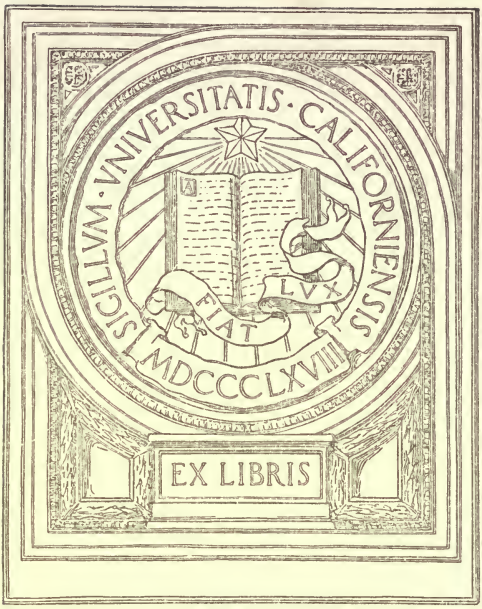
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NOTICES

OF

THE WAR OF 1812.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG,

LATE A MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND SECRETARY OF WAR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY WILEY & PUTNAM.

1840.

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"Were nations to review in peace their motives for having made war, with the means they employed, and the method by which they conducted it, they would in general find much to blame in a moral as well as a military view; the conviction of the wrongs they did, and the blunders they committed, might, on another and similar occasion, improve both their ethics and their tactics, and make them, at once, better men and abler soldiers; but as nations cannot be brought together, it rests with governments to perform this duty of self-examination; when, if they omit it, the task devolves on the historian."

Mabby.

NOTICES OF THE WAR OF 1812.

CHAPTER I.

Causes of the War.—Declaration of War by the United States.—Opposition to the measure.—Its character and effects.

The Treaty of Paris of 1783, by which Great Britain acknowledged "the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of the United States," was, on the part of the former, virtually a truce, not a pacification; a temporary and reluctant sacrifice of national pride to national interest; not a frank and honest adjustment of differences, seeking no cause, nor indulging any disposition, to renew the controversy. Indeed, so little careful was this power to conceal, or even to dissemble her temper and policy on this subject, that the first American minister accredited to her court, had scarcely passed the threshold of the palace, when he discovered, that a spirit of unextinguished animosity towards the United States, pervaded alike her councils and her conduct.[1] Nor was it the effect of longer residence, or more intimate acquaintance, to modify, much less to efface this first impression. Every overture on

[1] Appendix, No. 1.

his part, made with a view of placing the diplomatic relations of the two countries on a fair and friendly footing, was disregarded; the north-western, and other military posts, though confessedly within the limits of the United States, were forcibly retained;[1] the Indian nations in alliance with Great Britain, were openly instigated to a renewal of hostilities; and when at last, this diabolical purpose was accomplished, as if to leave no room for doubting her instrumentality in the case, she was found extending her territorial encroachments, and taking a new and formidable position on the Miami of the Lake; whence, during three campaigns, she supplied the wants, and prompted the attacks of these savage tribes.[2]

Checked by Wayne's victory in 1794, in this plan of desolating the west, she next employed herself in attempting to corrupt the east; and in 1809, mistaking the freedom of political discussion, for a spirit of revolt, despatched a confidential agent to Boston, with authority to mature the terms on which that section of the country would separate from the Union, and reconnect itself with the British Empire. The failure, no less than the atrocity of this project, forbade its acknowledgment; but though officially disavowed, the number and character of

1 The posts retained contrary to treaty, were Michilimackinac, Detroit, Niagara, Oswegotché, Point au Fer, and Dutchman's Point.

2 St. Clair's Narrative of the campaign of 1791, and Lord Dorchester's Speech to the Indians, in 1794. See, also, Washington's letter to Jay, of the 30th of August of the same year, Appendix, No. 3.

the documents produced in support of the charge, leave no doubt of its validity.[1]

It cannot be supposed that the spirit of hostility, thus manifested on the land, would be slow in showing itself on the ocean. Having in 1793, become a party to the coalition against republican France,[2] she adopted a policy, which sought at once to distress and impoverish her enemy and enrich herself, at the expense of neutral commerce; and accordingly, on the 8th of June of that year, issued an order for capturing and carrying into British ports, "all vessels laden wholly or in part with corn, flour, or meal, and destined to France, or to other countries, if occupied by the arms of that nation."

Offensive as this measure could not fail to be, its vexations and injuries were nearly forgotten, in the greater mischief and malignity which characterized that of the 6th of November of the same year; and which, by instructions secretly communicated to her cruisers, subjected "to capture and adjudication, all vessels laden with the produce of any French colony, or with supplies for such colony"—a measure, which in the opinion of a careful inquirer and competent judge, "annihilated at a blow, a large portion of the commerce of the United States."[3] But however great, in this case, the loss to us, or the profit

1 Appendix, No. 4.

2 The basis of the several coalitions against France, was the conference at Mantua in 1791; to which the King of England was a party, as elector of Hanover.—*M. Mollink's Annals.*

3 Dallas's exposition of the causes and character of the late war.

to her, there was soon superadded another measure, which interdicted all neutral commerce, not only with ports blockaded by forces sufficient for the purpose, (which the laws of war would not have forbidden) but with places where no force whatever existed; and even with whole coasts of territory, which her naval means, if acting in concert, would have been incompetent to blockade. Still, her abuse of power did not stop here; it was not enough that she thus outraged our rights on the ocean; the bosoms of our bays, the mouths of our rivers and even the wharves of our harbors, were made the theatres of the most flagitious abuse; and, as if determined to leave no cause of provocation untried, the *personal* rights of our seamen were invaded; and men, owing her no allegiance, nor having any connexion with her policy or arms, were forcibly siezed, dragged on board her ships of war and made to fight her battles, under the scourge of tyrants and slaves, with whom submission, whether right or wrong, forms the whole duty of man.[1]

Evils of such magnitude and continuance, could not fail to produce a high degree of excitement in the nation, and much of a correspondent feeling on the part of the government; but though three successive administrations saw in the conduct of Great Britain, sufficient cause of war, all doubted the expediency of acting upon it. Barely recovered from the debility, resulting from the defects of their

1 Official letters of Mr. King while Minister at London.

first Federal compact, and but just entered on the experiment of another of more efficient character, *forbearance* was adopted as a principle, and means simply diplomatic prescribed, as those alone which could be employed with safety and success. Unfortunately, this estimate of their value was deceptive, and the event showed, that with a nation like Great Britain, which makes her own interest and convenience the governing rules of her conduct, persuasion, admonition, remonstrance, argument, and even concession, are alike unavailing. All these elements of diplomacy were frequently and faithfully employed, but without other effect than that of multiplying and augmenting the evils they were intended to mitigate or remove; the appetite of the aggressor grew on what it fed; her insolence increased with her power, and the violation of one right, was made to justify that of another; when at last, disdaining longer to discuss wrongs she had no intention to redress, she officially announced—that "farther negotiation was inadmissible."[1]

Having thus lost the respect of her adversary, it but remained for the United States to decide, whether she would preserve her own? On this question, she could not hesitate long or seriously; and accordingly, on the 18th of June, 1812, declared war against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and their dependancies.

It must not however be dissembled, that this act,

[1] Dallas's Exposition.

though forced upon the government by the long-continued and increasing injustice of England, received from the community, a less general support, than might have been expected from the purity of the motives in which it originated, or the nature and extent of the evils it was intended to redress. The habitual opponents of the administration, believing the circumstances of the times furnished a favorable opportunity for attempting the recovery of the political ascendency they had lost, hastened to institute a system of indiscriminate opposition; directed as well against measures merely preparatory for war, as against those which were in themselves acts of war. In this headlong career, the fiscal operations of the government were opposed; the recruiting service discountenanced; the militia made insubordinate, and even the constitutional authority of the President to organize their masses and direct their services within the states respectively, denied and resisted. We need hardly add, that an opposition, thus active and lawless, could not fail to be mischievous, and became, as will be seen in the progress of our story, the source of both calamity and disgrace to the nation.[1]

[1] Appendix, No. 5.

CHAPTER II.

Hull's Expedition.—Loss of Michilimakinac.—Surrender of Detroit, the Michigan Territory, and the Army.

AMONG the measures of precaution, taken by the Government of the United States, previously to their declaration of war,[1] was that "of placing within the Michigan Territory, a force that should be competent to the defence of the north-western frontier against Indian hostility; and which, in the event of a rupture with Great Britain, would enable the United States to obtain the command of Lake Erie; and with it, the means of more easily co-operating with such other corps, as might be destined to the invasion of the Canadas."[2] The troops assigned to this service, amounting to two thousand men of all arms,[3] were placed under the command of Brigadier-General Hull, then Governor of the Michigan

1 The principal of these were, an Act laying an embargo on shipping—a second, authorizing a detachment of one hundred thousand militia—a third, for increasing the regular army—a fourth, for the acceptance of volunteers—and a fifth, for borrowing money on public account.

2 President Madison's Message to Congress, of Nov. 4th, 1812.

3 Three companies of the first United States regiment of Artillery; the fourth, and part of the first regiment of Infantry; three regiments of Ohio volunteers; the Michigan militia and one company of Rangers.

Territory; and formerly an officer, not without distinction, in the war of the revolution.

This General, after giving the necessary attention to the equipment and subsistence of his corps,[1] began his march from Dayton, a frontier town in the State of Ohio, on the first day of June, 1812. Though unencumbered with artillery, and in no way impeded by an enemy, his progress was unavoidably slow; from the necessity of opening roads, making bridges and constructing blockhouses, for the better security of his rear, and of the supplies and reinforcements moving upon it. It was not, therefore, until the 30th of the month, that he was enabled to reach the Miami of the Lake; where, under an admonition, recently received from the War Department, "to quicken his movements," he determined to avail himself of the means of navigation which now offered, for the more rapid and economical transportation of his baggage, stores, sick and convalescent.[2] Embarking these, accordingly, on board of the Cayahoga Packet, they were despatched for Detroit; while the army, with the same destination, resumed its march by land.

The day following this transaction, the General

1 Hull asserts, that he found the Ohio volunteers deficient in arms, equipment and clothing; and even unprovided with either contract, or commissariat, for the supply of their food.—*Hull's Memoirs.*

2 Colonel McArthur admonished the General against this measure, on the presumption that war was already declared, and furnished strong evidence of the fact; but with so little effect, that the General availed himself of the packet to forward, even "the instructions of his government and the returns of his army."

received the first official notice of the declaration of war; and on reaching the river Raisin, was made acquainted with the fate of his detachment; which, in attempting to pass the British post of Malden, had been attacked and captured, "by a subaltern and six men, in a small and open boat."

The effect of this disaster on General Hull, was not such as might have been expected from long military service, or high military character; and probably produced the first doubts that existed of his capacity as a leader. Instead of exciting to increased spirit and exertion, which would soon have compensated for the loss and atoned for the disgrace so unexpectedly incurred, he unfortunately saw it only in the light of an evil omen, and precursor of an attack, fatal alike to the objects and agents of the expedition; and accordingly employed himself in imagining and practising devices to avoid a battle,[1] which all circumstances—time, place and relative strength—made it his duty to seek. Nor were his stratagems on this occasion unavailing; the enemy saw and respected his strength, and permitted him to reach Detroit, without molestation or menace.

Finding himself now vested with an authority to invade the Canadas, "if consistent with the safety of his own posts," and not having, as he believed, any thing to fear on their account, he on the 12th of July crossed the river Detroit and encamped at

[1] Hull's Memoirs, p. 39.

Sandwich, with the professed object of marching directly upon Malden—a measure, recommended by many considerations; but more particularly by the fact, that from the local position of the fort, (nearly twenty miles in the rear of Detroit) its garrison had the power of destroying or obstructing all supplies coming from the United States, unless protected by a force superior to itself.

In prosecution of this important object, the General began by issuing a proclamation addressed as well to the hopes, as to the fears of the Canadian colonists; and vaunting, in an especial manner, the possession of a force "equal to the purpose of either protection or punishment." Nor did the party addressed, put a different estimate on its power of doing good or evil—"all opposition seemed to fall before it; one month it remained in the country, and was fed from its resources. In different directions, detachments penetrated sixty miles into the settled parts of the province, and the inhabitants seemed satisfied with the change of situation which appeared to be taking place. The militia at Amherstburg were daily deserting, and the whole country under the control of the army, asking for protection—while the Indians generally, appeared to be neutralized and determined to take no part in the controversy."[1]

If such was the effect of the mere appearance of the American army within the limits of Canada,

[1] Hull's official letter to the War Department, 27th August, 1812.

what might not have been expected from a prompt, steady and well-directed application of its powers? Malden was but eighteen miles from Sandwich; the road between the two, wholly unobstructed; and what at the former was called a fortification, utterly unworthy of the name.[1] Nor was the garrison more formidable than the work it occupied; consisting only of one hundred regular troops, and four hundred disaffected militia and neutralized Indians. Instead, however, of availing himself of circumstances thus auspicious, and putting into his conduct that vigor and intelligence, which always deserve success and often command it, the General unfortunately took council only from his fears, and for the first time discovered, that "he had neither cannon nor howitzers of large calibre, fit to travel; and that without arms of this description, it would be unsafe to advance." Artificers were therefore set to work to supply the deficiency, and at the end of three weeks, two twenty-four pounders and three howitzers, were put upon wheels strong enough to carry them.[2]

It may be reasonably supposed that this long interval had not been permitted to escape, without

1 Hull's trial; Cass and Miller's testimony.

2 General Brock's estimate of the use of heavy cannon in breaching earthern walls and cedar pickets, was very different. In approaching Detroit, a work of much more strength than Malden, he would not encumber his movements with guns of larger calibre than six and three pounders. Yet to Brock's knowledge of his trade, General Hull bears willing testimony.

some movements calculated to try the strength and temper of the enemy; and more particularly, that the approaches to his position, as well as the position itself, had been thoroughly reconnoitred and ascertained. Nothing, however, of this character was either meditated or executed, if we except two or three small and isolated detachments, sent as far as the river Canard; but without any sustaining corps, to enable them to hold what they gained, if found to be useful; nor even any instruction to do so, if practicable, by the means they possessed. Of these, the detachment commanded by Colonels Cass and Miller is most worthy of notice.

On approaching the river (a narrow but deep stream four miles from Malden) a British picket was found in possession of the bridge, and apparently determined to hold it. After a short trial of strength, the position was turned and the picket driven back upon the fort, whither the fugitives carried their panic along with them, "creating in the garrison much alarm and confusion"—a state of things which continued to exist until it was discovered that the detachment, instead of being (as had been imagined) the precursor of an army, was merely a reconnoitring party, ignorant of the value of the position it had gained, or not instructed and prepared to maintain it.[1]

If the effects of this experiment on the enemy, appear to be extraordinary and without sufficient

[1] Hull's trial; Forbish's testimony.

cause, how much more so must be considered those which it produced on the American commander? When the success of the party in taking the bridge and driving in the picket, was reported by Colonels Cass and Miller, they did not fail to report also the importance of the acquisition they had made to the future objects of the campaign; and entreated, that if any circumstances unknown to them, made it inexpedient or improper to move the army to this new and important position, they might themselves be permitted to hold it and be sustained in doing so, by occasional or permanent reinforcements and supplies. On this expression of facts and opinions, which should have excited only respect for those who had given them, the General yielded to a paroxysm of ill-temper and obstinacy; criminated the attack made on the enemy, as a breach of orders; rejected the advice offered to him in all its parts, and peremptorily commanded the immediate return of the detachment. Nor could any modification of this order be obtained, but on condition that Colonels Cass and Miller would take upon themselves the whole responsibility of the measure, without any corresponding obligation on the part of the General to supply the means necessary to its execution—a condition, to which he well knew, no prudent officer would yield his assent.[1]

1 Hull's trial. Colonel Miller's testimony.—"Witness mentioned to Colonel Cass and they agreed, that as they had not the disposition of the whole force, they should not take the responsibility." See also the testimony of Quartermaster-General Taylor.

Such want of knowledge, of judgment and of enterprise, could not be long concealed by any devices; and had now become so flagrant and alarming, that even the General appeared to be touched by a desire of redeeming what he had lost. He regretted that a blow had not been already struck; and declared himself pledged to lead the army promptly and directly to Malden.[1] The ammunition was accordingly placed in wagons; the cannon, on floating batteries; and every other requisite for the attack prepared, when to the grief and disappointment of all, the plan was abandoned, the encampment raised, and the army, with the exception of a small detachment of one hundred and fifty men, recrossed in the night of the 7th of August, to the town and fort of Detroit!

While the American commander was thus depressing the spirit of his own army, raising that of his enemy, taking from the savages every motive for longer inaction, and entirely destroying the confidence reposed in his promises by the Canadian colonists, his adversary (General Brock) was pursuing a system, which, in all respects, tended directly to augment and confirm these effects. Apprised, as early as the 26th of June, of the declaration of war,[2] he hastened to transmit the information to his outposts; and without waiting the instructions of Sir George Provost, suggested to the commandant

1 Colonel Cass's letter to the Secretary of War, of the 10th September, 1812.

2 Christie's Memoir of the late war in the Canadas.

of St. Joseph's, an immediate attack on Fort Michilimackinac, as the best mode of defending his own.

Though Captain Roberts, the officer to whom this suggestion was made, found himself ill-prepared for an enterprise of such moment; yet entering fully into the views of his commander, and being cordially supported by the agents of the two western fur-companies, he in the short space of eight days, organized a force, naval and military, with which on the 17th of July he made the experiment; and (it may be safely presumed, as much to his surprise, as entirely to his satisfaction) found the commanding officer not only unprepared for the attack, but ignorant of the declaration of war, and not unwilling to surrender his post, without even the ceremony of a refusal.[1]

Having thus easily and cheaply succeeded in wresting from the United States their most important western position, the British General now conceived a project of yet more contemptuous daring; having for its object, not merely the safety of Malden and the expulsion of the American army from Canada, but the pursuit and capture of this very army, within its own territorial limits and defences. As

[1] This surrender, to say the least of it, was precipitate. Some experiment of the enemy's power to take the fort, was due to the American flag and ought to have been made; and the more so, as the result would probably have shown, that an investing corps, composed of *thirty* regulars and a rabble of engagés and savages, with two old rusty iron guns of small calibre, was much less formidable than had been imagined.

a first step in this new career, he superseded Colonel St. George in the command of the district, and substituted for him Colonel Proctor. This officer, who arrived at Malden on the 29th of July, brought with him no important accession to the number of the garrison ;[1] but, what was justly considered as even more necessary,—a competent knowledge of his profession, a thorough acquaintance with the views, and a ready submission to the authority of his chief. With such qualifications it is not to be supposed that he would be slow in appreciating the advantages to be derived from the position of the fort in which he commanded ; the concentrated state of the force it contained, and the naval means given him to employ and to second this. He accordingly determined to avail himself of the swamps and defiles on the American side of the Detroit ; and by thus seizing the key of his adversary's resources, not merely recall him from Canada, but literally compel him to fight for his daily bread, or surrender at discretion. Nor had he long to wait for an occasion, on which to test the value of the plan he had adopted.

Three days before the retreat of the American army from Canada, General Hull, who had hitherto shown great indifference to the state of his communications,[2] consented to the march of a detach-

1 "Ten or twelve men." Hull's trial; Gooding's testimony.

2 "The Colonels of the Ohio militia applied for leave to take a detachment and open a communication with Brush, and bring the provisions in safety to Detroit ; but the General refused to grant the request and

ment, as a guard to the mail and additional convoy to a quantity of flour and a number of cattle, destined for the use of the army, which the policy, adopted by Proctor and already detailed, had stopped at the river Raisin. With that infatuation, however, which marked so much of his public conduct, and entirely forgetting the panic he had himself suffered in passing the defiles of Maguago and Brownstown, on the preceding 4th of July, (though then at the head of an army,) he perversely limited the number of the detachment to two hundred men.[1] This small body, composed of volunteers and militia, and marching with that want of circumspection which so often occurs in the movements of troops of this description, fell into an ambuscade prepared for them near Brownstown, and were immediately beaten and dispersed; with the loss of four captains, two subalterns, sixty privates and the public mail, of which they had been the escort. Major Van Horne, the commanding officer, did what was possible, to lessen the loss and prevent the disorder of the retreat; and thus endeavored to atone for the error he had committed, in disregarding the information previously given him, of the strength and position of the enemy; of

appeared indifferent about the fate of the Captain and the provisions. On the 6th, the Colonels applied for five hundred men to bury the killed (in Van Horne's affair,) and to open the communication with Brush; but the General refusing to let them take more than one hundred, and this being a number much too small, the project was abandoned."—*McAffee's History of the War in the West.*

[1] Hull's trial; McArthur's testimony.

which, had a proper use been made, the misfortune might have been easily and entirely avoided.[1]

To fulfil the intention of this unsuccessful and ill-conducted enterprise, the importance of which, (now that the army had recrossed the Detroit and could no longer live on the resources of the enemy,) became every moment more obvious and urgent, a second detachment was ordered, and the command assigned to Lieutenant-Colonel Miller of the fourth United States regiment of infantry. But, as in the former case, the General had not become wise by the experience of others, so in this, he continued to be ignorant in despite of his own. Disregarding the admonition, so abundantly furnished by the disaster and disgrace incurred on the 5th, and entirely overlooking the fact, that, his adversary having now nothing to fear with regard to Malden, was at all times in a condition to repeat the lesson with his whole force, if deemed necessary,—he pertinaciously refused to extend the corps beyond five hundred combatants; and would have hazarded these without the protection of a single piece of artillery, had not Colonel Miller insisted upon taking with him, one six-pounder and one five and a half inch howitzer.[2]

1 "After passing the Maguago villages, a Frenchman informed Major Van Horne, that three or four hundred Indians and some British, were lying in ambush near Brownstown, for the purpose of intercepting the party. Not sufficiently respecting the information, the Major marched on."—*McAffee's History.*

2 Dalliba's Narrative.

The detachment beginning its march on the 8th of August, and being conducted with the necessary attention and skill, suffered no serious interruption from the enemy, until the afternoon of the 9th; when on entering a wood near Brownstown, the advanced guard, commanded by Captain Snelling, found itself within pistol-shot of a long and hostile line, covered in front by a breastwork of logs and brushwood, and strongly flanked by the Detroit on one side, and a succession of swamps and thickets on the other. A heavy and destructive fire now opened on Snelling, who sustained and returned it with his usual gallantry, until Colonel Miller (by promptly converting his order of march into an order of battle) was enabled to interpose his front line. It was in executing this manœuvre, that finding himself both outflanked and outnumbered, and perceiving many of his men to fall and some to waver, while little if any impression was made on the covered ranks of the enemy, this distinguished officer determined to bring the contest to the decision of the bayonet. The execution of this purpose was not less rapid than its conception was judicious; the order to charge was received with loud and repeated huzzas; the breastwork was instantaneously mounted and passed, and the centre and left of the enemy, (composed of British regulars and Canadian militia,) not merely beaten, but decidedly routed.[1]

[1] "This rout continued for a mile, when coming into a piece of open ground, they endeavored to form, but on the approach of the Americans, again broke and fled into the woods."—*Dalliba's Narrative.*

Tecumseh, who at the head of what remained of his tribe formed the left of the British line, was more difficult to move. Apparently unaffected by the fate of his ally, he continued the contest with great vigor; and when compelled to abandon the breastwork, withdrew to the neighboring thickets, took new and strong positions, and for a moment rendered it doubtful, whether, after all, the battle was more than half won. Unfortunately, these last efforts, (the agonies of exhaustion and despair,) were mistaken by Major Van Horne, who commanded the right flank of the American line, as evidence only of the habitual prowess, untiring energy and great force of his Indian enemy; which, as he concluded, could not be long resisted, without the aid of a re-enforcement. A message to this effect overtook Colonel Miller, while closely pursuing the British and Canadian fugitives, a circumstance which could not fail to embarrass his movements. A halt was accordingly commanded, when, after a moment's reflection, giving up the glory of capturing one half of his enemy's force, he rapidly retraced his steps to rescue his comrades and cannon from the grasp of the other. A second message, soon after received from the right, leaving no doubt that the victory was as complete, as the action had been general; and that Tecumseh, like Muir, had at last been compelled to save himself by flight. The pursuit of the latter was resumed; but with the effect only of increasing the regret, at the well-meant but erroneous estimate of the powers and

perseverance of the Shawanee chief. On reaching the shore of Lake Erie, the flying enemy was still visible; but at a distance, that rendered every attempt at farther annoyance useless, and on an element prohibiting all nearer approach.[1]

Returning to the place of combat, an encampment was hastily traced and the necessary guards posted; when the American commander employed himself in collecting the wounded, burying the dead, and ascertaining the state of his communications with the river Raisin. Receiving on this last head satisfactory information, that the Indian villages in his front were abandoned, and that there no longer existed any obstruction, on the part of the enemy, to his farther progress, he hastened to detach Captain Snelling to General Hull with an account of the action, and a requisition for boats to remove the wounded; for provisions, of which he was already much in want; and for such a reinforcement of men, as would replace those who had fallen in the combat. With even these modest and moderate demands, the General did not think it prudent to comply. Boats were indeed permitted to be sent, which, by the exertion of Colonel McArthur, arrived at nine o'clock on the morning of the 10th; but a reinforcement sufficient to fill up the chasm made in the ranks of the detachment, could not be spared; and of provisions, so much only was forwarded, as in the present hungry and comfortless condition of

[1] Dalliba's Narrative.

the troops, "but sufficed for a single meal."[1] Believing, however, that the scantiness of this supply was the result of haste or accident, rather than of design, Colonel Miller despatched a second requisition on the contractor, and fresh assurances to the General, that "his communications with the river Raisin were now fully re-established." The messenger employed on this occasion, by some misdirection of his route, did not get back to the encampment until the evening of the 11th, and to the regret and astonishment of all, brought with him not the required supply of food, but a written and peremptory order "for the immediate return of the detachment." This order was strictly, though reluctantly obeyed, and at midday of the 12th, the corps re-entered Detroit.[2]

The General's conduct on this occasion could not escape animadversion. His more severe critics, com-

[1] Hull's trial; Miller's testimony.

