief that "the enemy would bend their force against Fort Washington and invest it immediately." Almost as he wrote, three vessels—a frigate and two transports—passed the obstructions with supplies for Howe's army above. And then, on the 8th, Washington wrote to Green the well-known letter: "The passage of the three vessels up the North river is so plain

a proof of the inefficiency of all the obstructions thrown into it, that it will fully justify a change in the disposition. If you cannot prevent vessels from passing up, and the enemy are possessed of the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to attempt to hold a post from which the expected benefit cannot be had? I am, therefore, inclined to think that it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington, but as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders as to vacating Mount Washington as you may judge best, and so far revoking the order given to Colonel Magaw to defend it to the last."

Green drew from this letter an option which its writer never intended, and when Washington, after his visit to the Highlands, returned on the 13th to Fort Lee, he found, to his surprise and grief, that Fort Washington, instead of being evacuated, had been reinforced. And it was then too late. Two nights after, thirty gunboats passed undiscovered up the Spuyten Duyvel creek, and on the 15th, Howe summoned the garrison to surrender, with a threat of no quarter in case of refusal. Magaw may have been deficient in judgment (for he had, before this, assured Green that the fort could stand a siege till December), but he was not in bravery, and retorted that he would defend his post to the very last extremity. He had about three thousand men, of whom the fort itself would hold less than a third, and the whole line of defense extended from south to north about two miles and a half. The heights to the north were to be defended by the Maryland regiment. Magaw was at the fort, with a small reserve, and the lines to the south were intrusted to Cadwalader with the two Pennsylvania regiments. They numbered together less than eight hundred men.

Howe had planned four separate and simultaneous attacks—on the north, and the main one, by Knyphausen and the Hessians, who, though nearest the fort, were separated by rough and wooded ground—the second, by four battalions under General

Matthew, who was to cross the Harlem river in flat-boats and land on the right of the fort—the third, intended as a feint, by Colonel Sterling with the Forty-second Highlanders, who were also to cross the Harlem and land to the left of the lines, and the fourth, by Percy and his English and Hessian troops, on the south.

“Howe,” writes Graydon, “must have had a perfect knowledge of the ground we occupied. This he might have acquired from hundreds in New York, but he might have been more thoroughly informed of everything desirable to be known from one Dement, an officer of Magaw’s battalion, who was intelligent in points of duty, and deserted to the enemy about a week before the assault.” Save an intimation to this effect in one or two of the German accounts, this has passed unnoticed by history; but Mr. de Lancey’s recent research has shown that the traitor who deserted on the 2d of November, had furnished Percy with plans of the fort, and full information as to the numbers and disposition of the garrison.

About noon of the 16th the attack was made. Knyphausen had hard work. The fight on the wooded heights was severe, and again and again he was driven back. Meanwhile, Matthew crossed the river, landed in safety, climbed the hill, stormed the battery, drove back our troops to the fort, and tried to cut off Cadwalader, who was between himself and Percy. Percy’s attack was made with two brigades, and their numbers drove in an advance post defended by but twenty men. Cadwalader held him in check for an hour and a half, though greatly outnumbered. Both sides were fighting under the eyes of their respective commanders-in-chief, for Howe was himself present with Percy’s troops, and Washington watched the fight from the opposite side of the Hudson. “Nothing encouraged him more,” says Irving, “than the gallant style in which Cadwalader, with an inferior force, maintained his position.” “It gave me great hopes,” he wrote to Congress that night, “the enemy was entirely

