

ROBERT GRAVES

SERGEANT
LAMB'S
AMERICA



RosettaBooks

for it at one guinea the pint.

At another Council of War on the next day, October 12th, General Riedesel prevailed upon General Burgoyne to attempt the retirement that he had refused to make two days before. Five days' rations—all that remained—were therefore issued to us by the Commissaries, and we awaited orders to issue from the works when dark came. However, our scouts reported that the enemy had sent out so many detached parties that it would now be impossible to execute this retreat without setting the whole American army in motion against us. General Burgoyne therefore changed his mind once more, for though he trusted General Riedesel, he did not trust the Germans under his command. It was notorious that they were suffering too greatly to be dependable marching companions; and had concerted to fire one volley only, if attacked, and then to club their arms in token of surrender.

I was now assisting the surgeons in a building which was a principal

target of the American artillery—a log-house of two storeys well advertised to them as constituting our general hospital. It was suspected by these over-ingenious people that our generals would be smart enough to make the hospital serve a double purpose, by sheltering themselves and their families under a roof that invited a humane respect. Some slight colour for their belief was provided by Madame Riedesel's ornamental calash which stood near the door; this pretty blue-eyed lady and her three young children having taken refuge in the cellar of the building. Therefore the round shot came bounding in and out of the upper chambers where we were at work. A surgeon, Mr. Jones, had his leg so crushed by flying masonry that we were obliged to amputate it. In the middle of this operation, which he endured with great fortitude, another ball came roaring from across the river, and when the dust had cleared we found that Surgeon Jones had been dashed from the table on which he was laid and was lying groaning in a corner: his other leg had been taken clean off! This was only one of many horrible happenings, of which a full Detail would turn the stomach.

The wounded were crying out for water, and we had none to give them. A *bâtman* volunteered to run down to the Creek and bring up water in a pail, but he was struck down before he had gone many steps. Then the same Jane Crumer, who had assisted me at Fort Anna, and whose husband was among the gravely wounded, cried out that the Americans were not such beasts that they would fire at a woman. She went leisurely out from the hospital, paused by the dead man to unclasp his fingers from the pail that they still clutched; then, waving amiably to the enemy across the river, she continued to the water-side, drew water, curtsied her gratitude and returned. Not a shot was fired at her. She went to and fro with her pail until she had fetched sufficient for all.

On October 13th, General Burgoyne summoned yet another Council,