[2] The American General, as usual, saw every thing through the medium of his fears. The effect of even this victory on his mind, was depressing and degrading. His official letter giving an account of it, laments "that nothing was gained by it but *honor;* and that the blood of seventy-five men had been shed *in vain;* as it but opened his communications as far as their bayonets had extended." It is thus he spoke of a victory, which drove the enemy from the field and from his purpose; which enabled the victors to remain nearly three days in front of Malden without molestation; and which, but for his orders of recall, would have enabled them to accomplish all the objects of the expedition. What would a bold and able leader have made of the moral effect of this victory on his own troops and on those of his enemy! With Mr. Hull, it degenerated into a chapter of lamentations on the *value* of a soldier's blood, and the *vanity* of a soldier's honor.

bining his uniform indifference to the state of his communications, the pressure necessary to induce him to take any measures for re-opening them, and the perverse preference given to those of the most inefficient and hopeless character, with this last act, of recalling a corps, which had beaten and routed the enemy from a fortified position of his own choosing, and which had thus substantially freed from obstruction the short remaining distance between itself and the river Raisin—did not scruple to impute to him a secret and systematic co-operation with the enemy; while others, less prone to suspicion and of more charitable temperament, ascribed it to an honest but false estimate of the value of the object to be attained, or of the degree of danger to be incurred in attaining it; and lastly, to a persuasion that the safety of his own position, now required a speedy and entire concentration of his forces. But of the several branches of this apology the General hastened to deprive himself, by organizing a new expedition, having the same object, but possessing inferior means; and with the additional objection, that its plan involved a longer march, by a route merely conjectural, and at a moment when the British force was fast accumulating in his front, and its bold and active leader had arrived at Malden.[1]

Colonel McArthur, the officer to whom the command of this new detachment had been assigned,

1 General Brock arrived at Malden on the 13th of August.—*Christie's Memoirs.*

set out late in the afternoon of the 14th, and after struggling with many and unforeseen difficulties—with thickets nearly impervious, with swamps almost impassable, and with hunger, which the General had forgotten to satisfy[1]—was at last compelled to retrace his steps towards Detroit; and arrived in the neighborhood of that post, in time to share in the misfortune, and witness the disgrace, which now awaited the main army.

This army, as has been already stated, recrossed the river Detroit on the evening of the 7th and morning of the 8th of August, with the exception of a few volunteers, who, in madness or in mockery, had been left for the protection of such British colonists as yet adhered to the American standard.[2] On the 11th, this shadow of support was also withdrawn; and on the 14th, General Brock, in prosecution of the plan already indicated, appeared at Sandwich, and immediately employed himself in constructing a battery to protect, at once, his present position and future operations. In executing this work, he met with no interruption; as every species of annoyance was either indirectly declined, or expressly forbidden

1 "The only food they had on this march, was green corn and pumpkins, found in the fields."—*McAffee.*

2 "Major Denny was left at the stockade-work at Sandwich, with one hundred and thirty convalescents and Anderson's artillerists, under orders 'to hold possession of that part of Upper Canada; to afford all possible protection to the well-disposed inhabitants, and to defend his post to the last extremity against musquetry; but if overpowered by artillery, to retreat.'"—*Idem.*

by General Hull. In vain, was permission solicited to erect a battery, with which to dislodge or destroy the enemy's shipping; in vain, a small detachment of one hundred men, required for the purpose of spiking the British cannon; to these, and to every similar proposition, involving credit to himself or danger to his adversary, the General turned either a deaf ear, or a positive refusal.[1]

Such was the state of things on the morning of the 15th, when a marquee (the top of which was so painted as to give it a strong resemblance to the British flag) was found erected in the centre of the American encampment. While this circumstance engaged the attention of the troops, exciting the surprise of all, and the suspicion of many, a boat from the enemy was seen approaching the shore. The officer under whose direction it came, having announced himself "the bearer of a written message from General Brock to General Hull," was promptly received and conducted to head-quarters. On examination, the letter he brought was found to contain a demand for the immediate surrender of the fort, and a menace of indiscriminate massacre in case of refusal.

A requisition of this kind, which, in all its aspects, was alike important and unexpected, would, no

1 "If you will give permission, I will clear the enemy, on the opposite shore, from the lower batteries?" The General answered, "Mr. Dalliba, I will make an agreement with the enemy, that if they will not fire on me, I will not fire on them."—*Dalliba's testimony; Hull's trial.*

doubt, have warranted an immediate recurrence to a council of war; but no such step was either taken or suggested. For once, the American General appeared to be both competent and willing to act without advice, and to take upon himself all responsibility. He accordingly, in terms sufficiently decided, rejected the demand, and to God and his sword committed the issue. Unfortunately, this defiance was addressed to one who knew well how to appreciate its meaning; and who did not for a moment suffer it to abate his diligence, lessen his hopes, or even increase his circumspection. His measures were pushed with a haste and temerity, which excluded all doubts of success; and with a disregard to rules, which sufficiently indicated his own conviction that he was but taking part in a pantomime.[1] The return of his messenger becoming the signal of attack, a fire from the newly-constructed battery was now opened on the town and fort of Detroit. This continued until ten o'clock in the evening, and was recommenced in the morning, but without any material injury to its objects; and was, in fact, but remarkable from its being the only semblance of stratagem, which the British commander condescended to employ in passing a river eleven hundred yards wide, in broad day, and within stroke of an

1 So satisfied was Brock that he had nothing to fear from his enemy, that when advancing to the storm of the fort, his column of march was not preceded by a vanguard of any kind; and the General himself was seen riding alone, two hundred yards in advance of his column. —*Snelling's testimony; Hull's trial.*

enemy not less strong than himself. Nor, as the event showed, was there any error in the estimate (which this fact presupposes) of a want of courage, capacity, or fidelity in his adversary; for, on making the experiment, it completely succeeded, and not merely without the loss of a single life, or of a moment's time, but under a full demonstration that neither obstruction nor annoyance of any kind was meditated by the American General.[1]

On crossing the Detroit, it was Brock's intention to establish himself at Spring-Wells, and with the aid of the Indians, so to interpose between the American army and its resources, as to compel it to quit its fortress, and risk a field-fight for the defence of its communications; but having, soon after landing, received new information with regard to the fort and army generally, and having in particular, assured himself of the detachment made on the 14th from the latter under the command of Colonel McArthur, he determined to shorten the process, and substitute assault for investment.[2] The force at his disposal for this purpose did not exceed seven hundred combatants,[3] and of this number, four hundred were Canadian militia disguised in red coats. With this small corps, preceded by five pieces of light artillery,

1 "On the 12th, (two days before Brock's demand of a surrender,) the commanding officers of three of the regiments (the fourth being absent) were informed, through a medium admitting of no doubt, that the General had stated that 'a capitulation would be necessary.'"—*Colonel Cass's Letter to the Secretary of War, September 10th*, 1812.

2 Brock's official letter of the 17th of August, 1812. 3 Idem.

(six and three pounders,) he began his march along the margin of the river; while the savages, by a parallel movement through a wood, covered his left flank. Between eleven and twelve o'clock, the head of the column presented itself at the tanyards below the town, (about five hundred yards from the fort,) when the American officer, commanding an exterior battery of twenty-four pounders charged with grape shot, believing the moment had arrived when hostilities could no longer be postponed with propriety, directed his men to point their guns and commence a fire; but the order was immediately countermanded, and another issued in its stead, forbidding every kind of hostility, and menacing with immediate death all who should dare to infract it.[1]

The strength, position, and supplies of the American army, at this critical moment, have been frequently stated, and even judicially established. The morning reports to the Adjutant-General, made its effective force one thousand and sixty, exclusive of three hundred Michigan militia, and as many Ohio volunteers, detached under McArthur. Of this force, four hundred effectives (infantry and artillerists of the line) occupied the fort—a work of regular form and great solidity; surrounded by a wide and deep ditch, strongly fraised and palisadoed, and sustained by an exterior battery of two twenty-four pounders.[2] Three hundred Michigan militia, ready to combat for

[1] McAfee's History.

[2] Hull's trial; testimony of Captain Dalliba, General Taylor, and Major Wesup.

their firesides and altars, held the town,[1] which in itself formed a respectable defence against the best troops, and one quite redoubtable against the attacks of Indians or militia. Flanking the approach to the fort, and covered by a high and heavy picket-fence, lay four hundred Ohio volunteers, expert in the use of their weapons and anxious to employ them; while one mile and a half on the right, advancing by long and rapid strides, was McArthur's detachment, returning by a route which (had a defence been hazarded) would have brought them directly on the rear of the enemy.[2] Of provisions and ammunitions the supply was abundant; fifteen days rations, and much fixed and loose powder and lead, were amply sufficient for a trial of strength and skill, which a single hour would have decided.

Under circumstances thus auspicious, "while the troops, in sure anticipation of victory, awaited the approach of the enemy; when no sound of discontent was heard, nor any appearance of cowardice or disaffection seen; when every individual was at his post, and expected a proud day for his country and himself"—an order was received from the General to withdraw the troops from all exterior positions; to stack the arms and hoist a white flag, in token of submission to the enemy! "This order was received by the men with a universal burst of indignation; even the women were ashamed of an act, so disgraceful to the arms of their country; and all

1 Colonel Cass's letter, 10th September. 2 Idem.

felt as was proper and decorous, except the man in whose hands were the reins of authority."[1]

The terms of the capitulation which followed, were such as might be expected from the views and feelings in which it originated. No stipulation was made for the Canadian colonists who had joined the American standard; the Ohio and Michigan militia were brought under engagements not to serve again during the war, unless exchanged; the territory in its whole extent, was yielded with the army; and (that even more might be granted than was asked,) the supplies at the river Raisin, with their convoy and McArthur's detachment, (the exact situation of which was not then known at the fort,) were, on the suggestion of General Hull, included within the act of surrender. By another provision of this instrument, the militia, whether drafts or volunteers, were liberated, while Hull and the regular troops were despatched to Montreal.[2]

About the date of these transactions, a calamity of similar, and to the individuals concerned, of severer character, awaited the garrison of fort Dearborn,—a military post on the south-western extremity of Lake Michigan, possessing as was believed, a considerable influence over Indian wants and policy.

1 Colonel Cass's letter of the 10th September.

2 "General Hull with the officers and men of his army, were introduced into Montreal on the evening of the 6th of September, in a triumphal, though mock procession, amidst the shouts of a scornful multitude, indignant at the savage threat of extermination breathed in his proclamation."—*Christie's Memoirs.*

Forgotten alike by the government and the General until about the middle of July, an order was then sent by the latter to Captain Heald, "to dismantle the fort, destroy the surplus arms and ammunition, and withdraw the garrison to Detroit." From an ill-judged mode of communication, this order did not reach the fort until the 12th of August. On the 14th, the garrison, reinforced by a few Miami Indians, under the command of Captain Wells, began its intended march; but had not proceeded more than a mile, when it was attacked, in both front and rear, by a body of five or six hundred savages, whom it had left at Chicago, professing a neutral, if not a friendly character. Captain Heald, after a hard and unequal combat, in which fifty of his party fell, (and being himself wounded and deserted by the Miamis,) was compelled to accept a proposition for a parley, which was soon and necessarily followed by a surrender, on condition that the lives of the American survivors, not now exceeding twenty, should be spared.[1]

Such was the termination of this first expedition of the new war; the details of which, have in them so little to flatter, and so much to mortify the pride of the American arms. Nor must it be forgotten that this catastrophe, however disgraceful in itself

1 Captain Heald, his wife and some third person, fell to the share of a party of Indians living at St. Josephs. Carried thither by their savage masters, they soon possessed themselves of a boat, in which they made their escape to Michilimackinac, where they found protection and the means of returning to the United States.

or disastrous in its consequences, was not the result of any of those occurrences, which, in the affairs of nations and of individuals, are denominated *accidents;* and which sometimes, triumph alike over the precautions of wisdom and the efforts of valor. We have seen that the army, in its march from the place of its rendezvous to that of its destination, was neither melted by heat, nor frozen by cold; neither persecuted by storms, nor crippled by enemies; neither wasted by disease, nor exhausted by famine; but that on the 5th of July it arrived at Detroit, in unimpaired health and spirits. From its friends, it received a cordial welcome, abundant supplies and a respectable addition to its force; and in its subsequent descent upon Canada, was scarcely less fortunate, as it found the British colonists indifferent, if not repugnant to the war; the Indian tribes, though secretly hostile, cautious and calculating; and the fortress of Malden, which alone sustained the enemy's interest in that section of the country, wholly indefensible. When at last, important changes had been wrought in this state of things, by the fall of Michilimackinac, the defeat of Van Horne, the obstruction given to our communications, the altered tone and temper of the British and savage population, and the doubts and misgivings which could not but prevail in our own ranks—when, in a word, fortune appeared to have decidedly taken part with the enemy against us, it was but to lead him into indiscretions; which, had they been seen and punished, would have promptly

reinstated our ascendency and accomplished the principal objects of the campaign. Like other advantages, these were permitted to escape, probably without notice, and certainly without improvement; leaving us only the mortifying reflection, that our disasters were of our own making, and the necessary consequence of an ignorance, which knew not what to do; of a self-sufficiency, refusing to be instructed; and of a cowardice, that in its terrors, lost all sense of national interest, personal dignity and professional duty.[1]

Remarks. The crimes and errors of public functionaries, however calamitous and disgraceful, are not without their uses; and that on this occasion, the bitter fruits of experience may, if possible, be converted into wholesome aliment, we subjoin a few observations indicating the principal faults committed, and the means by which they might have been substantially obviated, if not entirely avoided.

I. "Every commander of a corps, destined to the reduction of a fortress by siege or investment, ought, if possible, to draw his antagonist from behind his works, and induce him to risk an action in the open field." This maxim, nearly as old as the art to which it belongs, is founded on a reason sufficiently obvious, viz. that, "as forts make the weak strong, and the strong stronger, it necessarily follows, that it will be more easy to beat your enemy

[1] Hull's trial; testimony of Jessup, Snelling, Taylor, Eastman, &c.

without, than within his intrenchments." Of this rule and the reason on which it is founded, General Hull was either entirely ignorant or utterly regardless; for though on the 2d of July, according to his own statement, he found his adversary willing to forego the advantages given him by his fortress, and determined to risk a battle against a force much superior to his own; and with the additional disadvantage of interposing between himself and his only place of refuge, a wide and rapid river,—the challenge was not merely declined on our part, but such cunningly devised fables transmitted to Colonel St. George, as induced that officer to abandon his chivalrous, but unmilitary project.[1]

II. Another maxim of the art, which, like the preceding, is but a dictate of common sense, level to any ordinary capacity and requiring no scientific research, is,—that "whenever it be sufficiently ascertained, that your enemy is suffering under any extraordinary degree of debility, arising from deficient supplies, prevailing diseases, impaired disci-

1 "A large body of the militia had reinforced the British garrison, and all the surrounding tribes of Indians had been invited to his standard. Every preparation for attack was made on the 5th of July, and it was only prevented by a communication made to a person in Malden, who had the confidence of the commander; *that it was not the intention of the army to march to Detroit; that all the boats were collected on the west side of the river; that cannon had been sent for to Detroit; and that my intention was to cross the river and attack the fort. This information caused the commanding officer to abandon the enterprise,* and concentrate all his forces for the defence of his post.—*Hull's Memoirs*, p. 29.

pline, disaffection or want of numbers in his ranks, or ill-condition of his defences, it becomes your duty to assail him incessantly and vigorously."

It has been abundantly established, that between the 5th and 20th of July, fort Malden was, in all its parts, in a dilapidated state, and on two of its sides, (the north and west,) wholly indefensible; that during the same period, its nominal garrison did not exceed seven hundred men, of which, more than six hundred were militia and savages; the one, indifferent, if not disaffected to the war, and the other, professing neutrality and strictly forbidden by their military usages, from taking part in the defence of fortified places.[1] From these facts we are authorized to conclude, that had General Hull, at any time between the 5th and 20th of July, pushed boldly forward and presented his columns of attack before Malden, the place would have been surrendered to him, with as little ceremony as he surrendered Detroit on the 16th of August; a conclusion, put beyond all doubt by this additional fact, that when, on the 16th of July, the British outpost on the Canard was defeated and the bridge taken, so great was the alarm in Malden, that the shipping was brought up to the wharves, and actually employed in taking in the baggage, &c.[2]

1 Tecumseh's speech to General Proctor, 18th September, 1813,—"you told us that we need not trouble ourselves about the enemy's *garrisons*, and that you would take good care of *your own;* which made our hearts glad."

2 "There was a great deal of confusion in the town, moving effects,

III. Nothing can be more ill-judged and ruinous, than to send out small parties on services which necessarily expose them to the attacks of large ones; and hence the maxim, that "the strength of a detachment should be proportioned, 1st, to the importance of the object to be obtained in sending it; and 2d, to the disposable means possessed by the enemy of embarrassing or defeating the attainment of that object." In none of the detachments made by General Hull, were these conditions fulfilled; and in that of Major Van Horne, both were directly and grossly violated. What object could have been more important to the American army, situated as it then was, than the re-establishment of its communications with the State of Ohio; from which alone were to be expected reinforcements of men and supplies of provision? And again, what fact was better ascertained, than the facility with which the whole British force concentrated at Malden, and amounting to seven hundred combatants, could be brought to act upon any American detachment, marching by the route of Maguago and Brownstown? Yet was Van Horne sent to fulfil that object and by this route, with only two hundred militia-riflemen![1]

IV. When, on the 8th of August, Colonel Miller was detached to effect the purpose which Major

&c. The Queen Charlotte came to the wharf and took in the women and baggage, and had her topsails loose and ready to sail."—*Forbish and Gooding's testimony on Hull's trial.*

1 Hull's official report of the 26th of August, 1812.

Van Horne had failed to accomplish on the 5th, it required no spirit of prophecy to foresee, that Proctor (the British commander) would make every possible effort to overwhelm the second detachment as he had done the first; but that to this end he must employ *the whole force, composing the garrison under his command.* It is extraordinary, that this simple and obvious view of the subject, should have escaped the attention of any man to whom military ideas were at all familiar; or if it did occur to General Hull, that it should have failed to suggest the only means left for prosecuting his own objects, and converting the policy and enterprise of his antagonist into folly and misfortune. These means obviously were—so to strengthen Miller's detachment, as to leave nothing to chance; and thus to assure himself not merely of the discomfiture, but of the destruction of whatever force the enemy might hazard on the southern side of the Detroit; while, contemporaneously with Miller's movement, a second and small detachment should silently and rapidly descend the river to the neighborhood of Malden, and thence proceed to assail and carry the fort. That both parts of this plan (had it been adopted) would have entirely succeeded, there cannot now be a doubt; since, with the corps he had, Miller defeated Muir at the head of the whole British, Canadian and Indian force; and since, from the evening of the 7th to the 9th of August, fort Malden (ordinarily requiring the defence of seven hun-

dred men) was left to the custody of a *sergeant's guard !*[1]

V. Notwithstanding these repeated blunders of the American General, fortune did not yet entirely abandon him ; and on the 16th of August, presented a new occasion, requiring on his part only the vulgar quality of defensive courage, to have completely baffled the designs of Brock and re-established his own ascendency on the Detroit. This occasion was found in the indiscretion of his adversary ; who, on crossing the river with a force smaller than that it was his purpose to assail, had hastily determined to risk the storm of a fortification, strong in itself, abundantly supplied and sufficiently garrisoned. If it be thought extraordinary, that under these circumstances, General Brock should have forgotten all the dissuasives from attack furnished by history, it was certainly still less to be expected, that General Hull should have forgotten all the motives for defence furnished by the same source. Such, however, was the fact ; the timidity of the one kept pace with the temerity of the other ; and at last, in an agony of terror, which cunning could no longer dissemble and which history is ashamed to describe, the fort, army and territory were surrendered without pulling a trigger !

The errors which yet remain to be noticed are attributable to the administration—a fact, furnish-

1 Lieutenant Forbish's testimony.

ing no reason why they should be treated with more ceremony than others, with which they were associated. They will be sufficiently indicated by the following remarks.

VI. The nation which meditates the invasion of a neighboring territory, should be careful to employ the last moments of peace, in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the force it may have to encounter. Another duty, not less obvious and imperative than the preceding, will be that of speedily withdrawing or promptly reinforcing its own remote and isolated posts. If there be any thing in the local position of these, that may render their retention important to the progress or issue of the war, the latter course should be pursued—but if on the contrary, it will have no material bearing on either, the garrisons should be speedily recalled and the posts abandoned, while this can be done successfully and safely. Yet were both these important duties neglected. When Hull arrived at Detroit, he was ignorant alike of *the condition of Malden and the number of its garrison.* So also the commandant of Michilimackinac continued to be *uninformed of even the declaration of war*, until after the investment and surrender of his post; while the garrison of fort Dearborn, still more remote, remained *unrecalled*, until the middle of August, when *retreat had become wholly impracticable.*

VII. We have seen that General Hull *lost his own baggage and that of the army, the whole of his hospital stores and intrenching tools, and sixty men*, in

consequence of the ill-judged and tardy manner employed in transmitting to him the declaration of war. A fact, so extraordinary in itself, and so productive of injury to the public, calls for more development than has yet been given to it. It will be remembered that a declaration of war was autho rized on the 18th of June, 1812. On this day, Secretary Eustis wrote two letters to General Hull. In one of these, no mention was made of this important event; in the other, it was distinctly and officially announced. The former of the two, was carefully made up and expedited by a special messenger, who arrived in the General's camp on the 24th of June; while the latter, was committed to the public mail as far as Cleveland; and thence, through a wilderness of one hundred miles, to such conveyance, "as *accident might supply.*" The result was, that the declaration did not reach its destination until the 2d of July, *two days after it had been received by the enemy at Malden.* On this occasion, the British government was better served: Provost received notice of it on the 24th of June, at Quebec; Brock, on the 26th, at Newark; St. George, on the 30th, at Malden; and Roberts on the 8th of July, at St. Josephs. But a fact, still more extraordinary than the celerity of these transmissions is, that the information thus rapidly forwarded to *Malden* and *St. Josephs*, was received *under envelopes, franked by the Secretary of the American Treasury.*[1]

[1] Official Report of Captain Hanks to the commanding General at Detroit, see also Appendix, No. 6.

VIII. Few things are more self-evident, than that so long as the enemy had a fleet on Lake Erie and we had none, Malden could be supplied and reinforced by the British posts below; and that if hardly pressed, its garrison could be safely withdrawn to one or other of these posts. To meet these contingencies, and to protect Hull's long line of provisionment from interruption,[1] two suggestions were made—the one, to construct a navy competent to the command of the lake;[2] the other, to assemble on the Niagara a military force, which by menacing the safety of forts Erie and George, would prevent Brock from making detachments to Malden. In choosing between these alternatives, the government did not hesitate—they promptly rejected the former, and adopted the latter; but, unfortunately, without taking measures sufficiently decided for giving it execution. When, accordingly, Hull perceived that the enemy's force at Malden was increased and increasing, he called aloud on the militia officer commanding at Buffalo for support—who announced in reply, that "*he had none to give, direct or indirect.*" So also, when the Secretary of War ordered Major-General Dearborn to make *speedy movements on the British posts in his front*, the General answered—that "*till then, he had not known that the troops on the Niagara made part of his command.*"[3]

1 The line extended two hundred miles through a desert, and in a great part of its length was skirted by the lake, commanded by the British ships.