repulsed." But, meanwhile, Howe ordered Sterling with the Highlanders, supported by two battalions of the second brigade, to land in rear of Cadwalader's lines and convert his feint into a real attack. Accordingly he crossed the Harlem, and, as he was seen to approach, Magaw from near the fort, and Cadwalader from below, each detached about a hundred and fifty men,—all that could be spared in the unequal contest. Magaw's detachment did not arrive in time, and Cadwalader's, under Captain Lenox, had, unassisted, to oppose the landing. The fight was severe at the water's edge, but the Highlanders, though near a hundred men were killed and wounded in their boats, made good their landing, and fought their way to the top of the hill. When their guns were heard by Percy, he again attacked. Sterling, seeing the enclosed bastions of the second line, now entirely undefended, hesitated. Cadwalader took advantage of the delay, and retired towards the fort with the main body of his command, Percy following his retreat. He made his way back, but found the fort crowded with men, for Knyphausen had just won his fight and reached it from the north, driving back the defenders. As they still poured in, Magaw and Cadwalader in vain tried to rally them. The crowd and confusion in so cramped a space defied discipline, and just then Knyphausen sent in a summons to surrender. Half an hour's grace was all that was accorded. During it, a daring messenger brought word from Washington that if they could only hold out till night, he would then try to bring them off; but it was too late, and soon "the sight of the American flag hauled down and the British flag waving in its place, told Washington of the surrender."

The loss in killed and wounded was surprisingly small, but the prisoners numbered nearly three thousand, half of whom were good soldiers. The reverse was the worst which had yet befallen the cause. "And," as Washington wrote to his brother, "what adds to my mortification is that this post, after the last ships went past it, was held contrary to my wishes and opinion,

as I conceived it to be a hazardous one," and if, as some have thought, it is still one of the unsettled problems of history whether the fort should have been abandoned or defended, this is chiefly owing to the magnanimity of the commander-in-chief, who, in Bancroft's language, "took the teachings of adversity without imbibing its bitterness, and never excused himself before the world by throwing the blame on another."

The captured garrison was marched off to New York, where Cadwalader at once received a return of a great kindness which his father, the doctor, had shown to General Prescott when a prisoner in Philadelphia, by being released without parole and sent home. He considered himself, however, under the honorary obligation to procure the release of some other officer of equal rank before again taking up arms, and this was for long a source of great trouble to him. There were those who, without knowing the exact facts, thought that no such obligation existed. It was natural that the English should think he could not serve, but officers of high rank whom he consulted on our side agreed in this, and finally the matter was laid before the commander-in-chief, who gave him authority to request General Prescott to name some officer of equal rank with whom he could be exchanged. But just then came the general order issued in retaliation for the treatment of General Lee by the enemy, that no field officer be released at all. Of course, its result was that he was forced to remain inactive, and finally, in January, 1779, unable to serve himself, and unwilling to stand in the way of others' promotion, he resigned his commission.

In the familiar political conflict which followed the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, Cadwalader took a prominent part. Some of its crudities excite surprise at this day, and although he, and those who thought and acted with him, were then unable to obtain the alterations they worked for, yet the soundness of their judgment was shown by the short life of the system.

In 1784, he was elected a Deputy to the Continental Congress, and took his seat in January, 1785. He served through that and the two succeeding Congresses, speaking little but working efficiently. Among other committees he was one of the Grand Committee to which was referred the report of the Annapolis Commission, recommending the calling of the Federal Convention, the result of whose deliberations is the present Constitution of the United States.

Upon the adoption of this Constitution, Cadwalader was again elected as a Representative from New Jersey, and on the 4th of March, 1789, took his seat in the First Congress. He again served in the Third Congress until March, 1795, when he retired finally from public life.

In March, 1776, he had purchased what was probably (though the state of the records leaves the identity somewhat uncertain) a portion of the fine estate near Trenton which had formerly belonged to his father, and which the latter had sold on returning to Philadelphia. He called it "Greenwood," and here, after he left the army, he resided, dispensing largely the hospitality of the times—a virtue which he both inherited and transmitted—and where one of his chiefest pleasures was to receive the repeated visits of Washington.

Further of his domestic life it need only be said that in 1793, he married Mary, daughter of Archibald McCall, of Philadelphia. He died on the 13th of September, 1823, at his home of Greenwood, and was buried in the old Friends' burying-ground at Trenton. He had but two children, of whom one died young. The other survived him—the late Thomas Cadwalader—who, through a long and happy life, both commanded respect and won affection, and at last, surrounded by "that which should accompany old age, as honor, love, obedience, troops of friends," died on the 16th of October, 1873, at the place which was his father's, and was buried by his side.