2 Hull's Memoirs; testimony of Mr. Eustis on Hull's trial.

3 Appendix No. 7.

IX. The principal advantage accruing to a nation, which is the first to declare war, is that of selecting its *time* and *point of attack*, and of concentrating on the latter, such force as will ensure victory, and the moral effect produced by it on both belligerents. Of this truth, so obvious in itself, the American cabinet of 1812, do not appear to have been apprised—for when (according to General P. B. Porter's testimony) Hull required *three* thousand men, as the least number with which all the objects of the campaign could be successfully prosecuted; the government replied, that "more than *two thousand* could not be given."[1]

Whether this decision be examined in relation to the capacity of the nation; to the variety and importance of the services to be performed; or to the means necessary to their execution, nothing could have been more erroneous. To those who know any thing of the character or numbers of the western population, or of their peculiar interests and feelings at that period and on this subject, we need but remark, (and without any fear of contradiction,) that five thousand men could have been obtained as promptly as two thousand. When again it is recollected, that the defence of our western posts and territory; the prevention of a war with the savages; the capture of Malden; the command of Lake Erie, and the means of a prompt co-operation with the troops destined to act on the Niagara, formed the objects of the campaign—who can for a moment doubt

1 Hull's trial; General P. B. Porter's testimony.

their magnitude or interest? And lastly, though it be readily admitted, and we hope sufficiently proved, that the force given to General Hull was competent to the capture of Malden and the preservation of Detroit, still it by no means follows, that it was commensurate with all the objects of the expedition; since among these were to be found, "the capture or destruction of the British fleet,"[1] an object which, in the absence of all naval means, could only be effected by such an augmentation of the army, as would have entirely excluded that arm from the shores of the lake.

Had the government taken this short and plain view of the subject, and invited Governor Shelby of Kentucky, or Governor Meigs of Ohio, to follow in Hull's track, with two thousand gun-men and Winchester's brigade of infantry, how different would have been the issue of the campaign? Unfortunately, we began by weighing military expeditions in gold scales; and the experiment proved (as it will never fail to do) that parsimony, always paltry, in *war* is the most lavish and criminal prodigality.

[1] President's Message of November 4th, 1812.

CHAPTER III.

Militia Operations in the West.—Harrison's Autumnal and Winter Campaigns.

Of the disasters detailed in the preceding chapter, those of most early occurrence—the fall of Michilimackinac, the occlusion of supplies from Ohio, the defeat of Van Horne, and the retreat of the army from Canada, were more productive of surprise than alarm: all wondered at the events which had so unexpectedly taken place; but few, if any, ascribed them to their true cause, or foresaw either the extent of the evil, or the means most proper for remedying it. The executive confidence in the competency of the commander, continued to be unshaken; and no doubts were entertained, but that with the aid of a prompt reinforcement and a vigorous diversion on the Niagara, he would be able to hold what he possessed, recover what he had lost, and eventually accomplish all the objects of the expedition.

With these views of the subject, orders were issued for immediately organizing two corps in the west; one of which, to consist of sixteen hundred volunteers and four hundred regular troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Winchester, was destined to the support of Hull; the other, to be com-

posed of three regiments of Kentucky militia, subjected to the orders of Brigadier-General Harrison, was assigned to the defence of Indiana and Illinois; while the army of the north, under the command of Major-General Dearborn, was directed to hold itself in readiness, for an immediate attack upon one or more, of the British positions in its front.[1]

Of these orders, the first, so far as regarded the assembling of the troops, was promptly executed; and the corps assigned to Winchester, actually in motion for the Ohio frontier, when on the 24th of August, the appalling information was received, that Detroit, the territory, and the army, had been already surrendered to the enemy. Unexpected calamities are in general bad counsellors, and often hurry those disposed to listen to them, into the adoption of measures little calculated to promote their own objects. On the present occasion, the government, adhering to its policy of carrying the war into Canada, without apparently perceiving the want, and certainly without providing the aid, of any co-operating naval force, now hastily determined to put its trust in an unlimited employment of militia and a lavish expenditure of money—a plan which, though

1 On the 1st of August, Mr. Eustis gave notice to General Dearborn of the contents of a letter received from General Hull, of July 19th, by express, in consequence of which he subjoins the following order:—"You will make a diversion in his (General Hull's) favor at Niagara and at Kingston, as soon as may be practicable, and by such other operations as may be within your control." See vol. 6th, p. 199, Records of the War Department. These orders, substantially, were repeated in several subsequent communications.

far short of its objects, was, notwithstanding, well adapted to the feelings, wants, and calculations of the west.

The sedative effect produced by the war on the value of ordinary labor and its products; the comparatively ample compensation given for military service; the political excitement of the times, and the increased impulse given to this by the late disaster at Detroit, operating conjointly on an abundant, unoccupied, and high-spirited population, could not fail to bring together a large mass of ill-equipped and undisciplined men, who believing in the infallibility of western courage and rifles, sought no auxiliary in fulfilling the intentions of government, within even the short period of their own engagements.[1] The force, which under these influences was in a few weeks assembled at different points of the frontier, exceeded ten thousand combatants;[2] of which, that portion originally destined to the support of Hull, and best prepared for immediate service, was detached to fort Wayne—a small post on the Miami of the Lake, already sustaining an Indian investment, and still farther menaced by a British detachment, advancing under the command of Major Muir. But of these enemies, the former disappeared on the approach of the American column, without making any resistance; and the latter, not showing more disposition to hazard a contest, hastily withdrew to its boats and returned to Malden. It was now deemed

1 McAffee. 2 Idem.

proper, as well for the purpose of giving occupation to the troops, as for that of preventing any new attempt on the fort, to direct a few detachments against such of the Indian villages as had most contributed to the late investing party; but though made with sufficient zeal and activity, the experiment failed in producing any effect more important than the destruction of a few cabins and the corn growing around them.

While these circumstances were taking place in the northern section of the district, others, of a mixed character, good and bad, grave and ludicrous, were occurring in the southern. Early in September, a small band of savages, of the Potowatamie and Winebago tribes, appeared at fort Harrison; and feigning weariness and hunger, besought for the night the shelter and hospitality of the fort. But on finding that Captain Taylor, the commanding officer, gave no credit to their story, and even suspected their hostility, they threw off the mask, and collecting their associates, (who had hitherto lain concealed in the neighboring thickets,) united in a bold and persevering attack on the fort. During the progress of this, the assailants found means to burn a blockhouse, (which made part of the work,) and thus opened to themselves a new passage to the interior; but, though making many strenuous efforts to profit by this advantage, they failed in all, and were ultimately repulsed with considerable loss. To make up in some degree for this disappointment, the party repaired to a frontier settlement on the Pigeon's

Roost, where they killed or captured twenty-one of the inhabitants.

This last incident would, perhaps, have been alone sufficient to have called forth a new display of Kentucky population and patriotism; but to its authority was superadded that of a requisition from General Harrison for a force, which, with the three regiments already detached to Vincennes, would be competent not merely to the defence of Indiana and Illinois, but to the punishment of such Indian tribes as were most likely to disturb and molest any neighboring territory.[1] Governor Shelby, upon whom the requisition was made, hastened to give it execution, and with not more of attention, than the General himself had employed, in proportioning the quantum of force to the nature and exigencies of the service. When, therefore, we consider that the invitation to the field was without limitation as to numbers; that the causes requiring it were not a little exaggerated,[2] and that the policy, no less than the patriotism of the state, induced every man to become a soldier, we can no longer wonder that the Governor's proclamation should, within twenty days, have assembled an army of four thousand men, equipped for service, and all, Tartar-like, mounted on horseback.

The command of this formidable array was committed to Major-General Hopkins of the militia, who reached fort Harrison about the 10th of October. Finding nothing nearer to his own frontier to

1 McAffee.

2 Harrison's letter to Shelby, 5th Sept. 1812; McAffee, p. 156.

give him occupation, he on the 14th, began his march for the Indian villages on the Wabash and Illinois. Much of the ground he had to traverse was of the prairie character, (scantily supplied with water and entirely destitute of wood,) but abounding in tall, coarse grass. The effect of this redundant herbage on the army resembled enchantment; every step they took upon it, abated alike their ardor and intelligence; the guides lost their way; the General his authority, and the troops their submission; and on the fourth day after leaving fort Harrison (discovering that the prairie was on fire, and mistaking this for a *ruse* of the enemy) this "press of western chivalry" turned their backs on the war, and withdrew *en masse* to Kentucky.

About the same time, and in concert with the preceding movement, an expedition on a smaller scale, but of more successful character, was instituted by Governor Edwards of the Illinois Territory, and conducted by Colonel Russell of the rangers. Its object was an Indian town at the head-waters of Lake Peoria, which, by a rapid and well-directed march, the detachment was able to surprise and destroy. On the first alarm, the savages betook themselves to a neighboring swamp, whither they were hotly pursued and speedily routed—leaving behind them twenty dead bodies, a considerable store of corn, and sixty horses laden with baggage.

A second expedition under the direction of General Hopkins, and made for the laudable purpose of fulfilling the intentions and wiping out the disgrace

of the first, was now organized at fort Harrison. The corps employed on this occasion, was composed of a few regular troops, about fifty mounted gunmen, and the three regiments of Kentucky militia, detached under the first requisition; who, directing their march along the eastern bank of the Wabash, in eight days reached their first object, and destroyed in succession three of the principal Indian villages, with the loss of eighteen of their own corps; who, by some negligence or misdirection in their march, fell into an ambuscade of the enemy. Admonished alike by this disaster, the nakedness of the troops, an unfavorable change in the weather, and the impossibility of bringing the savages to a general action, the commanding officer thought it advisable to return to Vincennes.

Such was the state of things on the western frontier, when the government, having decided the rival pretensions of Generals Winchester and Harrison, vested in the latter the command of the army and district;[1] with orders sufficiently definite as to

[1] The intrigue by which this outrage on military rules and the laws of Kentucky was accomplished, will be found in McAffee, pp. 107—8, and is substantially as follows: Governor Scott had a desire to commission Harrison as a *Major-General* of the Kentucky militia, with a view of thus enabling him to supersede Winchester in the command; but to the honest and unsophisticated mind of Scott, the arrangement appeared impossible, inasmuch as by the laws of Kentucky, officers of militia must be inhabitants of the state—a qualification which did not apply to General Harrison. To get over these scruples of conscience on the part of the Governor, a few casuists were employed to change his opinions, and in this they at last succeeded. For the General's own agency in the business, see Appendix, No. 6.

the objects to be pursued, but entirely discretionary as to the time and mode of pursuing them. Availing himself of the latitude given by this new and increased authority, the General hastened to remodel his plan of campaign, and promptly rejecting his first project of recapturing Detroit by a *coup de main*,[1] substituted for it a march by three separate and distant routes across the swampy and uninhabited region in his front, to the Rapids of the Miami—whence, "after accumulating *one million of rations for the troops*, and *forage for two thousand horses and oxen*,[2] he proposed marching rapidly on Brownstown, crossing the river Detroit, and *before the commencement of winter, taking Malden and recapturing the Michigan Territory*."

1 While acting in a subordinate capacity to Winchester, the General had no doubt of being able, with a few mounted men, to retake Detroit by a *coup de main*, and was careful so to inform the government.—*McAffee*, p. 166. When, however, by means of this and other representations, having the same object, he became commanding officer of the army and district, his views suddenly changed; the rapid and certain process by a *coup de main* was abandoned as hopeless, (*McAffee*, p. 141,) and one, more systematic and imposing, substituted for it—requiring as a preliminary to any direct movement on Malden or Detroit, an accumulation at the Rapids of twelve months' forage and provisions, with carts, wagons, &c., necessary to transport them from the place of deposit to the scene of action—or, in other words, the entire purchase of all surplus corn, flour and fodder, oxen, horses, carts, wagons, &c., to be found within the State of Ohio; and this at a time, (22d of October,) when he says of the roads—"to get supplies forward through a swampy wilderness of near two hundred miles, in wagons, or on pack-horses, which are to carry their own provisions, is absolutely impossible."

2 McAffee, p. 167.

In prosecution of this plan, the army was divided into three columns; that of the left, composed of Kentucky militia and the seventeenth United States regiment, (commanded by Brigadier-General Winchester) was assigned to the route of the St. Mary; the central column, consisting of twelve hundred Ohio militia and eight hundred mounted infantry, commanded by Brigadier-General Tupper, to that of fort McArthur; while the column of the right, made up, or intended to be made up, (for all its elementary parts had not yet arrived) of three brigades of militia from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio, led by General Harrison in person, was to approach its object by the two Sandusky's.

Under these arrangements, the General had hopes on the 4th of October, that "within a fortnight from that date" he would be able to accumulate at the Rapids the necessary supply of food and forage, assemble the several parts of the army and begin his intended movement on Brownstown. But these hopes, which had little if any thing to justify them, were not fated to be of long duration; as on the very day on which they were expressed, the column of the left was found to be on the verge of mutiny and desertion. This conduct in a corps, which had hitherto showed only zeal in forwarding the objects of the expedition, was produced by the increased coldness of the weather and the miserable condition of their clothing; by a state of the roads, rendering them nearly impassable; by a deficiency of food, not easily to be accounted for; and by a discovery

(in which they but anticipated their commander) that his project of an autumnal campaign was wholly impracticable.[1] In this dilemma, the General found it prudent to employ persuasion rather than authority, and invoking the aid of Colonel Allen's eloquence in addition to his own, prevailed upon the column to prolong its stay and its efforts.

With Brigadier-General Tupper and the mounted men of the central column, he was less fortunate. Learning while at Winchester's cantonment that a party of Indians occupied the Rapids, (his intended point of concentration,) he ordered Tupper with eight hundred mounted men to advance and dislodge them, but this order, though reinforced by another from Winchester, was from time to time scandalously evaded—when the troops losing all confidence in their General and the General in the troops, they mutually agreed to withdraw to Urbanna.

To this useless band succeeded another, fortunately possessing a leader of more efficient character. Colonel Allen Trimble having arrived at St. Mary with a corps of five hundred mounted infantry, was directed to march to the defence of fort Wayne, (now menaced with a second investment by the Indians,) and thence to the Potowatomie villages, on the sources of the river St. Joseph. No enemy being found at the fort, the Colonel hastened to execute the remaining and secondary part of the

[1] McAffee, p. 146. 183—4.

expedition, when one half of the corps, in the exercise of its volunteer rights, refused to go farther. The Colonel, being thus left to choose between an abandonment of his purpose, or an attempt to execute it with half the force originally assigned to the enterprise, did not hesitate to adopt the latter; and supplying the want of numbers by vigilance and activity, was soon able to reach and destroy the two villages indicated in his orders.

It was now the 28th of October. The fortnight which, according to General Harrison's calculations, was to have done much, had passed away without doing any thing; the rainy season had already began; land transportation, always difficult, was now impracticable; and idleness, nakedness and hunger were working their ordinary effects on the health, habits and temper of the troops; rendering them sick, and sour, and restless—a state of things which the General could no longer conceal from himself, and which brought him, at last, to the reluctant confession, that the project of an *autumnal campaign* must be abandoned, and a *winter expedition* adopted in its stead. "My present plan," he says, in a letter of the preceding date, to the Secretary of War, "is to occupy Sandusky and accumulate, at that place, as much provision and forage as possible; to be taken from thence in sleds to the river Raisin. For to get supplies forward through a swampy wilderness of nearly two hundred miles extent, in wagons, or on pack-horses carrying their own provender, is impossible. Still the main object may be accomplished

by using the frozen margin of the lake, if the troops are provided with warm clothing, and the winter be such as it usually is in this climate."[1]

As, however, many weeks must elapse between the date of this new determination and the actual occurrence of such a condition of weather as could alone render it practicable, it was deemed expedient to employ the interval in destroying such Indian lodgements, temporary and permanent, as from actual force or locality of position, were most likely to disturb the left wing of the army, or the transportation of supplies going on under its protection. Of these lodgements, one had recently been made at the foot of the Rapids; ostensibly for the purpose of gathering and transporting corn, but, as was suspected, secretly destined to co-operate with the Miamis in some military enterprise on our frontier posts and convoys. To break up this party became, therefore, a matter of moment; and to effect it, General Tupper, whose feats in arms we have already commemorated, was detached, early in November, at the head of six hundred and fifty Ohio militia and a few mounted rangers. On approaching his object, he prudently employed a reconnoitring party to ascertain whether any changes had taken place in the force or position of the enemy? And being as-

[1] It was by thus qualifying his real opinions, that he carried the cabinet along with him in his attempts to execute his absurd projects. They at last saw, or thought they saw, in these contradictory statements, a desire on the part of the General, to escape responsibility, and a design to induce them to incur it.

sured, on the return of the party, that the allies, red and white, besides continuing where they had been, and without any material increase of numbers, were "now indulging themselves in singing and dancing," he manfully determined to cross the Miami and take part in the revel; but defeated in this by the depth of the water and strength of the current, instead of ascending the river and seeking a fording place of safer and quieter character, (which might have been readily found,) he followed the stream downward, and placing himself directly in front of the British and Indian camp, sufficiently announced, not only his arrival, but his intention also of shifting from himself and imposing on his enemy, both the trouble and danger of crossing the river. In this last calculation, however, he entirely lost sight of the anti-chivalrous character of Indian warfare. The first care of the red man of the forest is to take care of himself; and the second, so to measure the strength and temper of his antagonist as will enable him to judge, not merely on what side of a stream he shall fight, but whether he shall fight on either side of it. With this view, on the present occasion, after sending their women and children to the woods, and their allies to their boats, the Indians made a show of engaging at long shot; while a few mounted parties despatched across the Miami, soon found out the flanks and rear of their adversary, and sufficiently indicated their intention—not of fighting a pitched battle, but of harassing his progress when he moved, and disquieting his positions when he became sta-

tionary. As this was a state of things the General had not foreseen, and greatly disliked, he quickly resorted to the only expedient by which he supposed it could be remedied; and accordingly, early in the night of the 15th, began a rapid retreat to fort McArthur.[1]

While Tupper was making this second display of military talent, another expedition, under better auspices, was preparing at Franklintown. A corps of six hundred mounted men, selected from the army, were placed under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, with orders to march against the Indian villages on the Missisineway. Of these, they reached the most northwardly, at daybreak on the 18th of December, but without having been able to surprise it completely. A portion of the occupants escaped across the river; whilst the remainder, after a short and feeble resistance, surrendered to the assailants. No time was lost in pursuing this advantage, and three other villages were visited and destroyed by the party.

The troops, having been now thirty-six hours on horseback, and having suffered much from cold, hunger, and fatigue, encamped for the night on the bank of the river, where they remained undisturbed till near daylight; when the outposts were furiously driven in, and the camp sharply and generally assailed, but without producing the smallest ill-effect on its spirit and order. At the dawn of

1 McAffee, p. 171.

day, when a proper direction could be given to the movement, both flanks of the Indian line were rapidly turned, and its rear charged and routed. The general result of the expedition, however, was not flattering: twenty-three Indians were killed, forty-two taken, and four out of five villages, destroyed;[1] while on our side, ten men were killed, forty-eight wounded, and nearly two hundred rendered unfit for service, by disease and frost-bitten hands and feet.

These preliminary steps taken, and the column of the right with the park of artillery arrived at Sandusky, orders were now given to General Winchester, who had hitherto occupied a position near the mouth of the Au Glaize, to push forward to the Rapids; clear the front and flanks of that post of hostile parties; construct huts for the better protection of the advancing supplies; and prepare sleds for the intended movement on Malden. Under these orders, the General commenced his march on the 31st of December, at the head of about one thousand effectives; but the roads becoming much obstructed by snow, it was not till the 10th of January, that he reached the point to which he was destined. Finding on his arrival no traces of an enemy, excepting a single and small Indian encampment, (the occupants of which were promptly pursued and routed,) he now directed his attention to the preparatory labors already indicated —when on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of the month,

[1] The fifth, and unapproached village, contained the principal Indian force.

expresses were received from the inhabitants of Frenchtown, representing the many and aggravated horrors of their situation, and entreating the interposition of the American arms. "The British," they said, "no longer conceal their intention of carrying off our grain and our cattle; and the savages menace us with the destruction of our dwellings, and the massacre or captivity of our persons. Without your aid, we have no hope; with it, we may be able to defend ourselves, our wives, and our children; but this aid, to be effectual, must be prompt. The present number of the enemy among us, does not exceed three hundred combatants—a force that will be soon and considerably augmented; after which, your interposition would be useless, and our ruin complete."

An appeal like this, addressed to men of high and liberal views, could not be made in vain. The warm-hearted and gallant Allen, became its ready and zealous advocate. To his quick and intelligent mind, the policy it invoked appeared to be sustained by every motive that ought to govern in the case—sympathy for the afflicted; duty to fellow-citizens, and a correct interpretation of military maxims. "Can we," he said, "turn a deaf ear to the cries of men, women and children, about to perish under the scalping-knife and tomahawk of the savage? Can we regard with indifference the perils of those whose attachments to the United States have alone rendered them obnoxious to the calamities they dread? Can it be possible, that the wisdom of beating an enemy in detail, can either escape our notice or require argu-

ments to obtain our approbation? For what purpose are we here, but to seek, to find, and to fight this very enemy? And shall we permit his advanced guard to perpetrate all the mischief it meditates, and return in safety to its main body? Is it by such conduct that we shall wipe out the disgrace of Hull's surrender, or fulfil the promises made to our friends when, leaving our own firesides, we took upon us the temporary profession of arms? And if not, by what considerations is it recommended? Will it be said, that the force of the hostile detachment is too great to be successfully combated, or in other words, that a thousand freemen are unequal to a contest with three hundred savages and slaves? The supposition is degrading, and merits not the ceremony of a refutation. Will it, on the other hand, be alleged, that it is too inconsiderable to be noticed? This also would be an error—for besides, that victory, on any scale, is not without its moral effects on both belligerents, an abstraction of three hundred men from the present force of the enemy, would materially diminish his power, and give us a decided ascendency in prosecuting what remains of the campaign. Again: will it be said, (and, if I mistake not, it has been said,) that so near an approach to the den of the Lion would be imprudent? To this I reply, that danger is inseparable from war, and that the soldier who goes upon the plan of running no risk, is necessarily self-condemned to inaction and disgrace; whereas he who dares boldly, may do much. Since then, activity and enterprise are the elements of

victory, let us beware of calculating dangers too nicely—this was the fault and ruin of Hull, and cannot surely be thought worthy of our imitation. If the Lion, as he has been called, moves at all, he will do so in one of two ways:—he will either send a second detachment to support the first, in which case, both may be separately beaten,—or he will put his whole force in motion, and thus furnish us with a sufficient excuse for falling back upon our own army, which cannot now be far in the rear. From this brief and general view of the subject, I am led to conclude, that we should hasten our march to Frenchtown; attack, and if possible, destroy the advanced corps of the enemy; give protection to a meritorious and suffering people, and obtain the control of resources, of which we are much in want, and which otherwise will go to sustain the war against us."

The effects of this address were not equivocal—the General no longer hesitated, and the council, not having many or important doubts to remove,[1] it was speedily determined that "a detachment should be sent, as expeditiously as possible, to Frenchtown." A corps was organized accordingly, and beginning its march on the 17th, it was able at three o'clock, P. M. of the 18th, to present itself in front of the town, when the fire of the British artil-

1 Colonel Lewis and Major Madison stated, that according to their recollection, the opinion of the council of war was unanimous for proceeding to Frenchtown.

lery opened upon it. The measures taken by Colonel Lewis, the commander of the American detachment, were well-timed and well-judged. Without the smallest unnecessary delay, he ordered the two battalions of Graves and Madison, (preceded by Ballard's light infantry,) to cross the river[1] and drive the British and their allies from the houses and picket fences, of which they had hitherto availed themselves; while the remaining battalion, under the command of Colonel Allen, was so posted on the right as to flank any retrograde movement made or attempted by the enemy. The first of these orders was gallantly executed, and in a few minutes, Reynolds, the British commander, was driven from the village and compelled to seek another position. In doing this, he was soon and necessarily brought into contact with Allen's battalion, by which he was vigorously attacked and pursued, until at last, the shelter of a second group of houses and a wood enabled him to renew his defence.

Lewis's conduct under these new circumstances was not less prudent and proper than on the former occasion. Retaining Allen's battalion on the ground it occupied, and which menaced at once the front and left of the enemy's position, he detached those of Graves and Madison to turn his right and rear. The firing which grew out of this manœuvre became the signal for Allen to act; when, under the

1 The river was then covered by a thick and strong ice.

pressure of the two attacks, Reynolds was again routed and compelled to betake himself wholly to the forest. It was here that his Indian auxiliaries found their true *champ de battaille;* for though kept in constant retreat for three miles in succession, they maintained the conflict with great obstinacy, and but yielded at last to the superior force and well-conducted charges of the Kentucky militia. Colonel Lewis now led back his detachment to the town, and hastened to inform General Winchester of the events of the day.

If victory often impairs the faculties of strong and practised minds, what ill-effects may it not produce on those of less power, wholly unacquainted with war as a science? Unfortunately, on the present occasion, its only product was a self-sufficiency, in which every thing approaching the character of military foresight and discretion was forgotten. A council of war, convened on the morning of the 19th, determined "to maintain their new position and wait the arrival of reinforcements," and in this decision, the two Generals, Winchester and Harrison, united, but without sufficiently foreseeing the necessity of rendering more defensible an open village, within stroke of the enemy, and unprotected by a single cannon. Nor was it the effect of the arrival of the former of these commanders to correct or in any degree to qualify, this oversight. On the contrary, the small accession of force brought by him, (not exceeding two hundred and fifty men,) became the cause of an increased security, which

set aside even the most ordinary precautions; as on the night of the 21st, (though informed that the enemy meditated an attack,) the troops were neither kept together, nor was a picket-guard placed on the only road, by which their position could be readily or conveniently approached.[1]

While thus in the American camp nothing was seen, but disregard for themselves, nor any thing heard, but contempt for their enemy, Proctor, the British commander, was fast advancing from Malden, at the head of his whole disposable force, and was even permitted to establish a battery within point-blank shot of the town, without being either disturbed or discovered. Instead, however, of availing himself of this advantage, and making his attack before daybreak, which would have best secured him against Kentucky rifles, and probably effected the complete surprise of his adversary, he waited the approach of dawn, and thus became visible to an out-lying sentinel, who gave the alarm at the moment that the American drums were preparing to beat the reveille. Failing, therefore, to catch his enemy asleep, and forbidden alike by season, weather and want of preparation, from employing siege or investment, he resorted to assault, as the only means he had left for accomplishing his purpose; and with this view, covering his front with artillery and his flanks with Indian marksmen, he began his movements on the town, and had ap-

1 McAffee, p. 302.

proached within musket-shot of the pickets, when he was met by a fire so galling and incessant, as made an immediate retreat necessary.[1]

The left of his attack was more fortunate. In the hasty dispositions made for defence, the detachment of two hundred and fifty men brought by Winchester on the 20th, instead of being posted behind the pickets and held there in reserve, or made to occupy the houses which entirely commanded the approaches to the place, were most preposterously drawn out in line, on the right of the town, and without a *point d'appui*, for either flank. This weak and isolated position could not long escape the notice of the enemy, who hastened to concentrate upon it all his disposable means, Indian and British; and in twenty minutes, threw the American line into a state of confusion, which no possible exertion could restrain, and which soon and necessarily terminated in the capture or slaughter of nearly all the fugitives, including two companies of fifty men each, led from behind the pickets by Colonels Lewis and Allen. Yet with even this decided advantage, Proctor indicated little, if any disposition, to renew the attack on his first object. The experiment he had made on the covered part of the American position, had taught him a lesson of prudence he could not forget. He had lost by it nearly one fourth of his regular force, without having made any serious impression upon either the strength or the spirit of

[1] McAffee, p. 215.

his adversary; and to incur a similar loss by a second attempt, though attended by success, would in effect be exhausting on an advanced corps, the means given him of resisting the main body. Other considerations may be supposed to have increased the weight of this reasoning—the weather was cold, the snow deep, and Harrison's head-quarters already advanced to the Rapids; while his own corps was neither sufficiently provided against the elements nor the enemy. What, therefore, could not be done by a *coup de main*, (a sudden attack and speedy retreat) he should forbear to attempt; and the more so, as he was now encumbered with prisoners, and with the wounded of both armies. The pause in his operations, which took place about this time, may, therefore, be justly ascribed to reasoning like this, which must have been conclusive, and would have sent him back to Malden, satisfied with the advantage he had gained, but that information was now brought that General Winchester was among the number of prisoners made by the Indians. This unexpected incident, suggested to Proctor a new course of proceeding, of which he hastened to make the experiment. Causing the prisoner to be brought before him, he dilated freely on the extent of his force, and still more on that of his humanity. "I have," he said, "the means of setting fire to every house in the village, without risk to myself; and may thus, soon and safely reduce the party, which so unwisely attempts to defend it. But in this case, what will be the fate of the inhabitants, men, women

and children, and of the American militia associated with them? Such of these as may escape the fire of our musketry and cannon, will unavoidably fall under the tomahawks of our allies, whom it will be impossible to restrain in the heat of action. May I never witness such a spectacle! But, need I tell you, that private feelings cannot be indulged at the expense of public duty; and that, however agreeable it would be to me as a *man*, to avoid the employment of means, so terrible in themselves as those I have suggested, yet as an *officer*, I cannot be justified in omitting to do, whatever may be necessary or useful to the King's service. I have, therefore, to submit to you a single and short proposition, containing the only remedy the case admits of, and that is—that in your quality of commanding General, you will immediately surrender to me Frenchtown and the garrison it contains."

To Winchester, the situation of the gallant band, whom Proctor called the garrison of Frenchtown, appeared to be hopeless. He saw no reason to expect any interposition in their favor from the Rapids, and from no other quarter was it possible to obtain any, in time to be useful; yet without a reinforcement, the contest, as he supposed, must be short and unavailing. He had, besides, just witnessed the slaughter or capture of nearly one half of his command; and saw with horror what would probably be the fate of the other, if, as menaced by Proctor, it was deprived of its covering and obliged to combat on the open ground. His decision on Proctor's proposition

was, therefore, soon and humanely taken, and having yielded his assent, he immediately despatched an Aid-decamp to inform Majors Graves and Madison, that "they and their followers had been surrendered prisoners of war, to the arms of his Britannic Majesty."[1]

This annunciation of the unconditional surrender of a corps, which had hitherto triumphed over every attack made upon it, and which yet believed in its capacity of self-defence, could not fail to be ill-received by those to whom it was addressed. Though entertaining no doubts of the purity and benevolence of the General's views in taking this step, they did not scruple to question the validity of any engagement made by him in their behalf, after he had become a prisoner; and the less so, as the agreement actually entered into and communicated, contained no security whatever against Indian or other outrage, in the event of their acceding to it. The determination of Major Madison (whom the disasters of the day had now made commandant of the corps) was therefore judiciously taken.—"We shall run all risks," he said, "of a prolonged resistance, and perish, if such must be our fate, in a free and full use of our arms, unless the British commander will come under a solemn engagement that private property shall in all cases be respected; that the side-arms of officers shall be restored to them on their arrival at Amherstburg; that the wounded shall be promptly

[1] McAffee, p. 215.

and securely transported to that post; and that, until this last provision be complied with, a guard sufficient for their protection shall be assigned to them." These conditions, though altogether such as brave men had a right to demand, and a liberal enemy would have had no hesitation in granting, were for a time resisted by Proctor; but finding that his attempts at either duping or intimidating his adversary were unavailing, and feeling the importance to himself of even a qualified surrender, which should make unnecessary a renewed attack on the town or a longer continuance before it, he at last, after an altercation as little honorable to his manners as to his principles,[1] yielded his objections, and entered into the engagements proposed to him.

What remained of the day was assiduously employed by the enemy in preparing for an immediate retreat, and in actually retreating, as far as Stony Creek. At twelve o'clock, the prisoners (amounting to about six hundred) were put in motion, and in the evening of the 23d, arrived at Amherstburg; where "they were penned up in a small and muddy wood-yard, and exposed throughout the night to a cold and constant rain, without tents or blankets, and with only fire enough to keep them from freezing."[2] The dead, who lay where they had fallen,

1 In detailing the circumstances of this meeting, Major Madison stated to the Secretary of War, that "Proctor's conduct at Frenchtown was as *unmanly*, as at Malden it was *base*"--alluding to his impudent denial, that "any engagements favorable to the prisoners had been entered into by him."

2 McAffee.

in Frenchtown and its neighborhood, were not merely disregarded, but "formally denied the rights of sepulture, and left a prey to the hogs and dogs of the village;"[1] while the wounded, still more unfortunate, were literally abandoned to the mercy of the savages; who, it was tauntingly remarked, "would be found to be excellent surgeons."[2] Soon after sunrise, the day following, instead of the sleighs which Proctor had promised, and which were anxiously expected, came two hundred Indians, hideous as yells and paint could make them; who, after plundering the two houses in which the wounded were collected, set them on fire, and repulsing every attempt of the prisoners at escape, burnt the whole to the ground.[3]

Information of this disaster reached the Rapids at twelve o'clock of the day of its occurrence, and produced effects there, which had no tendency to mitigate the evil. The first intention of the commanding General, (who had arrived at this post early on the morning of the 20th) was to push forward such force as could be speedily assembled, interpose it between the flying troops and their pursuers, and save if possible, the wreck of the American detachment. But being informed at the end of a single hour's march, that the retreating party (when last seen by such of the fugitives as had been able to make good their escape) was reduced to less than forty men, much exhausted by fatigue, and hotly pursued by a body of mounted Indians, he abandoned his purpose, and

1 McAffee. 2 Idem. 3 Idem.

committing the service, originally proposed for himself, to a small detachment, he speedily retreated to the Rapids and immediately assembled a council of war. To the wisdom of this enlightened body, it appeared not merely possible, but highly probable, that Proctor would follow up the blow he had already given, and attack the post they now occupied; or, that leaving this behind him, he would throw himself on the head or flanks of the column of the right and the convoys moving in its rear. From such premises, it was not difficult to come to a conclusion—that the post must be abandoned; its defences, and the stores collected in them, destroyed; and the garrison, amounting to eight or nine hundred men,[1] instantly withdrawn behind Portage river. Orders in conformity with this decision, were speedily given and executed, and with this event, virtually terminated General Harrison's second, or winter campaign; which, unfortunately, having recovered no ground we had lost, nor effaced any disgrace we had suffered, utterly failed in accomplishing its objects; and as matter of history, is only remarkable for a waste of money, time, character and life.

Remarks. Of the many errors which signalize this expedition, the first in date as well as in character, was the plan of campaign, suggested by the government, and pursued by the General; and which differed but little from that prescribed to

1 McAffee, p. 236.

Hull, with respect to route, object and means. It may be concisely described as follows:—"Get together a large mass of militia and volunteers; arm, equip, subsist and march them without loss of time through the wilderness; give protection to the frontier, recapture Detroit, and invade Canada." In thus substantially renewing their first and ill-fated plan, the government entirely overlooked, or disregarded the circumstances which induced and justified the first expedition, and the very important changes wrought in these, by Hull's surrender and other causes, in relation, as well to their own condition, as to that of the enemy.

When on the 1st of June, 1812, Hull began his march to Detroit, we had an Indian war to prevent, which could be best accomplished by augmenting our military means in the neighborhood of the lakes; we had several old-established forts on the frontier, which, from different views, it was deemed important to sustain; we had a young and increasing settlement bordering on a British province, which both justice and policy commanded us to protect; we were yet in a state of peace, which enabled us to carry on our operations without interruption; we had the summer before us, from which to select the moments most propitious for crossing the swampy region, which separated us from our objects; and lastly, we had an organized corps, equipped, supplied and ready for service. Such was the state of things on the 1st of June, when Hull began his march for Detroit. But how changed in all respects was it

by the 30th of September—the day on which Harrison reached the St. Mary, and took command of the army and district? It will be remembered, that at this period, we were at open war with Great Britain; that our frontier settlements and posts had been wrested from us; that the Indian tribes of the west, with few, if any exceptions, had taken part with the enemy; that the rainy season had already commenced, and the roads (always precarious) had become difficult for infantry and nearly impracticable to carts and wagons; that the means of both subsistence and transportation, (beyond contract limits) were yet to be provided; that the artillery, destined for the service and indispensable to it, was not farther advanced than Pittsburg; that several corps of the army were also far in the rear, and that all, whether present or absent, required supplies, reorganization and instruction.

The condition of the enemy had also undergone changes, quite as important as our own, but of a character altogether different. In acquiring Detroit, he had become possessed of a fortress, much more defensible than Malden; and in the general issue of the campaign, had completely re-established the allegiance and services of his militia. In receiving the submission of Michigan, he had acquired the command of such supplies as that territory could furnish, and of as much of the personal labor of its inhabitants, as was necessary to military purposes; and lastly, in securing the attachment of the Indian tribes, he had obtained an ally, of all

others the most important to him, and formidable to us.

That circumstances, thus multiplied and important, all forbidding a prosecution of the prescribed plan of campaign, and all pointing distinctly to the safer, the shorter and more efficient plan of a joint operation of naval and military means, in the spring, were either overlooked or underrated by the cabinet, is not to be doubted; but of this apology, the commanding General has deprived himself by his own written acknowledgments; for in a letter of the 4th of January, 1813, he says, "The experience of a few days, was sufficient to convince me, that the supplies of provision could not be procured for an autumnal advance; and if even this difficulty was removed, another of equal magnitude existed, in the want of artillery."[1] On another occasion, he says, "A suspension of the operations of this army for the winter, without having accomplished the principal objects for which it was embodied, is an event, which has been long looked for by well-informed men, who know the character of the country and recollect, that the army of General Wayne, after a whole summer's preparation, was unable to advance more than seventy miles from the Ohio; and that the prudent caution of President Washington had directed it to be placed in winter quarters, *at the very season when our arrangements were beginning.*"[2]

1 Harrison's official letter of the 4th January, 1813.
2 Letter of the 8th of January, 1813.

On another occasion, he says, "From my knowledge of the cost of transportation, I do believe that the expense, that will be incurred in the course of *six weeks* in the spring, in moving the provisions of the army along the roads leading from the Rapids to Detroit, would build and equip all the vessels necessary to give us the command of the lake;"[1] to which, in a subsequent letter, he adds,—"If a small proportion of the sums that will be expended in the Quartermaster's department, in an active prosecution of the campaign during the winter, was devoted to obtaining the command of Lake Erie, the wishes of the government, in their utmost extent, could be accomplished without difficulty, in the months of April and May. Malden, Detroit, and Mackinaw, would fall in rapid succession."

With such decided convictions of what was wrong, in the plan he was pursuing, and of what would be right, in the measure he suggests as its substitute, we certainly had reason to expect, that the General, possessing as he did, a *carte blanche* for conducting the war, would have instantly abandoned his crusade upon the elements and the treasury; taken a new and better frontier on the eastern side of the swampy region; retained barely troops enough to occupy and defend it during the winter, and dismissed without farther ceremony or hesitation, the mass of his militia to their own firesides. Or, if failing to do this, that he would, at least,

[1] Letter of December 12th, 1812.

have made a prompt and full disclosure of the principal facts connected with the case, and of his own impressions under them, without the smallest admixture of other matter, having a tendency to neutralize their effects and keep up a false confidence in a mode of operating, which he thought so obviously wrong.

Had he pursued either of these courses, he would have acted wisely and deserved well of his country; but unfortunately he pursued neither. The hopeless business of transportation was kept up, not merely until its follies and abuses became apparent to all, but until it had actually ceased to be practicable in any possible way; until two teams had become necessary to carry the forage for a third;[1] until two trips, from one blockhouse to another, were sufficient to destroy a whole brigade of packhorses; until the whole route was marked with the wrecks of carriages and their lading, abandoned by their drivers and given up to destruction; until the creeks and rivers had become as impracticable for boats, as the roads were for carts and wagons; and lastly, (notwithstanding these wasteful and injudicious efforts,) until his advanced corps, though not now exceeding one thousand men, were literally starving in his front, and "compelled to subsist from the 10th to the 22d of December, on bad beef and the boiled roots of the hickory-tree."[2]

1 General Harrison's letter of the 22d December, 1812.

2 McAffee, p. 184, 5.

Nor will the time, or the manner, selected by the General for disclosing his opinions and convictions to the government, be more likely to satisfy an impartial inquirer; for though these, as we have seen, were matured as early as the last of September, or beginning of October, 1812, they were not communicated until the December or January following; and when they did make their appearance, were accompanied by so much that shook their authority and even led to opposite conclusions, that the cabinet, not inexpert at deciphering military diplomacy, and peculiarly shy of incurring any responsibility it could avoid, determined (with perhaps less of patriotism than of prudence) to leave the question of continuing the winter campaign exclusively with the General; who, appearing to hold two opinions on the subject, and being already vested with full authority for deciding between them, would, it was presumed, select that, which under all circumstances, would be the safest and best.[1]

But if Mr. Harrison's conduct was culpable in adhering to a campaign, forbidden alike by political and physical reasons, the course he adopted in prosecuting it, was not less open to censure, in a military view; as in this, he scrupled not to violate the plainest and most important maxims of the art he professed; and, with a uniformity, indicating either an entire ignorance of their existence, or an utter contempt for their authority. Of these maxims, we

[1] McAffee, p. 190.

subjoin the following, with a few brief remarks, applying them to the cases to which we refer.

1st. "Of all military operations, winter campaigns are the most to be condemned; because, most destructive to health, temper, habiliments and equipments. The best troops cannot long sustain them." Yet did General Harrison institute a winter campaign, though left by the government to choose between that, and one in the spring; and though affecting to consider the former as doubtful, if not dangerous, and the latter as safe, economical and efficient—thus virtually convicting himself of omitting to do what he believed to be right, and of actually doing what he knew to be wrong.

2d. "Every military expedition ought to have a useful and important object; for without such, however successful it may be, it will be fruitless; and of course, a mere waste of time, treasure and life." By the General's letter of the 12th December, 1812, we find, that "the sole object he could certainly promise to accomplish, was the recapture of Detroit," of which he says, "this will be worse than useless, so long as the enemy hold Malden in my rear, and Sandwich in my front; as from the former, he can intercept my supplies; and from the latter, by a shower of shot and shells, compel me to hide the army, for its preservation, in the adjacent swamps." Yet did the General prosecute a campaign, having this worthless object, and such dangerous consequences!

3d. "In offensive war, a single line of operation is to be preferred; as it keeps your forces in a state that best enables you to make, or to repel attacks." The General, in his wisdom, came to a different conclusion; and accordingly, instead of keeping his force together, divided it into three corps.

4th. "Other things being equal, the shortest line of operation is the best, as it most economizes time and money, and offers to your enemy the fewest opportunities for attack or annoyance." Hull's road would have best satisfied the demands of this rule, as its distance to the point of rendezvous was less, and its central position the safest. Yet to this route, was assigned the smallest and least efficient of the three corps.

5th. "Double, or multiplied lines, are only to be employed when your enemy has committed the error of forming similar lines exterior to yours." But as in this case, Proctor committed no such fault, the reason, which could alone justify the General's arrangement, did not exist.

6th. "Double, or multiplied lines, whenever adopted, should be kept within sustaining distance of each other; and to this end, their movements must be simultaneous." This maxim, of the first importance in itself, was wholly disregarded; as the General's lines were so far apart, and so deficient in the ordinary means of communication, as in a military sense to be completely isolated. Nor was the last injunction of the rule better observed than the first; as Winchester's march from Defiance to

the Rapids, was made without any corresponding movement on the part of either Tupper or Harrison.

7th. "Military magazines should invariably be formed in the rear of the army they are intended to supply. If established in its front, they invite attacks from the enemy; and if captured or destroyed, compel an immediate retreat." Instead, however, of acting on this rule, the General's constant effort and greatest care, was to accumulate a million of rations at the Rapids, forty miles in front of his central column, and seventy in front of his right wing, and without other protection than Winchester's corps, now reduced by disease or fatigue to eight or nine hundred combatants, destitute alike of fortifications and artillery, and but fifty miles distant from the enemy's main body.[1]

8th. "On a rigid maintenance of discipline, will depend the safety of the country, the preservation of the army, and the successful prosecution of any enterprise in which it may be employed." This maxim is so universally known, and so generally admitted, as to render unnecessary any new illustration of it. It but remains, therefore, to inquire, how far this *sine qua non* of successful war, was attended to by General Harrison? On beginning his career, this officer unfortunately adopted a theory with regard to western militia which, though it sufficiently answered his purpose of displacing a senior officer and securing to himself the command of the army, operated very mischievously on the public interests.

1 Appendix, No. 7.

In his letter to the War Department, of the 3d of September, 1812, he says, "The backwoodsmen are a singular people. They are susceptible [capable he probably meant] of the most heroic achievements; but they must be taken in their own way. From their affection and attachment, every thing is to be expected; but I will venture to say, that they never did, nor ever will perform any thing brilliant under a stranger." All which, when translated into plain English, amounts to this—the men of the west acknowledge no principle of obedience, stronger or safer, than that of personal attachment to their chief. With them, respect for the government, reverence for the laws, sensibility to the national interest, and even a decent regard to their own characters, avail nothing, unless to all these be superadded, the appointment of a leader "who will take them in their own way"—or in other words, who will gratify their whims, yield to their opinions, overlook their follies, and connive at their faults.

We need hardly remark, that a creed like this, founded on an assumed insubordination on the part of the troops, and an unavoidable compliance on that of the General, is incompatible with every thing deserving the name of discipline; and will never fail to terminate in waste, peculation, disorder, and defeat. Nor were its effects different on the present occasion, as may be seen by recurring to many of the incidents mentioned in the text; and still more distinctly by the following extracts, made from the General's official correspondence; from McAffee's

history of the war in the west;[1] and lastly, from the journal of the late Colonel Wood of the Engineer corps. In a letter of the 12th of December, to the War Department, when assigning the reasons why he did not sooner apprize the government of the impediments that obstructed his progress, he says—"Though I was always sensible that there were great difficulties to be encountered, &c., I did not make sufficient allowance for the imbecility and inexperience of public agents, and the villany of the contractors." In the second letter of the 25th of January, in attempting to explain, why, after censuring Winchester so freely for hazarding Lewis's movement on Frenchtown, he directed that officer to hold the position "*at any rate*," he says, "I am persuaded that nothing but a reiterated order would have produced obedience on the part of the troops."[2] To these sentiments, Wood's Journal is an echo. "In the use of the axe, the mattock, and the spade," says the Engineer, "consisted the chief military knowledge of our army." And again:—speaking of Lewis's expedition and the arrangement of the troops at Frenchtown, he adds—"Not the least regard was paid to defence, order, regularity, or system, in posting the different corps." The historian, however, is still more frank in his confessions, than the General or the Engineer, for according to

[1] Report says, this work was principally founded on documents furnished and revised by the General, with a view to his biography.

[2] If such would have been the effect of a second order, why hesitate to give it?

him,—"*Chaos* and *misconduct* reigned in *every department*, and particularly in that of the *supplies;* in which the best organization and arrangements were necessary to meet the inconceivable difficulties which were to be surmounted in that line. The General had excellent materials for an army in the Kentucky militia; but he had no time to spend in preparing them for the field.[1] The only persons that could be procured as packhorse-drivers were, generally, the most worthless creatures in society; who neither took care of the horses, nor of the goods with which they were intrusted. The horses were of course soon broke down, and many of the packs lost. The teams hired to haul, were also commonly valued so high in coming into service, that the owners were willing to drive them to debility and death, to get the price; and in addition to this, no bills of lading were used, or accounts kept, with the wagoners; of course, each had an opportunity to plunder the public without much risk of detection."[2]

9th. "The General who divides his forces, will be beaten in detail. Officers who have neglected this rule, have generally paid a heavy penalty for doing so. Never, therefore, when acting offensively, make a detachment." In the wisdom and authority of this maxim, the General appeared to concur; as he more than once asserts, that he "made it a rule, never to hazard a detachment that was not in itself sufficiently strong to resist the whole force of the

1 McAffee, p. 141. 2 Idem, p. 184.

enemy." If, however, we test this assertion by facts, we shall soon discover that, in this respect, the General has greatly over-rated his own discretion; and that his actual conduct, so far from observing the rule by which he says he was always governed, was often a direct violation of it.

We have already detailed the progress and fortunes of three detachments, made under his direction, viz., Tupper's two attempts on the Rapids, and that of Campbell against the Missisineway villages; all of which failed to accomplish the objects prescribed to them, either from the deficient number of the party, (as in the case of Campbell) or from the incompetency of the leader, as in that of Tupper. In these instances, therefore, Mr. Harrison was no strict observer of his own rule; nor will his general plan be found to be better conformed to it, than his occasional practice; for, from the moment he divided his army into three corps, and so placed these as to render mutual support impracticable, he virtually converted them into detachments of the worst kind; and of course, subjected them to all the evils incident to subdivision, and himself, to all the censure attaching to so great an error.

10th. "When the head of your line of operation is carried near to your enemy's principal station, it ought to be carefully strengthened; for if it be weak, he will certainly attack and probably destroy it." Such, however, was not the General's opinion; since, far from strengthening Winchester, when approaching the enemy, he would have taken two regiments

from him, and thus reduced the advanced corps to four or five hundred men.[1]

Conduct like this, could only be justified by one or more of the following reasons; that the strength of the whole army was so small, as to forbid an augmentation of any particular part; that the objects to be gained or secured, by re-enforcing the advanced guard, were comparatively unimportant; that the state of the roads and weather, rendered the movement of troops impracticable; or, that the enemy's demonstrations, against other and important parts of the line, not only made a diminution from their strength improper, but justified a recall of a part of the vanguard, for the purpose of strengthening the menaced points. Unfortunately for the General, every fact here assumed, is without a shadow of foundation. The nominal force of the army amounted to ten thousand men; and its effective or disposable force, to six or seven thousand.[2] The object to be attained, (by re-enforcing Winchester) was of the highest importance, as well in itself, as in its consequences; being nothing less than the security of the million of rations, collected and collecting at the Rapids; and without which, in the General's opinion, the expedition must fail. The weather and roads, far from presenting any serious obstruction, were, during twenty days of December, peculiarly favorable;[3]

1 Appendix, No. 7. 2 McAffee's History.

3 Letter from General Harrison to the War Department, of the 4th of January, 1813.

nor was there any thing in the movements of the enemy alarming to other parts of the line. It would be unjust to Mr. Harrison not to add, that he made no attempt to exculpate his conduct on either of these grounds; and had he been equally prudent in forbearing to employ the defence he actually set up, it would have furnished, at least, one occasion for speaking favorably of his discretion. But what can we think of the capacity of a General, who, when the magazines necessary to his own eventual success were in jeopardy, could seriously wish to send back one half of the small corps employed in their protection? And for what purpose? For a pitiful saving, arising from the mere difference between contract and commissariat prices, to be made on the few rations necessary to the subsistence of five or six hundred men![1]

11th. "Every position, taken by an advanced corps in the face of an enemy's army, (if too weak to defend itself) should be promptly abandoned, or speedily re-enforced and fortified." And again:— "No advanced corps should be hazarded, beyond sustaining distance from its own army." Inattention to these two rules, was no doubt the proximate cause of the disaster at Frenchtown, and the subsequent defeat of the campaign. For, who will be hardy enough to assert, that if (after the affair of the 18th) Winchester's corps had been withdrawn, or his posi-

1 McAffee, p. 193.

tion re-enforced and fortified: or lastly, if Harrison had been within sustaining distance of it, the loss and disgrace suffered on the 22d, would not have been avoided?[1]

The first notice of the expedition to Frenchtown, reached the commanding General on the 16th. Its effects on him and the troops he commanded, is thus described by the late Colonel Wood.—"This news, for a moment, paralyzed the army, or at least, the thinking part of it; for no one could imagine that it was possible for him [Winchester] to be guilty of such a hazardous step. General Harrison was astonished at the imprudence and inconsistency of such a measure; which, if carried into execution, could be viewed in no other light, than as attended with certain and inevitable destruction to the left wing. Nor was it difficult for any one to foresee and predict the terrible consequences which were sure to mark the result of a scheme, no less rash in its conception than hazardous in its execution."[2] What then, we ask, under convictions thus full and distinct, of the folly and danger of the enterprise, was the duty of the commanding General? Unquestionably, to prevent the movement if possible; and if not, to recall the detachment without a moment's delay. Yet were both entirely omitted! No order, forbidding the expedition, was given by Har-

[1] Appendix, No. 9, affidavit of Governor Madison, &c.
[2] McAffee's History p. 228.

rison; nor after his arrival at the Rapids on the 20th, did any issue for recalling the troops. On the contrary, he on that day, despatched his Inspector-General with an order to Winchester, "*to hold fast the position at any rate*," or in other words, *at every risk*,—thus making himself entirely responsible, for whatever consequences might follow.

CHAPTER IV.

Operations on the Niagara.—Partial Armistice.—Renewal of hostilities.—Van Rensselaer's attack on Queenstown.—Smyth's invasion of Canada.—Dearborn's Campaign against the British advanced posts on Lake Champlain.

We have already stated, that to lessen the pressure made upon Hull, and to reinstate the ascendency he had lost on the Detroit, Major-General Dearborn, who, in the distribution of service for the year 1812, had been assigned to the command of the northern army, was directed to make such movements against the British posts in his front, as would have the effect of preventing them from re-enforcing the garrison of Malden; or otherwise altering the relations as to strength, which had hitherto existed between Hull and Proctor. But for this service, the Major-General had made no preparation, and appeared to have little relish;[1] as on the very day on which he was thus instructed by the government,

[1] In the General's letter of the 8th of August, we find an apology for this inaction, quite as unjustifiable as the inaction itself—"*Till now*," he says, "I did not consider the Niagara frontier as coming within the limits of my command,"—an assertion directly contradicted by the armistice entered into between him and Provost, and utterly inconsistent with the orders he received, from the 26th of June, to the 1st of August. For these orders, see Appendix, Nos. 10 and 14.

(though sufficiently apprised that detachments had been sent to Malden, and that the situation of Hull was becoming more critical every moment) he did not hesitate to enter into an armistice, by which he completely disabled himself from giving any aid to that officer; either by vigorously assailing the British posts in his front, (now rendered comparatively weak by the absence of Brock and the troops carried with him,) or by extending to him or his army, the benefits of the temporary suspension of hostilities into which he had entered. Nor did this extraordinary policy, on the part of the General, stop here—for though promptly informed, that the arrangement he had made was disapproved by the President, and though peremptorily ordered to put an end to it as speedily as possible, he notwithstanding, continued its operation till the 29th of August; thus enabling Brock, not only to consummate his victory on the Detroit, but to lead back his detachment and re-establish his defences on the Niagara.[1]

It would be a mere waste of time to inquire into the motives of the British commander, in proposing an arrangement, productive of such decided advantage to himself and his army;[2] but why the American General should have consented to it, in the first

1 Brock left York on the 5th of August; arrived at Malden on the 13th; received Hull's surrender on the 15th; returned to his post on the Niagara, on the 25th; visited York on the 27th; and early in October was again at Fort George, playing off his artifices on General Van Rensselaer.

2 For the use made of the armistice by Provost, see Appendix, No. 11.

instance, or continued it in the second, contrary to the express orders of his government? are problems less easily solved. Two official solutions have, however, been given of them, which it is our duty to commemorate; and which, if they do not instruct, can hardly fail to amuse the reader. According to that of the Secretary of War, the General had only mistaken a *private*, for a *public* letter; and presuming that it contained some new and important overture on the subject of peace, hastened to adopt the preliminary measure of an armistice. But however well this solution may account for the General's first step in the business, it entirely fails to explain the second; which must have been made with a full knowledge, that his mountain had not even produced a mouse, and that the despatch to which he had ascribed so much importance, had neither been, nor was intended to be, communicated to the American Government. To supply, therefore, this obvious defect in the Secretary's explanation, we must recur to that of the General, who in a letter of the 27th of August, lets us into the secret that the *ruse* was altogether on his side; that it was now in full operation, and [though it might have deprived him of the power of saving Hull, or of capturing the enemy's posts in his front] was not to be either too much undervalued, or hastily given up; "as he had yet on hand some useful stores which must be forwarded to Sacket's Harbor."[1]

[1] Dearborn's letters of the 9th and 20th of August, 1812.

But the time had now arrived, when something more important than the transportation of puncheons and packages, was expected from an army impatient of longer inactivity; and loudly, if not seriously, demanding an opportunity of meeting the enemy in the field. To this ostensible ardor, the gallant and successful enterprise of Lieutenant Elliot of the navy, (aided by Captain Towson and a detachment of the army) in capturing two armed brigs of the enemy under the guns of Fort Erie, gave a new and increased impulse; approaching so nearly to a state of insubordination on the part of the militia, that motives of personal safety and reputation, no less than those derived from a sense of public duty, made a compliance with it indispensable.[1] Major-General Van Rensselaer, (the local commanding officer) having accordingly made such preparations as he deemed necessary; and having besides assured himself, that "General Brock had again set out for Malden with a considerable re-enforcement,"[2] selected the morning of the 11th of October, for making an attack on Queenstown—a small village on the Canada side of the strait, defended by three batteries, a few artillerists, two companies of the 49th British regiment, and a small detachment of York volunteers.

The corps designated for this service, and principally composed of militia, assembled punctually and in good order, at the place of rendezvous; and with

1 General Van Rensselaer's report of October 14th, 1812.

2 Idem.

the exception of the weather, which was wet and windy, every thing wore a propitious aspect. But when, after long and patiently abiding the pelting of a north-easterly storm, the embarcation was ordered, and the boats called for, none were found to be in readiness; and on inquiry, it was discovered, that the person having charge of them, had not only withdrawn himself, but had carried with him all the oars, necessary for the service. For this unexpected occurrence, there was no remedy but patience; the expedition was accordingly suspended, and the troops sent back to their cantonments.

On the 13th, the project was renewed, without any essential change in relation to its object, or the mode of obtaining it. The former, continued to be the mere expulsion of the enemy from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village, "as a covering for the American army against the inclemency of the weather;"[1] while the latter, proposed only a hardy attack on that portion of the enemy's line of defence, which confronted the American camp at Lewistown. To effect these purposes, a corps of six hundred infantry, composed in equal parts of regular troops and militia, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Van Rensselaer and Christie, were, under cover of the night, to cross the Niagara and carry the batteries by assault; after which, the residue of the army was to follow and occupy the heights and the village.

In prosecution of this plan, the infantry selected for the attack, assembled at the lower, or old French

[1] App. No. 25.

Ferry, near Lewistown, about four o'clock, A. M.; when, notwithstanding the recent admonition on the subject of boats, it was found that those provided for the present occasion, "were insufficient to transport more than three hundred men at a single trip."[1] Two companies of the 13th United States regiment, forming the right of the line, and commanded by Captains Armstrong and Malcom, were the first embarked; and from good fortune and skilful pilotage, were able to reach the opposite shore without either annoyance or discovery. Other and smaller parts of the same regiment followed, and with equal success, until the whole number who had made good their landing, amounted to somewhat more than one hundred combatants; when it was deemed advisable to quit the shore, and take a position on the first or river bank, and *there* await the arrival of the residuary part of the corps. In executing this movement, noises which could not be entirely avoided, reached the British sentinels on the heights, and produced an immediate and general alarm. A random cannonade, on the course of the Ferry and place of American embarcation, followed; while the two flank companies of the 49th and the York militia, forming the garrison of the post, concentrated their fire (from different parts of the hill) on the ground occupied by the American detachment, and with so much effect, that every commissioned officer belonging to it was in a few minutes either killed or wounded.[2] Lieuten-

1 Appendix, No. 12. 2 Idem.

ant-Colonel Van Rensselaer, who had accompanied this party, though among the latter and suffering severely, was yet able to stand; and from a first and hasty consideration of the case, directed the men to withdraw, and shelter themselves under the bank; but soon perceiving that a position of this kind was not less dangerous than the former, and wholly inefficient as regarded the enemy, he hastened to issue the wiser and more military order, that "all such as could move, should immediately mount the hill and storm the batteries." Captains Ogilvie and Wool of the 13th, (the former of whom had about this time crossed the river,) promptly undertook the execution of this order, and ascending the heights, turned the British position, seized the battery,[1] and drove the covering party (composed of the two flank companies of the 49th) into a strong stone building near the water's edge. From this fortress, the companies soon after, made two or more vigorous, but unsuccessful efforts, to recover the ground they had lost; in the last of which, the gallant Brock was fated to fall:—a circumstance which, for the moment, gave the American party full and undisturbed possession of the heights of Queenstown.

During the pause that now followed in the combat, several attempts were made to carry over from the American camp, supplies necessary to the further prosecution of the general plan; but so few and insufficient were the means provided for the purpose,

1 This battery was a redan,—open in the rear, by which the assailants entered.

and so disorderly the employment of such as did exist, that the effects expected from them were very inadequately produced. Of artillery, but one gun could be brought to the west side of the river; of ammunition, but a small quantity; and of entrenching tools, all were forgotten and left at the place of embarcation. Nor was the transportation of the army, more successful than that of the supplies. Two detachments of the 6th, 13th and 23d regiments of infantry, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Christie and Major Mullany, found means to cross,[1] and were soon followed by Brigadier-General Wadsworth and a small battalion of militia; but the mass of this latter description of force was immoveable. Neither entreaty nor threats—neither arguments nor ridicule availed any thing. They had seen enough of war, to satisfy them that it made no part of their special calling; and at last, not disdaining to employ the mask, invented by faction to cover cowardice or treason, fifteen hundred able-bodied men, well armed and equipped, who a week before boasted loudly of patriotism and prowess, were now found openly pleading *constitutional scruples*, in justification of disobedience to the lawful authority of their chief!

While this degrading scene was going forward on the eastern bank of the river, occurrences no less interesting, but of a character somewhat different, were taking place on the western. Between two and three o'clock, P. M., a scattering fire was heard on the southern side of the heights, produced by an Indian

[1] Appendix, No. 12.

attack made on a small party of straggling militia; who being completely surprised, fled in great confusion, and carrying their panic along with them, threatened to extend the infection to other corps. It was at this critical moment that Lieutenant-Colonel Scott of the second regiment of artillery, placing himself at the head of a few platoons of regular troops, charged the savages with a gallantry which soon checked, and at length drove them into a neighboring wood; where the combat became nearly stationary, and a mere trial of skill at sharp-shooting. Perceiving that a *champ de battaille* like this, secured to the Indians all the advantages of their habitual and peculiar mode of fighting; while to his own troops it produced effects directly the reverse, the Lieutenant-Colonel prudently withdrew his party to the open ground; and there took a position which, though it did not entirely put an end to the attack, made it too inefficient, longer to disturb the order of the American line.

A discovery was, however, soon made, that the savages were not the only enemy the invading corps would have to contend with. From the heights of Queenstown, in the distance eastward, was now seen advancing a column of artillery and infantry. Its approach, though slow and circumspect, was steady and unremitting; and of its character and objects there could be no doubts. About three o'clock, P. M., General Sheafe, the successor of Brock and leader of the column, after turning the village and throwing into it a detachment competent to its defence,

presented himself and a force of eight hundred regulars, militia and Indians, in front of the American line—now reduced to less than three hundred combatants, and sustained but by a single piece of artil lery, badly supplied with ammunition. In this state of things, a note was received from General Van Rensselaer, advising an immediate retreat, and promising, on his part, the utmost exertion in furnishing the necessary boats and a covering fire, during the passage of the river; but, at the same time, leaving to Wadsworth (the senior officer on the field) entire liberty to follow the dictates of his own judgment on the occasion. This note was immediately communicated to the commandants of the different corps, and their opinions on the subject requested; but without producing a decision, either for or against, the proposed measure. The British commander in the meantime continued to manœuvre from right to left, and from left to right; countermarching nearly the whole length of the American line twice, as if determined to count every man in the ranks, and to make himself familiar with every foot of the position, before he hazarded an attack. This deliberation on his part gave time for renewed councils on that of his adversary; and a second consultation being held, a determination was at last taken to try the experiment of a retreat, as recommended by General Van Rensselaer.

To have executed successfully, a purpose of this kind, in the face of an enemy so much more formidable than themselves, in numbers, discipline and

variety of arms, would have been no easy task for soldiers the most practised, and officers the most skilful; but was perfectly hopeless, when required from American levies, who had seen only an imperfect service of three or four months. The result was such as might have been, and probably was anticipated by the reflecting portion of the corps; the first step taken in retreat, produced a movement on the part of the enemy, which at once converted the march into a route; and (superadded to the fact, that not a boat was found on the shore ready to receive them) made necessary an immediate and unconditional surrender.

General Van Rensselaer, disgusted with the conduct of the militia, and perhaps not entirely satisfied with his own, withdrew from service, about the 18th of October; when the command of the Niagara or central army, as it was now called, devolved on Brigadier-General Smyth; an officer, from whose patriotic and professional pretensions, the multitude had drawn many favorable conclusions. Nor was the estimate made of his military character by the government, more correct; as it took for granted, a temperament, bold, ardent and enterprising, and requiring only restriction to render it useful. In the orders given for the regulation of his conduct, he was accordingly forbidden to make any new attempt at invasion, with a force "less than three thousand combatants, or with means of transportation (across the Niagara) insufficient to carry over simultaneously the whole of that number."

The interval between the 26th of October and 27th of November, was usefully employed in getting together and preparing the necessary number of boats, and such increase of physical force, as would enable the new commander entirely to fulfil the cautious policy prescribed to him by the government. Having at the last of these dates, sufficiently secured both objects, as he believed, he issued an order, that the army should assemble early on the 28th, at Black Rock, for the purpose of entering on the projected invasion. Nor was there any thing in the state of the weather, or of the river, or in the force and condition of the enemy, seriously to obstruct the execution of this design. The width of the Niagara from Black Rock to the Canada shore, does not exceed a mile—a distance ordinarily passed in a few minutes; the weather was clear and cool, not cold; the outposts of the enemy few and feeble, and too remote from forts Erie and Chippewa, to be promptly sustained by the garrison of either; and of course offering to the invading army an opportunity of breaking down in succession, any detachments sent to their support. Such was not, however, the view of the subject taken by the General; for besides, that no man had more thoroughly convinced himself that the "better part of valor is discretion," he had on this occasion, made a special promise "not to be beaten,"[1] and to fulfil this engagement, determined to risk only a night-attack, with two

[1] Smyth's letter to Dearborn, of the 30th October, 1812.

small detachments, which, whether successful or not, should terminate the enterprise by a hasty retreat to their own shore.

In pursuance of this plan, Captain King of the fourteenth United States regiment, with one hundred and fifty regular infantry, and seventy seamen, led by Lieutenant Angus, was despatched about midnight of the 27th, with orders to attack and carry the British posts at the Red House; while Lieutenant-Colonel Bœrstler, with two hundred rank and file of the same regiment, was instructed to land near the mouth of Frenchman's Creek; assail the guard posted at that place, and destroy the bridge necessary to a communication between forts Erie and Chippewa. From bad pilotage, or some of the untoward accidents which often befall night movements, neither party succeeded in carrying over its whole force. Of King's ten boats, but four reached the point of attack designated for them. In these, were the seventy seamen and an equal number of infantry, who landed under a shower of grape and musket shot. The former, unaccustomed to the order of military movements, and requiring only to be told where the enemy was, rushed forward with their habitual gallantry and appropriate weapons, (pikes and cutlasses,) and after a short but sanguinary contest, carried the position, made several prisoners, threw two pieces of artillery and their caissons into the river, and set fire to the building.

During these occurrences, King with his infantry was not idle. Directing his march on the two exte-

rior batteries, which the enemy yet held, he gallantly carried the lower by storm; and on reaching the upper, found it hastily abandoned. After spiking the cannon and destroying the carriages of both, it but remained to fulfil the last injunction of his orders —assemble his party, and recross the river. But to his great surprise, neither on his retrograde march to the shore, nor on his arrival there, was any thing to be seen of Lieutenant Angus, the seamen, or the boats. All had disappeared, and he now found himself in a situation the most painful to a soldier—that of encountering a sudden and unavoidable danger, against which skill and courage could avail nothing. An accident, however, tended to mitigate the evil; for in seeking his own craft, he found two of the enemy's, in which he despatched as many of his party as the boats would hold, but refusing to abandon the remainder, he and they were soon after made prisoners of war.

The explanation of this unfortunate circumstance, offers a new proof of the perils of night movements; and of the great inexperience of our best officers, at that period of the war, in this branch of military service. After the seamen, as already stated, had carried the first object of attack, (not knowing what direction had been given to the infantry of the detachment, and no *signal of retreat* having been agreed upon,) they hastened to the shore, with the wounded of their own party, and the prisoners they had made; when finding but four boats of the ten, (with which the enterprise began,) and these with-

out a guard, and ignorant of the fact, that this number only had made good their landing, Lieutenant Angus concluded, and not unreasonably, that Captain King had anticipated him in the retreat; and accordingly embarking his party, returned to the Navy-Yard, near Black Rock.

Bœrstler's adventures, on this occasion, had in them little of interest, with respect either to what was done, or what was suffered. Mistaking somewhat the point of attack, he effected his landing with three boats out of seven, and without the loss of a man. The British guard being a small one and soon routed, the pursuit was continued towards the bridge, (the destruction of which formed the principal object of this part of the enterprise,) but being now informed by a prisoner, that "Ormsby was in full march, and nearly approaching it," the Colonel contented himself with detaching a Lieutenant and a few men, to effect its destruction; and retiring with the mass of his party to the shore, entered his boats, and recrossed to Squaw Island. The return of both Angus and Bœrstler, in a total ignorance of what had befallen their comrades of the expedition, could not fail to create much disquietude in the army; and induced Colonel Winder to offer himself, with another small party, to go in quest of them. But on approaching the Canada shore, and finding the British batteries re-established and sustained by a body of infantry, he returned to Black Rock, with a loss of six killed and twenty-two wounded.

The result of the enterprise, though sufficiently indicative of the error committed, in departing from the letter, as well as the spirit of the orders given by the government, had no tendency to quicken the General's appetite for a second experiment, upon a larger and more efficient scale. He even now began to doubt, whether the force present and willing to co-operate with him, amounted to the number prescribed by his orders as necessary to invasion; nor did he forget the use, that in his present extremity, might be made of the second injunction of the government, that "no attempt at invasion should be hazarded, without the advice and approbation of his principal officers." While, therefore, he ostensibly prepared for a second attack at another point, and with his whole force, he secretly held a council of war, in which, under different motives,[1] it was agreed, that "the further prosecution of the present plan of invasion, should be abandoned." This decision was promptly followed by a general order, putting an end to the campaign, and directing the army to be placed in winter quarters; when, to complete the gasconade, a flag was despatched to

1 Councils of war are famous for giving bad advice, and hence the maxim adopted by Eugene and Frederick, that the General who resorts to them, seeks only an apology for doing nothing. The decision in this case, was, however, taken on a different principle from that assumed in the preceding maxim; it arose not from a dislike of an efficient course, but from a want of confidence in the skill and vigor of the General.

Fort Erie, requiring an immediate surrender of that post, and its garrison.

The temper discovered by the militia and volunteers, on this termination of the campaign, was highly insubordinate and disgraceful—the General was hissed and hunted from one hiding-place to another; and at length, compelled to fly for safety to his own home, in Virginia. In noticing this circumstance in his official report, he says—"It has been in the power of the contractor's agent to excite a clamor against the course pursued. He finds the contract a losing one at this time, and would wish to see the army in Canada, that he might not be bound to supply it." Such was the veil, with which he endeavored to cover his own follies and faults.

During these occurrences, the main army, occupying a position on the eastern side of Lake Champlain, and commanded by the senior Major-General in person, continued to slumber on its arms, though both the time, and the policy of adopting measures of offence, had been distinctly indicated by his own increasing strength,[1] by the continued weakness of

[1] On the 26th of September, 1812, there were within district No. 9, commanded by General Dearborn, 13,000 men of all arms. On the Niagara, 3,300 regulars, and 3,000 volunteers and militia; at Sacket's Harbor, 200 regulars, and 2,000 militia; and on Lake Champlain, 3,000 regulars, and 2,000 militia. Throughout the campaign, Provost's regular force, covering a frontier of 900 miles, and extending from the Sorel to Fort St. Josephs, did not exceed 3,000 men. See Colonel Cochran's statement, Appendix No. 13. The British commander was, of course, unable to occupy the Isle aux Noix, during the campaign of 1812, or to obstruct the roads leading to Montreal, from New-

his enemy, and lastly, by the urgent character of the orders given him,—"*not to lose a moment in attacking the British posts in his front,*"[1]—yet in despite of considerations so numerous and imperative, no movement of any kind, in the direction of the enemy, was made, till the 20th of November;—and what then was hazarded, was on a scale so small, and for an object so unimportant,[2] as rendered this last act of the campaign, though less disastrous, quite as ridiculous as any of its predecessors.

Of this movement, the historian of the war in the Canadas, offers the following details; which we the more readily adopt, because, not differing materially from those given by our own functionaries, they distinctly show the feeble character of Provost's outposts, and the small disposable force with which he

York and Vermont. Three gun-boats sent out from England, for the defence of the Sorel, could not be employed for want of seamen, till June, 1813. About this time, a small re-enforcement arriving from New-Brunswick, the old fortifications on the Isle aux Noix, were repaired, and the position occupied by a detachment under the command of Colonel Taylor.—*See life and service of Sir George Provost, and Christie's History of the War in the Canadas.* At any time, therefore, during the autumn of 1812, this important post, emphatically called the key of Central Canada, might have been seized and held by the American General, without loss or risk of any kind; as besides abundant means, strictly military, he was authorized, about the middle of October, to buy and equip such number of vessels, as would secure to the United States a decided ascendency on Lake Champlain and the Sorel.

[1] For the orders given to General Dearborn, during this period, see Appendix, No. 14.

[2] This mighty object was the destruction of a blockhouse, occupied by a small party of Indians and Canadian militia.

was able to sustain them, when in November, 1812, he expected the attack of an army of ten thousand men.

"The American army under General Dearborn," says Mr. Christie, "now gradually approached the frontier of Lower Canada; and on the 17th of November, Major Salaberry (commanding on the lines) received information that this army, to the number of ten thousand men, were advancing to Odletown. He immediately despatched *two companies of Voltigeurs* and three hundred Indians, to the support of Major La Force; who, with *two companies* of the *embodied militia*, formed the *British outposts on the La Cole*. The day following, Major Salaberry with the remainder of the Voltigeurs, a corps of Voyageurs, and four companies of Chasseurs, advanced to the neighborhood of the menaced points. By this time the American army occupied the town of Champlain, two or three miles from the line, and a serious invasion was now momentarily expected; but nothing of any consequence occurred till the 20th, when between three and four o'clock, A. M., the Americans were discovered fording the La Cole. The guard-house was soon and completely surrounded; when the *British militia* and a *few Indians*, who were with them, rushed from it, broke through the American line and escaped unhurt. In the meantime, a second party of the Americans now advanced, and mistaking those in possession of the ground for the British picket, a smart firing between the two ensued, which continued for nearly half an hour; when being un-

deceived, they united and hastily retreated, leaving behind them five killed and as many wounded. This party consisted of one thousand five hundred infantry and a troop of dragoons, commanded by Colonels Pike and Clarke; and with the main body of the army, soon after withdrew to winter quarters."[1]

Remarks. The errors which signalize the close of this campaign in the north, are numerous and striking. Those of Dearborn and Smyth appear to have been the result of constitutional defects—barrenness or inactivity of mind in the one, and infirmity of purpose in the other; while those of Van Rensselaer were obviously sins of ignorance, the offspring of that deficient knowledge, which every man must feel, who for the first time, and without any previous instruction, finds himself at the head of an army and on the eve of a battle. Of the former, any new illustration would be unnecessary, as they have been already sufficiently indicated; while of the latter, a special but brief notice may be useful.

I. The false and improbable report of a spy, was made the groundwork of the expedition. "With practised Generals, the credibility of spies is always doubtful, and never confided in, unless sustained by some collateral evidence, furnishing a strong probability in its favor." In the present case, such proof was entirely wanting; and the report itself expressly contradicted by the fact, that the complete success of Brock's late expedition to Detroit, had left no rea-

[1] Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 90.

sonable motive for a repetition of the visit; and the less so, as the hourly augmentation of the American army in his front, made the safety of the British posts on the Niagara his most important duty. Notwithstanding these obvious considerations, the knowledge and integrity of the spy were taken for granted, and, in the General's opinion, warranted not merely an attack on Queenstown, but a full dispensation from the employment of all military rules while making it.

II. "Every military enterprise, should have some useful and important object." Yet, according to the General's official report, his views were limited on this occasion, to the expulsion of a small British detachment from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village as winter quarters for his troops—objects which, if attained, would have little if any influence on the progress or issue of the war, while they could not fail to impose upon him the perils of defending throughout the winter, an open and unfortified village; and (what would be worse) the absurdity of placing between himself and his resources, a wide, rapid, and unfordable river.

III. The troops employed, or intended to be employed, on this service, were principally militia; and, therefore, not better chosen than the object itself. Why this was so, is a problem, not yet satisfactorily explained. If it originated in an *esprit du corps*, or belief of militia efficiency, there may be some color of excuse for the error; but, if as reported, the arrangement was made to gratify the ambition of an individual, the act was not merely

injudicious, but criminal. At the period in question, there were at the General's disposition, more than three thousand troops of the line; from whom a corps might have been selected, which, if well found, equipped and commanded, would not have been either beaten or baffled.

IV. "If it be necessary to pass an army over a large and rapid river, in presence of an enemy, *demonstrations* should never be omitted—provided the extent of your own force will justify detaching." That General Van Rensselaer had at this time a redundant force, will be seen by his official report; yet so far from assigning any portion of it to this use, he was even careful so to distribute it as would have completely counteracted this intention, had it existed. Colonel Scott and his artillerists, were called from the Falls, and Smyth and his brigade from Black Rock—points, where, had they been left, their presence would have kept at their posts, the garrisons of Erie and Chippewa, and thus prevented their co-operation in the defence of Queenstown.[1]

V. "Every officer, charged with the direction of a military enterprise, should, before commencing it, assure himself that the means necessary for the purpose, are provided and ready for use." In this case, it was different, as we have seen, that neither boats, oars, nor pilots, had been assembled in sufficient numbers; and, (what is still more extraor-

1 See Appendix, No. 12.

dinary) that no efficient means had been taken, for ensuring the safety, or regulating the employment, of such of these articles as had been collected.

VI. "An army crossing a river in small detachments and consecutively, exposes itself to be beaten in detail, by an enemy much inferior to itself"—another and important maxim, which, on this occasion, was forgotten or disregarded.

VII. The place selected for crossing the river, was ill-judged. "A sheet of eddies, from shore to shore," as described by the General, and commanded by two of the enemy's batteries, could not fail to aggravate the evil of the preceding error; and both multiply and increase the difficulties inherent in the operation, under circumstances the most favorable.

VIII. The omission to ascertain, previously to the adoption of the project, the political sentiments of the militia on the question of invasion; and that of not promptly recalling the advanced corps, after having ascertained that point, were errors of great magnitude. Both measures were entirely within the General's power, and had they been adopted, would either have prevented the enterprise, or have terminated it at a moment, when, by the death of Brock, and the flight of the enemy, we should have had the credit of a victory, instead of the discredit of a defeat. And lastly, nothing could be more ill-judged than the attempt made to withdraw the corps, after it had lost its ascendency in the field; and when the means necessary for passing the river, or of covering the retreat, no longer existed.

Blunders and faults like those we have been employed in narrating, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon public opinion. With such of our population as had opposed the war, they became a fruitful source of ridicule, and augury of future and greater evils; and with those who had honestly and zealously advocated it, of sorrow and humiliation. These last mentioned feelings were not, however, unmingled with hopes, that a second campaign, under better auspices, and more of preparation than was permitted to the first, would redeem many of its errors, and demonstrate that, though a peace of thirty years might have obscured or blunted the knowledge necessary for conducting the war, it had not utterly extinguished that spirit and aptitude for military enterprise, which so eminently characterized the latter stages of the revolutionary contest; and which even now, began to display itself on the ocean and the lakes.

CHAPTER V.

First investment of Fort Meigs.—Dearborn and Chauncey's Expedition.—Reduction of York and Fort George.—Chandler's defeat and capture on Stony Creek.—Bœrstler's defeat.—Affair of Sacket's Harbor.

With the exception of a few unimportant combats on the St. Lawrence, between Forsyth's riflemen and the garrison of Prescott,[1] the first military movements of this year took place in the west. It will be remembered that while Proctor, after defeating and capturing Winchester, was hastening back to Malden, to escape the attacks of Harrison,[2]—this

1 On the 6th of February, Forsyth with two companies of the rifle corps in sleighs, ascended the St. Lawrence from Ogdensburg to Elizabeth on the Canada shore, surprised the British guard, made fifty-two prisoners, (among whom were one Major, three Captains and two Lieutenants,) liberated sixteen deserters, and made prize of one hundred and forty muskets and a considerable quantity of ammunition, without losing a man of his party. The British commander at Prescott, retaliated this blow on the 22d, by a visit to Ogdensburg; drove Forsyth out of the place (killing and wounding about twenty of his corps, and capturing a quantity of stores and provisions and six pieces of artillery) with the loss of seven rank and file killed, and seven officers and forty-one privates wounded.

2 Proctor's reasoning on this occasion was sanctioned by military rules. Could it be supposed, that the main body of an invading army was so far in the rear of its advanced guard, as to be unable to sustain it? If not, the circumstances assumed by Proctor were exactly those, in which Harrison ought to have been found on the 23d of January, 1813.

last mentioned officer, from similar apprehensions of his adversary, after setting fire to his stores, baggage and defences at the Rapids, retreated hastily to Portage river. The delusion under which this movement was made, could not be of long duration, and actually yielded to a few hours' reflection on the many embarrassments, from which even victory could not exempt the British commander; severity of weather, roads rendered nearly impassable by snow,[1] ranks thinned by fatigue and battle, prisoners to be guarded, wounded men to be taken care of, and though last, not least, the imperative character of Indian usages, which never fail to demand a debauch, as the first and best reward of valor and victory. Under the influence of these, and perhaps of other considerations leading to the same conclusion, General Harrison, on the evening of the 24th of January, announced to the government, that "a few days would enable him to resume and defend the position he had left, against any thing Proctor could bring against it." Advancing, accordingly, on the 1st of February, he took post on the eastern bank of the Miami; and with a force amounting nearly to two thousand men, began a fortified camp, to cover the head of his intended operations.[2]

Neither these movements, nor the objects at which

1 "From the depth of the snow, those on foot were soon exhausted." —*Harrison's Report of Winchester's defeat.*

2 The General's late experience had taught him a lesson of prudence. He had now, also, the benefit of Colonel Wood's presence and advice.

they aimed, could be long unknown to the British commander; who, to defeat the latter, assiduously employed himself in organizing a corps (British, Canadian and Indian) which, judging from past events, would be competent to the reduction of the American camp, either by direct attack, or by intercepting supplies, coming to its aid and necessary to its support. Leaving Malden, therefore, on the 22d of April, and availing himself of his naval means to cross Lake Erie, and ascend the Miami, he on the 26th, took a position on the western bank of that river, and there began the construction of two or more batteries. These being soon completed and mounted, a fire commenced on the 30th, of sufficient vivacity but of little effect, and so continued until the 4th of May, when a message from Brigadier Clay, arriving about midnight, announced the near approach of twelve hundred Kentucky militia, coming to the support of the garrison. Under this information, the American General immediately determined to risk a project of attack, suggested at once by the dispersed state of the enemy's force, and the incompetent protection given to his batteries. Instead, therefore, of allowing the re-enforcement to form an immediate junction with the garrison, (as Clay intended,) he directed that officer to debark eight hundred of his brigade on the western side of the river, with orders, "to turn and take the two British batteries there, spike the cannon, destroy the gun-carriages, and regain their boats as speedily as possible;" while, simultaneously with this move-

ment, "the remainder of the brigade should land on the opposite shore, fight its way into the camp, and thus favor a *sortie* to be made by the garrison upon the third, and only remaining British battery."

This plan, no doubt, indicated military character, (combination and enterprise,) and was only objectionable from the confidence it reposed in a militia, ignorant of the art of war, and likely from personal habits, to be as insubordinate, as they were unskilful. Still, the first steps of the detachment were, if not circumspect, particularly fortunate; for neither its landing, nor its approach to the batteries, was seen or suspected by the enemy; and so utterly uncovered were their redoubts, that Colonel Dudley, the officer commanding the enterprise, was able to make himself master of two of them, without losing a man. But here, good fortune and discretion alike abandoned the Colonel and his followers; for, instead of confining their attention, as ordered, to the destruction of the enemy's artillery, and the security of their own retreat, they inconsiderately engaged in a bush-fight with a few straggling Indians, who thus contrived to amuse them, until Proctor had time to interpose a strong corps between them and their only means of retreat. The result was such as may be readily imagined, partaking less of the character of defeat, than of destruction; for of the eight hundred combatants, numbered in the morning, but one hundred and fifty escaped captivity or slaughter.[1] The undetached portion of Clay's brig-

[1] Harrison's Report, dated May 5th, 1813.

ade, (led by Colonel Boswell,) though resisted by the savages, effected its object, with little of either loss or annoyance; while a detachment from the seventeenth and nineteenth regular regiments, aided by a few volunteers and militia, gallantly assaulted and carried the battery on the eastern bank, made a number of British soldiers prisoners, and handled roughly, such Canadians and Indians as came to its support.

Though, on the whole, the fortunes of the day were such as furnished the enemy with pretensions to a victory,[1] still the siege, in many of its circumstances, was marked by facts, which, whether considered separately or together, extinguished in the British commander, every hope of eventual success. No part of his calculations had hitherto been verified; his batteries had not only failed to make any serious impression on the American fort, but had all, in succession, been wrested from him; and were at last, but partially recovered through an error of his enemy not likely to be repeated. His allies, also, were found to be incompetent to the service assigned to them; they neither did, nor could, so invest the American camp, as to intercept or even seriously impede the junction of re-enforcements advancing to its aid; and at last, becoming weary of a service, little adapted to their personal habits and military usages, they no longer disguised their intention of speedily abandoning it. If to these motives

1 Provost's letter to Lord Bathurst, 14th June, 1813.

for discontinuing the siege, be superadded the fact, that information of General Dearborn's successful descent at York, in the month of April, had already reached the British camp, we cannot wonder, that Proctor should deem it prudent to abandon all further prosecution of his designs, and regain, as quickly as possible, his position at Malden.

But to this course, however expedient, physical impediments had now arisen: his artillery being of large calibre, could not be transported by land; and the wind blowing strong from the north, prevented its movement by water. To fill up the pause thus made unavoidable in his operations, and to cover at once the defeat of his general object, the retrograde movement he now contemplated, and the apprehension excited by the probability of Indian desertion and American attack, he had recourse to negotiation. The form given to this, was the blustering one employed against Hull—affected humanity, ridiculous menaces, and insolent demands. Despatching a flag on the evening of the 5th, he required the immediate surrender of the American post and army, as "the only means left for saving the latter from the tomahawks and scalping-knives of the savages." Harrison's answer to this proposition was sufficiently manly and decided. Considering it unworthy of a more serious notice, he but adverted to its folly, and admonished Proctor, "not to repeat it,"—thus leaving to his adversary the choice of continuing the contest, or, failing to do so, of virtually acknowledging his weakness or his fears. In making this election,

Proctor did not hesitate long or seriously; the tone and object of his first message, were immediately abandoned, and a simple proposition for an exchange of prisoners, substituted in its stead. Bungling and ill-disguised as these expedients were, they became to the enemy, active and useful auxiliaries; and appear to have effectually concealed his real purposes, until, "a change of wind and a general movement in his camp," made them apparent to all. But it was now too late to profit by the discovery; at twelve o'clock the whole armament, with the exception of the Indians, (who had gone off on the 7th and 8th,) was found embarking and rapidly descending the river.

Harrison's presence on the Miami being no longer necessary, he now hastened back to Sandusky and Franklintown, to organize the means indicated for prosecuting his part of a new plan of campaign, having for its objects—

1st. The reduction of Kingston and York on Lake Ontario, and of forts George and Erie on the Niagara; and

2d. The capture of Malden, and recovery of Detroit and the Michigan Territory.[1]

In prosecution of the former, two modes of proceeding, differing as to time and means, were prescribed to Major-General Dearborn. The one, (founded on the supposition that Kingston might not be accessible at that season of the year to the

1 See Appendix, No. 14.

approaches of infantry and artillery,) made provision, that the movement should not be attempted until the navigation of the lake should cease to be impeded by ice; when, by a joint operation of the fleet and army, Kingston, York, and fort George, should be attacked in succession, and in the order in which they are here named. The other, resting on the contrary supposition, that no important impediment arising from snow or ice would obstruct movements exclusively military, directed, that the two brigades wintering on Lake Champlain, and amounting to twenty-five hundred combatants, should be placed in sleighs, and moved under the command of Colonel Pike, by the most eligible route and with the greatest possible rapidity, to Kingston; where (being joined by such force as could be brought from Sacket's Harbor) they should, by surprise or assault, carry that post, destroy the shipping wintering there, and subsequently be governed by circumstances, in either retaining the position or in withdrawing from it."

Though neither of the movements prescribed by these views of the subject was objected to on the ground of any great or unavoidable difficulty in its execution,[1] some reports of the increased strength of the enemy, and of an intention on his part to attack

[1] General Dearborn's letters of the 18th and 25th of February. In the former he says, "Nothing shall be omitted on my part, in endeavoring to carry into effect the expedition proposed;" and in the latter he adds, "Chauncey has not returned from New-York. I am satisfied that if he had arrived as soon as I had expected him, we might have made a stroke at Kingston on the ice; but his presence was necessary for having the aid of the seamen and marines."

Sacket's Harbor, got up by Provost as a mere *ruse* to conceal his own weakness and fears,[1] were unfortunately mistaken by both the Major-General and the naval commander, as furnishing sufficient authority for altogether dispensing with the movement proposed to be executed by Pike; and for so far changing the prescribed order of proceeding in the other, as to make Kingston the *last* object of attack, instead of making it the *first*.[2]

In prosecution of this inverted plan of campaign, General Dearborn (embarking sixteen hundred rank and file of the army) sailed from Sacket's Harbor on the 25th of April, and on the 27th arrived off York,

1 Provost, alarmed for the safety of his western posts, prorogued the legislature on the 22d of February, and set out hastily for Kingston. That he brought no troops with him, and even took from Prescott an escort to protect him in what remained of his journey, are facts well ascertained. Yet was this, and other similar movements, mistaken for evidences of the march westward of large re-enforcements. See Appendix, Nos. 16 and 17.

2 "To take or destroy the armed vessels at York, will give us the complete command of the lake. Commodore Chauncey can take with him ten or twelve hundred troops, to be commanded by Pike; take York, from thence proceed to Niagara and attack fort George by land and water; while the troops at Buffalo cross over, carry forts Erie and Chippewa and join those at fort George, and *thence*, collect our whole force for an attack on Kingston. After the most mature deliberation, the above was considered by Commodore Chauncey and myself, as the most certain of ultimate success."—*General Dearborn's official letter to the War Department. President's Message, 31st January*, 1814. To this change of plan the President gave his approbation, from a belief, that "being on the spot, the General and Commodore were most likely to be possessed of the information which should govern in the case."

the capital of Upper Canada and the headquarters of General Sheafe. The defences of the place were few and feeble, composed of two or three earthen redoubts, four hundred regular troops, an equal number of embodied militia, and between forty and fifty Indians.

Positions having been given to such of the armed vessels as were destined to cover the landing, and take part in the attack of the batteries, the debarkation of the troops began about 8 o'clock, A. M. Forsyth and the rifle corps, forming the head of the column, were the first to make the experiment, and after much effort effected a landing; not, however, as was intended, at the site of the old French fort Toronto, but at a point, more than a mile farther westward, "thickly covered with brush-wood, and already occupied by British and Indian marksmen." In the contest that followed, Forsyth lost some men, but no credit; and being speedily sustained by Major King and a battalion of infantry, and soon after by the presence of General Pike and the arrival of the main body, the enemy were driven from one position to another, and at last compelled to seek shelter in their redoubts. Of these, the first approached by the assailants, made little resistance; as the occupants, perceiving the storm that awaited them, made haste to abandon the work.[1] The second, presented an aspect of more firmness; but discon-

[1] The Grenadier company of the sixteenth, commanded by Captain Walworth, was proceeding to the assault, when the redoubt was abandoned.

tinuing its fire suddenly and entirely, Pike concluded, and not unreasonably, that his antagonist, by so acting, sought the means of making an overture of surrender; and in this belief, halted his troops at the distance of sixty rods from the battery, when a magazine exploding, burst on the head of the column, spreading its mischief far and wide; killing and wounding more than two hundred men, and creating in the remainder, much temporary alarm and confusion.[1]

Of this circumstance, Sheafe, the British commander, was careful to avail himself. Collecting what of his regular force remained, and leaving to their own resources the civil authorities and embodied militia, he began a hasty retreat in the direction of Kingston. The assailants, who in the meantime, had re-established their order, and resumed their march, were yet in a condition to have overtaken the fugitives, but unfortunately, their gallant leader had fallen a victim to the explosion; the General-in-chief, was yet on board of the fleet;[2] and Colonel Pierce, who thus fortuitously became the commanding officer, being wholly uninstructed as to the orders or views of either, permitted himself to be amused by proposals for a capitulation, forbidden alike by the

1 Sheafe asserts, that the explosion was the effect of accident; and states the loss sustained by the garrison in consequence of it, as a proof of the fact.

2 Dearborn, in his letter of the 28th of April, says,—"I had been induced to confide the command of the troops in action to General Pike, from a conviction that he fully expected it, and would be much mortified at being deprived of the honor, which he highly appreciated."

laws of war and the policy of the moment; and thus gave time to Sheafe and his followers, not merely to effect their escape, but to destroy, as they went along, a ship of war on the stocks, and a magazine of military and naval stores in the harbor.

The defence of the town being no longer practicable, a surrender necessarily followed, by which it was stipulated, that the militia and others attached to the British military and naval service, should be paroled; that private property of every kind should be respected, and that all public stores should be given up to the captors. These last, according to the report of the General, consisted of an "immense depôt of supplies, military and naval, and a sloop of war repairing for service."[1] The enemy's loss on this occasion, amounted in killed, wounded and taken, to five hundred men; that of the United States, in killed and wounded, to three hundred and twenty.

The first object of the expedition being thus accomplished, the troops were immediately re-embarked, in the hope that they would be able to proceed to the second and more important, without loss

[1] Of this immense depôt, we hear nothing further from the General, excepting that "so great was its magnitude, that the fleet could not carry the whole away," a fact the less to be regretted, as what they did carry with them, was burnt with many other stores at Sacket's Harbor, through a misconception of the naval officer having charge of the magazines. Our trophies were fewer, but better taken care of.—One regimental standard taken, was, (by some strange confusion of ideas,) sent to the Navy department; and one human scalp, a prize made, as we have understood, by the Commodore, was offered, but not accepted, as a decoration to the walls of the War Office.

of time; but the wind becoming adverse, it was not till the 8th of May, that they arrived off fort George; nor until the 27th, that they were sufficiently prepared for the attack of that post.[1] At four o'clock, A. M. of this day, the batteries on the American side of the Niagara being ready for action, the means necessary for transportation provided, and a considerable re-enforcement of troops drawn from Sacket's Harbor,—the army, (now amounting to nearly six thousand combatants,) began their movement in boats, along the lake shore, to Two-Mile-Run, the point designated for a general landing. When abreast of this, they rested on their oars, till the armed vessels had severally taken their covering positions, and the signal had been given for descent; after which, resuming the movement, they pressed vigorously forward to the shore. At nine o'clock, the light infantry commanded by Colonel Scott, effected a landing; and being speedily supported by Boyd's brigade, and a well-directed fire from the shipping,[2] were soon enabled to surmount the bank,

1 This delay, was at one time ascribed by the General to some sins of omission, on the part of Generals Lewis and Winder,—and at another, to the late arrival of the fleet from York.

2 In Commodore Chauncey's report of this affair, he says,—"All the vessels anchored within musket-shot of the shore, and in ten minutes after they opened upon the [water] batteries, they were completely silenced and abandoned." Again; "The enemy, who had been concealed in a ravine, now advanced in great force, to the edge of the bank, to charge our troops, [when] the schooners opened so well-directed and tremendous a fire of grape and canister, that they [the enemy] soon retreated from the bank."

break down the enemy's line in their front, and compel its scattered parts to fly in the direction of Newark and fort George.

On approaching these, Vincent, the British commander, finding the former in flames, and the latter, nearly if not altogether untenable, wisely determined to hazard a retreat in the face of his enemy; and by thus deserting his post, multiply the chances of saving his garrison. Fortunately for him, a contingency of this kind, was neither provided for in the original plan of attack, nor by any subsequent order given on the field; and would, perhaps, have entirely escaped notice, had not Scott, from his advanced position, made the discovery, and deemed it his duty, to institute and continue a pursuit of five miles; not merely without orders, but in evasion of such as were given, until at last, a mandate reached him, of a character so decided and peremptory, as, by leaving nothing to discretion, could not fail to recall him to fort George.

About the time of this last occurrence, the commanding General, who had now landed from the fleet, received information, that Vincent, re-enforced by the garrisons of Chippewa and Erie, and a battalion of the eighth or King's regiment, had determined to risk a second combat for the defence of the peninsula; and that with this view, he had called in the militia, and was pressing forward to occupy a strong mountain-pass, called the Beaver Dams.

Though much of this information was unwarranted, by any thing which had been seen of the

numbers, condition, or order of the retreating troops, and though directly contradicted by the report of an officer of the American staff;[1] still, receiving as it did the entire confidence of the General, an order was issued "for renewing the pursuit at daybreak of the 28th, in the direction of the Dams." Of this movement, we need only say, that it resulted in disappointment and mortification,—in disappointment, because on approaching its object, Vincent was not to be found; and in mortification, because it was now evident, that the report, on which the movement was ordered, was a mere artifice employed by the enemy, to put the army of the United States on a wrong track, and thus enable Vincent to anticipate them in the possession of Burlington heights; "a position," without which, according to his own statement, "he could neither retain the peninsula, nor make a safe exit from it."

Under circumstances thus distinctly indicating the policy of the enemy, the American General could no longer mistake his own. We accordingly find him recalling the army, for the purpose of giving to their efforts a new and better direction. One chance, he said, yet remained—"embark the troops on board the fleet, and (should the winds be favorable) they will arrive at the head of Burlington Bay, before the British can reach it; and we shall then close the campaign successfully." But to this arrange-

[1] Letter from Major Van de Venter, A. Q. M. G. to the War Department.

ment, the assent of the naval commander was not less necessary than his own; and though on the 29th, the Commodore saw no objection to the plan, he on the 30th, entirely changed his opinion; and instead of lending himself to a co-operation that would in all probability have been successful, he decided on a movement principally naval in its object, and altogether useless in its effects.[1]

Deprived as the General now was of the aid of the fleet, (which in his opinion furnished the last remaining chance of excluding Vincent from the heights of Burlington,) he was necessarily left to choose between the inaction of a campaign merely defensive on the strait, and the pursuit and attack of the enemy amidst the mountain gorges and defiles, in which they had wisely placed their safety. Of these alternatives, he on the 1st of June, adopted the latter, and accordingly despatched General Winder with a single and small brigade, amounting, in all arms, to somewhat less than eight hundred combatants, to give it execution. This officer, in the progress of his march, was not long in discovering that the enemy's force was more formidable than had been supposed; and very properly decided, to await at Forty-Mile Creek, the arrival of such re-enforcements as, on a representation of the preceding fact, the General might think proper to send to his aid.[2]

[1] His object was the defence of his naval stores and the new ship then on the stocks at Sacket's Harbor—but for the protection of neither did he arrive in time. They were saved by Brown and the garrison.

[2] Burns reports the whole force (after Chandler's arrival) at one

On the 3d of June, Brigadier-General Chandler brought up a second brigade; and understanding that Vincent occupied a strong camp, eight miles in his front, which he was every hour making stronger, the new commander determined to shorten the distance between them, and bring him to action as promptly as possible. The division was accordingly put in motion in the direction of the British camp, and Stony Creek passed by the American advanced guard; between which and an out-lying British picket, a skirmish, of short duration and little importance, ensued. But as it was now sunset, the General found it necessary to halt for the night; and proceeded accordingly to make the necessary disposition of the troops, for passing it in safety. Taking the road as the centre of his line, he there placed his artillery, supporting it on the right by the twenty-fifth regiment, three companies of light infantry, and one of riflemen; and on the left, by the fifth, sixteenth, and twenty-third regiments. Half a mile in his front, was posted a strong picket, and similar guards on both flanks and rear, with orders to send out frequent patrols. In addition to these arrangements, the thirteenth and fourteenth regiments, with Archer's company of artillery, were stationed near the mouth of Stony Creek, (for the better security of the boats and baggage ascending the lake,) and

thousand three hundred men; if, therefore, this report be correct, the force originally sent did not exceed eight hundred, nor the re-enforcement five hundred.

in the rear of the whole, was posted the second regiment of light dragoons.[1]

While Chandler was thus employed in securing his camp, Vincent, who now saw that to retain his present position (on which all his hopes of eventual success depended) another battle must be fought, was deliberating on the mode most proper for giving it; and having found by a careful reconnoissance, made early in the evening, that his enemy's camp-guards were few and negligent; that his line of encampment was long and broken; that his artillery was feebly supported, and several of the corps placed too far in the rear to aid in repelling a blow, rapidly and vigorously struck at their front,—he wisely determined to hazard a night-attack, in the hope of effecting by surprise, what he despaired of being able to accomplish openly and directly.

In pursuance of this plan, the British column (seven hundred combatants) began its march about midnight; and prosecuting it with great silence and much general attention to order, it was able at three o'clock in the morning to surprise and capture every man of the American picket, without giving the slightest alarm to the main body. Nor were its subsequent movements less judicious, though fortunately, much less successful. Selecting the *centre* of the encampment for assault, two small demonstrations (the one, made on the extremity of the right

1 "This corps (the dragoons) lay at a considerable distance from the scene of active operation, as you will perceive by the enclosed diagram."—*General Lewis's report, 14th of June.*

flank; and the other, on that of the rear guard) were mistaken by Chandler and Winder for real attacks; and had the effect of producing such changes in the disposition made of the American line,[1] as enabled Hervey, at the head of the forty-ninth and part of the eighth British regiments, to gain the rear of the artillery, envelop a part of it, and make prize of some pieces of ordnance, three tumbrils, and about one hundred prisoners—among whom were found the two American Generals.

How much farther the mischief might have been carried, but for one of those accidents common to night movements, can only be conjectured. Vincent, the British commander, quitting for a moment the track of the column which he had hitherto followed, lost his way; and, as is not unusual in similar cases, every effort to recover it, carried him further from his object. It was not, however, until after Hervey's attack had succeeded, that he was missed; when (having been sought for without success) it was not unreasonably concluded, that a fortune, similar to that which had befallen Chandler, had awaited him.[2] Hervey, finding himself in this new and unexpected situation, prudently determined to make sure of the trophies he had won; and, accordingly, began his retreat under cover of the night, leaving to his enemy, the care of his wounded, the burial of his

1 "Hearing a firing in the rear, I instantly ordered Colonel Milton with the fifth, to form in *our rear, near the woods.*"—Chandler's report.

2 "He was found the next day, four miles from the scene of action, without hat or horse."—*Lewis's Report.*

dead, and one hundred privates of the eighth and forty-ninth regiments.

Though at daybreak, the American army was found to have sustained some diminution of its numerical force,[1] still, as this was not such as made retreat either necessary or expedient, an order for renewing the pursuit of the enemy, was both desired and expected—but as the capture of Chandler and Winder had unfortunately devolved the command on an officer of cavalry, having no confidence in his own capacity for directing infantry movements,[2] a council of war, to whom the question was submitted, advised "the immediate retreat of the army to Forty-Mile Creek, there to await the further directions of General Dearborn."

This officer, who, from ill-health and other causes, had uniformly committed the direction of field-operations to subordinate agents, seeing nothing in the circumstances of the moment, to render necessary a departure from his ordinary practice, satisfied his sense of duty, by despatching to the army, General Lewis and the sixth regiment, with orders to bring the enemy to action, as promptly as possible.

This new commander reached his destination at five o'clock, P. M., and found the troops encamped

1 The loss of the American army in this action was small, "much less than that of the enemy."—*Report of Colonel Burns.*

2 "Had either of the Generals remained in command, or, if Colonel Burns had been an officer of infantry, the enemy would have been pursued and cut up."—*Dearborn's Report of June the 6th, to the War Department.*

on a plain, "at the foot of a perpendicular mountain of considerable height," whence, at six o'clock, the British fleet was discovered, shaping its course in the direction of Vincent's post;—a circumstance, forbidding, as the General believed, an immediate movement upon that officer, and making it proper that the American army should retain for the night its present position. At daybreak, on the 8th, the hostile armament was found "in a dead calm," about a mile from the shore, and abreast of the camp; while an armed schooner, towed forward to a station favorable for the purpose, opened a fire on the American baggage and boats, drawn up on the beach. But a few discharges of hot-shot, soon convinced the British commander, that the experiment was not likely to turn out advantageously, and thus hastened the recall of the schooner to the fleet.

It was under these circumstances, by no means inauspicious to the eventual success of the expedition, that an order was received from General Dearborn, directing the immediate return of the troops to fort George; from an apprehension, (founded on the appearance of two British schooners apparently employed in examining the shore,) "that a serious attack on that post was meditated by the enemy." This ill-judged order was scarcely executed, when it was found that the "minute examinations" made by the British schooners, had an object very different from that, which the General in his alarm, had ascribed to them. Having in an hour or two, sufficiently ascertained, "that no American vessels,

remained in or near the mouth of the Niagara,' they hastened back to their fleet; which, after landing the supplies and re-enforcement it had carried to Vincent, repaired to the southern side of the lake, and was there, (according to Provost's statement to Lord Bathurst,) "usefully employed in intercepting provision-boats, going to fort George."[1]

The tranquillity, which followed the preceding alarm in the American camp, was unfortunately permitted to become an absolute sleep of fourteen days; of which, the British commander was careful to avail himself. Advancing his main body (now re-enforced by a battalion of the hundred and fourth) to Forty-Mile Creek, he thence pushed forward a party, under the command of Colonel Bishop, "to seize and fortify such mountain passes, as would best secure his own position; and, at the same time, so circumscribe the range of the American troops, as to compel them to live on their own resources."[2] In pursuance of these directions, Bishop began by establishing two posts on the lake road, and one on that of Queenstown; the garrisons of which, with the aid of preconcerted signals, could be readily brought to sustain each other.

The American General, awakened at last by a report of these encroachments, thought it expedient, on the 23d of June, to despatch Colonel Bœrstler, at the head of six hundred men of all arms—dragoons,

1 Provost's letter to Lord Bathurst, 3d of July, 1813.
2 Idem.

artillerists and infantry, to strike at the Stone House, (one of the posts established by Bishop,) about two miles beyond the Beaver Dams, and seventeen from fort George. The result of the movement was such as might have been foreseen. Bœrstler was permitted to reach the Dams without annoyance, but having neither reserve to sustain, nor demonstration to favor him, he was surrounded by enemies, to whom (after three hours' useless fighting) he surrendered himself, and his party.[1]

The reader will recollect, that before General Dearborn thought it safe to attack fort George, he withdrew from the garrison of Sacket's Harbor, the whole of Chandler's brigade, and six companies of Macomb's artillerists, serving as infantry—the effect of which, with the absence of the fleet, left the post (important as it was) in a condition decidedly weak. Provost, whose public duties brought him to Kingston, about the time of this occurrence, was soon made acquainted with it; and believing that it furnished a favorable occasion for retaliating the blows sustained at York and fort George, and for permanently settling the doubtful question of naval ascendency on the lake, he hastened to organize an expedition, having for its objects, "the capture of the harbor and naval stores, and the destruction of the new ship General Pike, then on the stocks."

Fortunately, the disposable force, under the direction of this functionary, was, at that period, not

[1] For Bœrstler's detailed account of this affair, see Appendix, No. 24.

redundant; and on actual muster, could be made to amount to but seven hundred, rank and file.[1] With this small force, a few artillerists and two pieces of light ordnance, embarked on board of small vessels and convoyed by the fleet, the British commander-in-chief began his movement on the 27th of May—"intending to reach the harbor in the night, and at daybreak in the morning, to assault and carry the place by surprise."[2] Retarded by baffling or adverse winds, it was not until ten o'clock, P. M. of the 28th, that he arrived within striking distance of his object; and then, under circumstances, which had entirely changed the relations as to force, previously existing between himself and his enemy. Unable to make the movement covertly, as he had expected to do, some of even his first steps were discovered by the younger Chauncey; who, while hastening back to his post, fired signals of alarm—which, taken up by the guns of the fort, and thus extended to the country, had the effect of bringing together by mid-day of the 28th, six hundred militia in aid of the garrison; and with them, a leader, both sagacious and intrepid, who, like Cincinnatus, was found at his plough.[3]

1 The detachments employed in the attack of Sacket's Harbor, were, "one company of the one hundredth, one section of the Royal Scots, two companies of the eighth, four of the one hundred and fourth, two of the Voltigeurs, and one of Glengary light infantry, with two six-pounders and their gunners."

2 Bayne's Official Report, May 30th, 1813, and "Life and Services of Sir George Provost."

3 General Dearborn, commanding the district, Colonel Backus,

General Brown, the person of whom we speak, having a perfect knowledge of the ground on which he stood, was at no loss to discover the point at which the enemy would attempt to disembark; or the route, by which, after landing, he would endeavor to reach the forts. His dispositions were made accordingly; to the volunteers and militia forming the first line, was assigned the duty of meeting and repelling the descent of the enemy from his boats; while midway between the shore and the village, and on ground made difficult of approach by an abbatis, was placed the second line, composed of regular troops,[1] amounting to four hundred combatants, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Backus. Still further in the rear, were a few artillerists, charged with the custody of the forts, which, in the General's plan of defence, formed his dernier resource.

Such was the disposition made of the small American force, when at daybreak of the 29th, the enemy's fleet was seen in line, between Stony Point and Horse Island; and his troops, in small craft, covered by gun-boats, making for the southern side of a sandy ridge, thrown up by adverse currents, and occasionally forming a causeway between the island

senior officer of the United States troops at the Harbor, and Major Swan, acting Adjutant-General, had previously united in urging General Brown, a militia officer residing in the neighborhood, to take the command, in the event of an attack on the post.

1 Detachments from the first dragoons, ninth and twenty-third infantry, and a few artillerists.

and the main land. To meet this movement,[1] the volunteer regiment stationed on Horse Island, was promptly withdrawn, and made to take a position on the shore, adjacent to that occupied by the militia; when orders were given to both corps, "to conceal themselves as much as possible; to reserve their fire until the enemy's approach should enable them to count his coat-buttons; and, if driven from their ground, to rally in the adjoining wood, attack the enemy's flank, and, if unable to stop him, to retire on the left and rear of Colonel Backus's position, and there await further orders." Unfortunately, no part of these directions was complied with. A fire, much at random and given prematurely, was followed by a flight, nearly general, of both parts of the first line, and with such determination to avoid new dangers, that every attempt at rallying either, proved unsuccessful.[2]

For this unmanly and unexpected conduct on the part of the militia and volunteers, the General found himself greatly consoled by the coolness and courage of the regular troops, who, though compelled to abandon their first position, hastened to occupy

1 "It was my intention to have landed in the cove, formed by Horse Island; but on approaching, we discovered that the enemy were fully prepared, with a very heavy fire of musketry, supported by a field-piece. I therefore directed the boats to pull round to the other side of the island, where a landing was effected in good order, and with little loss."—*Bayne's Report, May 30th*, 1813.

2 General Brown's official letter, of June 1st, 1813. The only exception to this conduct in the militia and volunteers, was found in the parties headed by Captains McNitt and Collins.

another, which, in their hands became impregnable; and soon brought the British commander to the conclusion, that "the reputation and interest of his Majesty's arms, would be best promoted by an immediate retreat."[1] This was accordingly ordered and executed; leaving, as was his custom, his killed and wounded on the field of battle, as new subjects for the exercise of the humanity of his antagonist. On this fortunate issue of a business, involving so many high interests, and so little promising in the outset, we find but one drawback—the burning of the naval stores, storehouses and barracks—an effect of false information, imprudently given and too hastily believed, by the officer charged with the custody of these buildings.

The affair of Sacket's Harbor was followed by an attack of similar character and fortune, on Black Rock; and which, though having little, if any bearing on the progress or issue of the war, may, notwithstanding, be entitled to a brief notice. Colonel Bishop, commanding the *élite* of General Vincent's division, encouraged as well by the diminished strength, as the uniform inaction of the American army, pushed his enterprise onward to the Niagara,

1 "At this point, the further energies of the troops became unavailing; the block-house and stockaded battery could not be carried by assault, nor reduced by field-pieces, had we been provided with them. Seeing no object within our reach, that could compensate for the loss we were momently sustaining, I directed the troops to form on the crest of the hill; and from this position, we were ordered to re-embark." —*Bayne' Report.*

and finding fort Erie without a garrison, hastened to re-establish himself in that post. Being now within sight of Black Rock, and informed that it was the depository of a considerable quantity of public stores, he determined to make it a visit; and on the 11th of June, crossed the river at the head of two hundred and fifty men, of the eighth, forty-first, and forty-ninth regiments. The militia in charge of the place, and nearly as numerous as the enemy, being *non-combatants*,[1] withdrew at his approach, and permitted him to execute his purposes without hindrance or molestation. Having at last accomplished his objects, spiked the heavy cannon, carried off the light ones, loaded his boats with flour and salt, and burned to the ground, both barracks and block-houses, he withdrew to the shore, with the intention of embarking himself and his party, when he discovered, that he had yet, like Cæsar at Munda, to fight for his life.

A report of the predatory character of the expedition, spreading rapidly through the country, had the effect of assembling at Buffalo, about one hundred and fifty United States infantry, as many militia and a few Indians, who immediately set out to recapture the public stores, and punish the invaders of the soil. For the first of these purposes, their arrival was too late—the plunder having been al-

1 An effect of the eastern doctrine (on the causes and character of the war) industriously circulated in the northern and western frontiers of New-York.

ready secured; but for the last, it was yet in good time, and after a contest made as brief by the fall of Bishop, as it had been vigorous while he lived, the British party was compelled to fly to their oars and recross the river; leaving behind them nine of their number killed and fifteen wounded. At other points, the enemy pursued his purposes with better effect; and at last, virtually reduced fort George from a fortress, into a prison, with limits, little, if at all exceeding the range of its cannon.

To account for a state of things so unexpected, and falling so far short of the promises held out by the General and the naval commander, when they began the expedition, we subjoin the following extract from an official despatch of the former, of the 20th of June. "From resignations, sickness, and other causes, the number of regimental officers present and fit for duty, is far below what the service requires. A considerable portion of the army being new recruits, and the weather very unfavorable to health, the sick have become so numerous, in addition to the wounded, as to reduce the effective force far below what could have been contemplated. The enemy have been re-enforced with about five hundred men of the one hundred and fourth regiment; whence I conclude, that he will endeavor to keep up such a plan, at, and near the head of the lake, as will prevent any part of our force in this quarter from joining, or proceeding to Sacket's Harbor, for the purpose of attacking Kingston; and such is the state of the roads in this flat country, in consequence

of continual rains, as to render any operations against the enemy extremely difficult, without the aid of a fleet, for the transportation of provisions, ammunition and other necessary supplies. The enemy would probably retreat on our approach and keep out of our reach, being covered by one or more armed vessels. The whole of these embarrassments have resulted from a temporary loss of the command of the lake." [1]

The accounts of the General's health, were not more encouraging than that given of the condition of the army. In a letter of the 4th of June, he says, —"I am still very feeble, and gain strength very slowly." June the 6th, "I never so severely felt the want of health as at present; a time when my services might perhaps be most useful." June the 8th, "My ill state of health renders it extremely painful to attend to current duties, and unless it improves soon, I fear I shall be compelled to retire to some place where my mind may be more at ease." June the 14th, "General Dearborn, from indisposition, has resigned the command,—not only of the Niagara army, but of the district. I have doubts whether he will ever again be fit for service."[2] "As the General is unable to write, I am directed to inform you, that in addition to the debility and fever he has been afflicted with, he has, within the last twenty-four hours, experienced a violent spasmodic attack on his

1 General Dearborn's letter to the War Department, of the 20th of June, 1813.

2 General Lewis's letter of the 14th of June, to the Secretary of War.

breast, which has obliged him to relinquish business altogether."[1]

It cannot be thought extraordinary, that under circumstances so alarming, as well in relation to the General as to the troops, an order should have issued on the 6th of July, recalling the former from the command of the district ;[2] and enjoining on his successor, "not to prosecute any offensive operation, until our ascendency on the lake was re-established."

Remarks. We have seen that, by the plan of campaign prescribed to General Dearborn, *Kingston* was made the first object of attack ; after which (if successful) the army should proceed to the reduction of York, fort George and fort Erie. This arrangement, so far as regarded the order of attack, was recommended by considerations the most decisive ; inasmuch, as the capture of the first named of these posts, would have involved that of the British fleet, (then frozen up in its harbor ;) the entire separation of Lower from Upper Canada ; the necessary fall of all military and naval armaments within the latter,

1 Letter from Colonel Connor, Aid-decamp of General Dearborn, of June the 12th, to the Secretary of War.

2 This act of the Executive authority, originated with that portion of the House of Representatives most active and influential in supporting the war ; who, believing that habitual ill-health on the part of the General, disqualified him from such a discharge of his duty as the exigencies of the service required, deputed Messrs. Clay and Ingersoll to represent their views on the subject to the President. Mr. Monroe became the medium of communication between these gentlemen, and Mr. Madison, coinciding in their opinion, soon after directed the General's recall.

and a speedy termination of the Indian war in the west—advantages not to be expected from the most successful operations against York, fort George, or fort Erie.

Nor will it appear that on receiving this order, the General put a different estimate on the practicability of the project, or on the value and importance of the objects it presented. In his letter of the 18th of February, he says—"Nothing shall be omitted on my part, in endeavoring to carry into effect the expedition proposed;" and in that of the 25th he adds, "Chauncey has not yet returned from New-York; if he had arrived as soon as I expected him, we might have made a stroke at Kingston on the ice; but his presence was necessary for having the aid of the marines and seamen."[1] Unfortunately, this coincidence of views between the government and the General was of short duration. On the 3d of March, be became "satisfied, on information, (as he declared,) *entitled to full credit*, that a force had been collected from Quebec, Montreal and Upper Canada, of from *six to eight thousand men, at Kingston;* and that an attack would be made on Sacket's Harbor within forty-eight hours, perhaps sooner." Again, on the 9th, (though then entertaining doubts whether

[1] What an extraordinary reason to be given by the commanding General of an army and district, (of which Sacket's Harbor made a part,) for omitting to execute an order directly emanating from the President of the United States! Did Mr. Chauncey leave the fleet without a commander *de facto?* And if not, what rendered his authority over seamen and marines less efficient than that of the Commodore.

Provost would hazard an attack,) he announces to the government, that "this unexpected movement of the enemy, would effectually oppose the measures contemplated on our part." And in conformity with this desponding view of the subject, a council of war, held on the 15th of March, decided, that "no attempt upon Kingston should be made before the naval force could act;" or, in other words, before the lake was navigable;—a decision, which, besides putting an end to Pike's expedition on the ice, gave to Provost all he wanted—an entire month to strengthen his defences, and a thaw, to restore Yeo and his fleet to their ordinary activity and usefulness. After thus demolishing the most important part of the plan of campaign, it was not to be expected that what remained of it would be treated with more ceremony. "To take," says the General, "or destroy the armed vessels at York, will give us the complete command of the lake. Commodore Chauncey can take with him ten or twelve hundred troops, to be commanded by Pike; take York, from thence proceed to Niagara and attack fort George by land and water, while the troops at Buffalo cross over and carry forts Erie and Chippewa and join those at fort George, and then collect our whole force for an attack on Kingston. After the most mature deliberation, the above was considered by Commodore Chauncey and myself *as the most certain of ultimate success.*"[1]

[1] Of this plan, we have the following estimate by General Pike and others. "The opinion of General Pike, founded on a knowledge of General Dearborn's intended movements, is, that our country is

It will not be easy, perhaps impossible, to give any sufficient reason for the course thus recommended, and eventually adopted, by the two commanders. If they continued to believe, that Provost had assembled from "six to eight thousand men at Kingston, for the express purpose of attacking and destroying Sacket's Harbor," as stated by the General in his despatch of the 3d of March—what could justify a project on their part, which would necessarily abstract a large portion of the military and the whole of the naval force, from this menaced point? If, on the other hand, they had ceased to give credit to a fable so absurd, (which is most probable,) and had returned to the opinion, that "the garrison of Kingston was weak,"[1] why not return also to the intention of carrying the attack on that important post, and thus have fulfilled the original plan of campaign?

It now but remains for us to show, that the information taken by the General as the guide of his opinions and conduct on this occasion, was wholly unfounded. Our proofs on this head are, I. "That Provost, on arriving at Prescott, borrowed from that post an escort of soldiers, to prevent his being kidnapped on his way to Kingston"[2]—a fact, utterly in-

again doomed to defeat, if the operations now meditated by the General are attempted to be accomplished. The opinion is also prevalent with the best officers, that no conquest of character will be made, if your plans of invasion be subject to the continual wavering of the commanding General."—*Letter from Major Van de Venter, D. Q. M. G., of the 31st March, 1813, to the Secretary of War.*

1 General Dearborn's letter of the 14th of February, 1813.

2 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 101.

consistent with the story of his having brought with him, large detachments from Quebec and Montreal;[1] 2d, that Proctor, Barclay, Vincent, and Sheafe, so far from being in a condition to yield any aid to the supposed project of an attack on Sacket's Harbor, were themselves in great want of re-enforcements—the former, postponing on that account, an attack which he had been ordered to make on Perry's fleet, while fitting out at Presque Isle;[2] 3d, that when late in the month of May, the British commander-in-chief (induced by the continued absence of the American fleet and army at the head of the lake) made an attack on Sacket's Harbor, he was unable to bring against that post, more than *seven hundred* combatants,—a conduct, utterly unaccountable in an old soldier, having at his disposition a corps of either six or eight thousand men; 4th, that the maximum of the British regular force at Kingston, in 1813, was one thousand men—a fact ascertained by the late Major-General Brown during the war, and subsequently, on a visit to that place.[3] And lastly, that Sheafe's papers, taken at York and examined by the late Colonel Connor, Aid-decamp to General Dearborn, "showed satisfactorily, that the garrison of Kingston, during the winter and spring of 1813, was *weak*, and *much below the force necessary to its defence.*"[4]

[1] Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 101.

[2] Letters of Prevost and De Rottenburg to Proctor and Barclay, Appendix, No. 19.

[3] Appendix, No. 16.

[4] Appendix, No. 17.

II. The error next in date, as well as in magnitude, was that of omitting to make any competent provision for preventing the escape of the two British garrisons, the one from York, the other from fort George; an object, which, had it been accomplished, would have given us a complete command of the peninsula, and necessarily prevented those blunders and misfortunes, the occurrence of which, so completely verified the prediction of the much and justly lamented Pike.

Had the commander-in-chief in the first of the above mentioned cases, been on the field of battle or near it, or had he made Colonel Pierce acquainted with the orders given to Pike, (as he ought to have done,) the unnecessary delay made in the pursuit of the enemy would not have occurred; and in this case, Sheafe and his followers would, in all probability, have been overtaken and captured. Again, in the other case, if, instead of concentrating his whole force, naval and military, on the water-side of the enemy's defences, he had divided the attack, and made Chandler's brigade, Macomb's regiment, and Burns's cavalry, with a few pieces of artillery, cross the Niagara below Lewistown, and advance on fort George by the Queenstown road, the investment of that place would have been complete, and a retreat of the garrison impracticable. That this important duty should have escaped the General's notice is the more extraordinary, as the Secretary of War, in a letter of the 15th of May, 1813, had sufficiently apprised him of what would be the obvious

policy, and probable conduct of his adversary, should he find himself compelled to choose, between giving up his fortress, or saving his garrison.[1]

III. To correct the preceding error, the army was ordered to march on the 28th, to the Beaver Dams, in the belief that Vincent, after calling in his outposts, would make a stand at that point; but, unfortunately, though the pursuit was right, the direction given to it was wrong. Of the two routes in the General's choice, that known by the name of the Lake-road, would have placed him two miles in Vincent's front; and would of course, have compelled that officer (had he committed the blunder ascribed to him) to fight a battle, with a force greatly superior to his own, when, on the contrary, if approached by the Queenstown route, a direct and uninterrupted retreat would have been left open to him.

IV. The effect of this false movement, besides unnecessarily trying the strength and patience of the troops, was the loss of two entire days to the pursuit. Two others (the army being now recalled to fort George) were given to the consideration of some expedient, which should best indemnify us for the time and labor thus thrown away. The General's own wish, was to avail himself of the fleet, to carry the army to Burlington Bay; but the high destiny of that arm, on this, as on a later occasion, gave it a different and less useful direction. Left, therefore, without a choice of measures, he at last adopted one, (a march on the enemy by the Lake-

1 Appendix, No. 18.

road,) which ought to have been taken at daybreak of the 28th. But here, the General defeated the wisdom of his own decision by the means employed to execute it; for, instead of sending a force competent to the service required, he on the 1st of June, under some extraordinary delusion, despatched only a single and small brigade to combat a force, which, according to his own estimate on the 28th of May, required the presence and co-operation of nearly the whole army.

V. Doubting, at last, the sufficiency of Winder's brigade, the General on the 3d of June, despatched a second, which, with its precursor, reached Stony Creek in the evening of the 5th, when it was decided that the army should halt for the night. Chandler, who was now the leader of the enterprise, finding himself but six miles from the enemy, concluded, and not unreasonably, that if Vincent intended to give battle, he would make the attempt during the ensuing night; and under this impression, hastened to call into exercise all his generalship to meet that contingency. Pickets were accordingly placed in front and rear, and on both flanks; while a chain of sentinels encircled the camp. Yet, with all these precautions, the camp was surprised, a portion of its artillery taken, and one hundred prisoners made, among whom, were the two Brigadiers. A misfortune like this, must have had a cause, or causes, worth inquiring into, with regard to which, we offer the following suggestions:—

1st. "If a General take a position in the neighborhood of an enemy, from whom a night-attack may be expected, his first care ought to be, to keep his force together, and so placed, that its several parts may be promptly brought to sustain each other." This maxim does not appear to have been sufficiently attended to. The thirteenth and fourteenth regiments, composing the boat and baggage guard, were stationed three miles from the encampment; and the cavalry so placed as to be unable to act.[1] Why the position given to the boat-guard, had not been taken as the ground of encampment for the whole detachment, is not very apparent; for here, besides the advantages of concentration, the General would have found himself three miles nearer his object; on the very route, by which he intended moving in the morning; and with flanks and rear, well secured by the lake and the creek, against the night-attack he expected.[2]

2d. "It is not enough that patrols and pickets be established against night-attacks. These parties should be frequently visited by the General himself, or by some one of his staff, who will be careful to enforce the orders already given, or issue new ones accommodated to such change of circumstances as may have arisen in the case." Had such a supervision been exercised on the present occasion, it is quite impossible, that an entire picket would have

1 Burns's Report to General Dearborn.

2 Chandler's Report to General Dearborn, of the 18th of June.

been caught asleep on its post; or that fires, ordered to be extinguished in the evening, should have been found burning at daybreak.[1]

3d. "In night operations, when the eye can do little, false attacks may be mistaken for real ones—but even in this case, the ear of a practised soldier cannot long be deceived—for if the onset be neither vigorous nor extended, it may at once be considered as false." Vincent's demonstrations were of this kind, few and feeble; and making no serious impression but upon the two Generals—who, mistaking them for the main attack, drew off the fifth regiment from the centre of the line, and thus left the artillery unsupported.

4th. The next blunder in this comedy of errors, must be ascribed to Burns, on whom the command of the army had devolved, in consequence of the capture of Chandler and Winder. When, at daybreak, this officer was called to exercise his new functions, he found, as he tells us in his official report, that "all the views of the enemy had been completely frustrated; himself obliged to fly, leaving the field of battle covered with his dead and wounded, and more than seventy men, principally of the forty-ninth, made prisoners:" while, on the other hand, the troops of the United States had suffered little loss, were in perfect order, and entirely in condition, had not both Generals been taken, to have pressed Vincent to a second combat, the issue of which,

1 Chandler's Report to General Dearborn, of the 18th of June.

would not have been doubtful. Yet, in despite of all these discoveries, our modest cavalier (from sheer diffidence in his own capacity to direct infantry movements) refused to avail himself of the advantages he possessed, and, instead of longer pursuing the objects of the expedition, turned his back at once on Vincent and victory, and hastily retired to Forty-Mile Creek; thus practically contradicting his own official statements, and giving to the affair of Stony Creek, the new and unmerited character of a positive defeat on our part.

5th. But little more mismanagement was now wanting, to make the campaign of 1813, as much a subject of ridicule at home, and contempt abroad, as that of the preceding year. Nor had we long to wait for such new instances of misconduct, as could not fail to produce this degrading effect. On the 6th of June—the day on which Burns was flying, when none pursued—an order was received from the commander-in-chief, recalling without loss of time, the whole army to fort George, and virtually abandoning all the objects of the campaign. Nor was even this ill-judged movement executed, without a disorder which entailed upon it, the loss of "twelve boats, principally laden with the baggage of the army."[1]

These events were soon known and justly appreciated by the British commander, who, advancing as we retreated, was willing on the 20th of the

1 General Lewis's Letter of the 14th of June, 1813.

month, to hazard the *élite* of his army (about five hundred combatants) within stroke of his adversary.[1] Every just view of this circumstance, indicated the wisdom of immediately assailing this corps; the capture, or destruction of which, would have effectually defeated the present views and future operations of Vincent. But unfortunately, though the General adopted this opinion, he altogether failed, as in other cases, in the employment of means, proper for giving to the experiment a successful issue. Instead of placing, as he ought to have done, Scott and Miller at the head of fifteen hundred men each,[2] and moving them by a night-march and the shortest route on De Coos's station, he despatched Bœrstler (an officer not distinguished by any prior service) with five hundred and forty effectives only, by the Queenstown road, in open day, without reserve or demonstration of any kind, either to sustain the attack, or cover the retreat![3]

1 The Stone House, called De Coos's station, was seventeen miles from fort George.

2 The effective strength of General Dearborn's army, amounted at this time, to three thousand five hundred combatants.

CHAPTER VI.

Second investment of Fort Meigs.—Gallant defence of Fort Stephenson.—Defeat of the British fleet on Lake Erie.—Capture of Amherstberg.—Recapture of Detroit and the Michigan Territory.—Harrison's pursuit and defeat of Proctor.—Arrival of a part of the Western Army on the Niagara.

ALARMED by the reports in circulation of Perry's progress in building and equipping armed vessels at Presque Isle, Proctor and Barclay, early in the spring, projected an attack on that post; but for this purpose, an augmentation of their several means was deemed indispensable. The General, accordingly, called for a re-enforcement of regular infantry, and the Commodore, for an additional number of practised seamen; but though the enterprise was promptly approved by Provost, and entirely conformed to views previously given by him, so weak at the moment was the British central division on Lake Ontario, that an immediate compliance with either branch of the requisition was impracticable; nor was it till about the 10th of July, that "sixty seamen and four hundred infantry" could be sent to the division of the west.[1]

In the meantime, to avoid a state of inaction, and

1 See letters of Provost and De Rottenburg, Appendix, No. 20.

to give employment, in particular, to a great mass of restless Indians, which had been assembled at Malden in March and April, Proctor began the campaign with a demonstration on fort Meigs, from which he expected the following results; 1st, That Clay, and his garrison, made up of insubordinate militia, might be provoked or seduced to quit their intrenchments, and take the risk of a field-fight with him and Tecumseh; and 2d, that by seriously alarming Harrison (then at Lower Sandusky) for the safety of his outpost and stores on the Miami, that officer would be induced to march to their defence; and thus losing the power of sustaining fort Stephenson, Cleveland and Presque Isle, render certain and easy the capture of those places.[1]

With these views, the British commander began his movement at the head of a force, regular, militia and Indian, amounting to four thousand combatants;[2] with which, on the 22d of May, he appeared before fort Meigs. But perceiving early, that his stratagem in relation to that place, was not likely to succeed, and that what remained of his plan might be jeoparded by delay, he on the 28th, raised his camp; sent back a part of his allies to Malden, detached another and larger portion to watch and waylay Harrison, and with the residue of his force, white and red, hastened to the attack of Lower Sandusky. Nor could circumstances more propitious be imagined, than those under which he found this nominal

1 See letters of Provost and De Rottenburg, Appendix, No. 19.

2 Christie's History of the War in the Canadas, p. 117.

fortress,—injudiciously placed and badly constructed, neither finished nor furnished, and even stripped of a part of its ordinary armament,—with a small garrison not exceeding one hundred and fifty men, under orders to retreat, "should the enemy approach in force and with cannon, provided *a retreat should then be practicable.*"

Fortunately for the credit of the American arms, the first step taken by Proctor was that of isolating the fort by a cordon of Indians; thus rendering the retreat of the garrison highly perilous, if not impracticable, and leaving to the commander a choice only between submission and resistance. In making this selection, the young and gallant Croghan did not hesitate; and to the demand of a surrender, enforced by the usual menace of indiscriminate slaughter in case of refusal, he answered substantially,—that the defence of his post was a point of honor, which could only be satisfied by an actual experiment of the relative force and fortune of his antagonist and himself.

While this negotiation was in progress, Proctor was employed in landing his artillery and giving it a position in aid of his gun-boats; from which, on the delivery of Croghan's answer, a heavy fire was opened and continued on the fort, with little if any intermission during the night. At daybreak, a second battery of three six-pounders was established within two hundred and fifty yards of the pickets; and about four o'clock, P. M., it was found that the whole fire of the British cannon, was concentrated on the north-west corner of the fort—a circumstance, sufficiently

indicating the point and species of attack meditated upon it. Major Croghan, accordingly, hastened to employ such means as he possessed to strengthen the menaced angle,[1] and had barely executed his purpose, when the enemy (covering himself with smoke) was seen rapidly advancing, and but a few paces distant from the pickets. A general and well-directed fire of musketry from the garrison, which immediately followed this discovery, had the effect of checking his progress and considerably disturbing his order; but the latter being speedily restored, the movement was resumed, and the ditch reached and occupied by the head of the column. It was at this critical moment, that Croghan's single piece of artillery, charged with grape-shot and so placed as to enfilade the assailants, opened its fire and with such effect, that in a few minutes, the combat was virtually ended and the battle won.[2] Most of the enemy who had entered the ditch, were killed or wounded; and such of them as were less advanced and able to fly, sought safety in the neighboring woods—carrying with them no disposition to renew the attack, and strongly impressing their Indian allies with their own panic. Proctor now saw, that all attempts to rally the fugitives were hopeless; and that to avoid a greater calamity,[3] his most prudent course would

1 Bags of flour and sand.

2 The cannonade and bombardment lasted thirty-six hours.

3 A fear that Harrison would quit his camp at Seneca, and pounce upon him in his then crippled state. It is worthy of notice, that of these two commanders, (always the terror of each other,) one, was

be, to re-embark what could be collected of his force, red and white, and return immediately to Malden. His retreat began accordingly at three o'clock in the morning, leaving behind him a note, recommending to American humanity the burial of his dead and the care of his wounded.

The enemy's movements not immediately requiring further attention from General Harrison, he now became actively and exclusively occupied, in bringing together such militia, in aid of the regular troops assigned to his command, as was deemed competent to the objects of the campaign. To this service, the popular and patriotic Governors of Kentucky and Ohio lent themselves freely and successfully; and by the 15th of September, the army collected on the southern shore of Lake Erie, and destined to a new invasion of Canada, amounted to more than seven thousand men.

Nor was the naval and auxiliary armament constructed at Erie, more tardy in its movements. On the 2d of August, the vessels were brought over the bar; and on the 5th, were in condition to offer battle to the enemy's fleet. This challenge being declined, a second experiment, made with the same view on the 7th, had a similar result. It was, however, soon found, that Barclay's hesitancy had not arisen from any settled purpose of avoiding a combat, but merely to supply a defect in the necessary preparation of his

now actually flying from his supposed pursuer; while the other, waited only the arrival of Croghan at Seneca, to begin a camp-conflagration, and flight to Upper Sandusky.

ships. At sunrise of the 10th of September, he was seen bearing down from Malden in the direction of Put-in Bay, whither Perry hastened to follow and to fight him.

The relative force of the two fleets, was not widely different—that of the British, was composed of two ships, two schooners, one brig, and one sloop, carrying sixty-three guns (twelve, eighteen and twenty-four-pounders) with five hundred and eleven seamen and marines; while that of the United States, consisted of three brigs, two schooners, and four sloops, mounting fifty-four carronades, and manned by four hundred seamen and marines.[1] In command of the former, was a distinguished veteran of the Nelson school, to whom all the secrets, real and pretended, of naval tactics, must have been intimately known; while, at the head of the latter, was a youth "whose home had long been on the deep"—glowing with patriotism and courage, but having no experimental knowledge of battles fought in squadron.

As if in some degree, to compensate this and other points of disparity, the wind, which early in the morning blew from the south-west, shifted to the south-east, and gave to the American fleet the weather-gage. Availing himself of this advantage, perhaps with too little attention to the sailing qualities of his smaller vessels, Perry, at a quarter before twelve, placed the Lawrence in a position to begin

1 McAffee's History.

an action, which, for pertinacity and effect, will rank high in the annals of naval warfare. Finding, after an experiment of ten minutes, that the distance he had taken was better adapted to his enemy's guns than to his own, he made sail ahead; soon after which, to his great mortification, "the brig became unmanageable—every brace and bowline being, in the meantime, shot away." Yet in this crippled condition, she gallantly "sustained the contest for more than two hours," at canister distance; when "every gun she had, being rendered useless, and a large portion of her crew killed or wounded,"[1] her commander transferred himself and his flag on board the Niagara, which, at this critical moment, a gust of wind had brought to his aid. A movement was now wanting that should give to the conflict a decided character and favorable issue; and this, Perry hastened to employ. At forty-five minutes past two, the smaller vessels having got into line, the signal for close action was made; when the Niagara, bearing up and passing the Detroit, Queen Charlotte and Lady Provost, at half pistol-shot distance, poured into them a most destructive fire from her starboard guns; and from her larboard battery another of equal execution, on the Chippewa and Little Belt. What yet remained to be done, was soon accomplished by the gun-boats, under the skilful direction of Captain Elliot;[2] the

1 Perry's official letter, dated September 13th, 1813.
2 Idem.

flags of the Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Lady Provost, were struck in quick succession; those of the brig Hunter and schooner Chippewa, were not slow in following the example; and the Little Belt, which now attempted to escape, was promptly pursued and soon captured. Such was the termination of this well-fought and decisive battle—brilliant in itself, having the most important bearing on the issue of the campaign, and requiring nothing to complete its glory, but the humble and pious gratitude with which it was announced.

The road to Malden being no longer obstructed by the enemy, the commanding General now hastened to avail himself of the first impression made on Proctor by this naval victory. Embarking the army on the 27th, he on that day sailed under convoy of the fleet for the Canada shore; which, from the favorable state of the wind and weather, he was enabled to reach at three o'clock, P. M. No enemy appearing to interrupt the debarcation, it was safely and promptly made, and the march continued to Amherstburg, where the troops bivouacked for the night.

It was here, that General Harrison first learned, that Proctor, after dismantling Malden, burning the barracks and navy-yard, and stripping the adjacent country of horses and cattle, had early on the 26th, began his retreat into the interior of the province. Though no time was lost in resuming the pursuit in the morning, still, reasoning from the urgency of Proctor's motives for a speedy flight, and the ample

means he possessed for executing it successfully, the movement was made without the smallest hope that the American army could, by any effort, be able to overtake him.[1] This desponding view of the business, which, had it continued longer, would no doubt have verified itself, was fortunately much diminished, if not entirely removed, (soon after the arrival of the army at Sandwich,) by finding, that the want of horses, which, in the General's opinion, rendered the pursuit hopeless, would be well and abundantly supplied by Johnson's mounted regiment, which was now seen winding its way along the opposite bank of the Detroit.[2]

Two days were now employed in re-establishing the civil government of the Michigan Territory, and assigning to it a defensive corps; in organizing a portion of the army for rapid movement, and in giving to the whole of it an order of march and battle. It was not, therefore, until the 2d of October, that the pursuit was resumed, nor until the 5th, that the enemy was overtaken. On this day, he was discovered in a position skilfully chosen, in relation as well to local circumstances, as to the character of his troops. A narrow strip of dry

1 General Harrison's letter to the Secretary of War, dated September 27th, 1813. In this letter, the General says—"I will pursue the enemy to-morrow, although there is no probability of overtaking him; as he has upwards of one thousand horses, and we have not one in the army."

2 This corps had been organized by direction of the War Department, for frontier defence, in the spring of 1813, under the command of Colonel R. M. Johnson.

ground, flanked by the Thames on the left, and by a swamp on the right, was occupied by his regular infantry, amounting to eight hundred bayonets, sustained by artillery: while on the right flank, lay Tecumseh and his followers, on the eastern margin of the swamp. After satisfying himself of these facts, General Harrison hastened to make such disposition of his force, as, in his opinion, was best accommodated to the case. To Trotter's brigade of Kentucky volunteers, was assigned the front line, extending from the swamp to the road near the bank of the river. One hundred and fifty yards in the rear of Trotter, King's brigade formed a second line, of similar extent; and in the rear of King, Child's brigade was held in reserve. On the left of Trotter and covering his flank, Desha's division, composed of two brigades, was posted in crotchet or *en potence*—while to the mounted gun-men, was assigned the duty of turning the right flank of the Indian position.

This arrangement was scarcely announced, when two important circumstances, which had either not been attended to at all, or very negligently, were now fully ascertained; the one, that the service assigned to the mounted regiment, was impracticable, from the miry character of the soil, and the number and closeness of the thickets which covered it; the other, that Proctor had neglected to strengthen the front of his position with either ditch or abbatis; and had besides, committed the greater fault, of giving to his regular infantry a formation

of open order. Acting on this state of things, which left no doubt of the true point of attack, or of the means most proper to be employed in making it, the mounted corps was now ordered to form in close column in front of the volunteers; to advance obliquely in the direction of the British infantry, and after receiving their fire, to charge them at full speed. On examining the ground directed by the preceding order to be taken, the space was found to be too narrow for a useful employment of the whole regiment; when Colonel Johnson, in the exercise of a discretion wisely left to him, separated the two battalions of which it was composed; giving to the one, the execution of the projected charge on the British infantry, and to the other, a simultaneous attack on the Indian line. Of the two corps, the second battalion, "in four columns of double files," had advanced but a short distance, when it received the enemy's fire; which, as might have been expected from men and horses unpractised in war, and brought for the first time into actual combat, produced a recoil in the heads of the columns. The disorder was, however, soon and completely retrieved, and a second fire sustained, with the *sang froid* of veterans; when the charge, as directed, was promptly and vigorously made, and with a success, seldom equalled and never surpassed. In "the single minute of time" which it occupied,[1] the victory of the day was essentially won, and nearly the

[1] Harrison's Official Report of the action.

whole of the regular force of the enemy killed, wounded, or taken. The contest between the first battalion and the savages, was, like the preceding, sharp but short; its duration not exceeding six or seven minutes. In this, the gallant Colonel Johnson was thrice severely wounded; and his not less gallant adversary, Tecumseh, the head and heart of the Indian line, killed on the spot he defended. Proctor, who had saved himself and part of his suite, by a base desertion of his troops, was now strenuously but unsuccessfully pursued. The chase was not, however, altogether barren; fifty additional prisoners and six pieces of brass artillery were captured and secured.

Thus fortunately terminated an expedition, the results of which were of high importance to the United States; a naval ascendency gained on Lakes Erie and Superior; Malden destroyed, Detroit recovered, Proctor defeated, the alliance between Great Britain and the savages dissolved, and peace and industry restored to our widely extended and much exposed western frontier. With the proud satisfaction of having contributed to these important events, the Kentucky volunteers began their homeward march, under the direction of their gallant and venerable leader, the late Governor Shelby.

The attention of General Harrison and Commodore Perry, on getting back to Sandwich, was for a moment, attracted to measures necessary to the reduction of Michilimackinac; but the weather becoming stormy, and the navigation of Lake Superior

dangerous, the project was abandoned, and another and better substituted in its stead. Leaving to General Cass and his brigade the defence of Detroit, the residue of the regular troops, amounting to thirteen hundred men, were promptly embarked and brought down to Buffalo, where they arrived on the 24th of October. In taking this step, the General had anticipated the wishes of the Secretary of War, who, in a despatch of the 22d of October, suggested as an ulterior operation for the army of the west, a movement to the Niagara, and an attack of the right and rear of De Rottenburg's position; while McClure's militia and Porter's volunteers should assail it in front—a measure, the execution of which was only prevented by the slowness with which both corps assembled for the purpose; by the reported movement of the enemy from the peninsula to Kingston; and by the risk arising from any great accumulation of force at that post, to our naval depôt at Sacket's Harbor, in the absence of the army, which was now moving in another direction.[1]

The better to obviate this cause of alarm, the Secretary of War directed, that McArthur's brigade should be removed, as promptly as might be convenient, to the harbor; intending by the limitation thus given to the order, that Smith's battalion of riflemen should be left to make part of the garrison

[1] See Appendix, No. 24.

of fort George, and the defence of the Niagara frontier; instead of which, both corps were brought down the lake by the General, who, hastening his return to the west, soon after closed his military career by a resignation of his commission.

Remarks. This third and last campaign of General Harrison, though in its issue highly important to the nation and honorable to its arms, would, in all probability, have had a termination as disastrous as its immediate predecessor, had the General been indulged, as formerly, with a *carte blanche* in the mode of conducting it.

It will be remembered, that in prosecuting the war in the west, the cabinet of 1812, limited the exercise of its authority to a mere designation of objects; leaving to the knowledge and judgment of the commanding General, the selection of means, time and manner of pursuing them. The frequent and unexpected misfortunes, which in this and part of the succeeding year, befel the American arms in district No. 8, could not fail to suggest a change of this system, in two essential points—the *exclusively military character of the armament:* and the *latitude, given to the General with respect to the number and kind of troops to be employed, and the time and mode of employing them.* A plan of campaign conformed to these general views, was accordingly prescribed, limiting the army to *seven thousand combatants;* designating *Malden* as the object of attack; adding

to the military, *a naval force;*[1] and directing a movement of the former by *water*, instead of a *land-march of "nearly two hundred miles" through a swampy desert;* in which, besides the ordinary impediments arising from roads and weather, it would, at every step, have been liable to the attacks, open and covered, of *four thousand savages.*[2]

1 No efficient measures were taken by the government to obtain a command of the lakes, until October, 1812. A letter, written about this time, by General Armstrong to Mr. Gallatin, was probably the means of recalling the attention of the cabinet to this important subject. In this letter, the General stated the following facts—"that he was informed by Captain Chauncey, that as early as the 1st of July, Captain Woolsey had requested twenty six-pounders, of which, there were more than one hundred in the navy-yard unemployed; that the intention of Woolsey was to arm such vessels of commerce, as could be found on the lake, and at Sacket's Harbor, with the aid of which he would be able to get a complete command of the water, and that he (Captain Chauncey) not believing himself authorized to do more, had but referred the letter to the Secretary of the Navy, from whom no answer had been received." On these facts, the General subjoined the following opinions, that "it was not yet too late to accomplish Mr. Woolsey's object; and that the object in itself was of the highest importance; that besides giving us the advantage of *an exclusive and uninterrupted use of the Lakes for public purposes, it would effectually separate Upper from Lower Canada, cut asunder the enemy's line of communication, and prevent Brock and Provost from succoring each other.*" Soon after the receipt of this letter, Commodore Chauncey received authority to build and equip, armed vessels on Lake Ontario; and General Dearborn a similar authority, to arm and otherwise fit out for public service, such commercial craft as might be useful on Lake Champlain. For another communication, involving this and other subjects, see Appendix, No. 22.

2 McAffee and Christie. The latter, residing in Canada, and having access to public functionaries, must be considered good authority with respect to the numbers with which the expedition began.

To a strategic movement of this kind, expressly calculated to gain an ascendency on the Lake, and thus to neutralize the Indian part of the enemy's force, and secure to the American army a direct approach to its object, without expense, fatigue, or peril—no opposition, on the part of the General, was anticipated; and the more so, as in December or January preceding, he had officially announced, that "if the government would employ *naval means*, all their objects could be accomplished, in the short space of *two months in the spring*."[1] Yet, so vacillating was his judgment on this subject, that in March, 1813, he substantially revoked this advice, and did what he could, to obtain permission to conduct the campaign by the *old route, and in the old way*.[2] Fortunately, time, and the experience it brought with it, had lessened the weight of the General's opinions at Washington; his suggestions on the present occasion, were, therefore, promptly and decidedly discarded, and a new order issued, for prosecuting the campaign on the plan given in March, which, as we have seen, terminated successfully in August.

Mr. Harrison's next error was of a character even more menacing than the preceding; and but for the counteraction given to it by Major Croghan, must have been followed by disaster and disgrace—a con-

1 General Harrison's letter to the War Department, of the 12th December, 1812.

2 Harrison's official letter, of the 17th of March, and answer of the Secretary of War, Appendix, No. 23.

clusion, abundantly established by the following facts. On the 21st of April, after inspecting the defences at *Lower Sandusky*, the General, in a letter to the War Department, denounced that post as worthless in itself, and "impossible to save," and, therefore, "to be immediately *stripped of its stores, and promptly abandoned on the approach of the enemy.*"[1] Yet, on the 26th or 27th of July, though apprised of Proctor's coming, at the head of a force, estimated at five thousand combatants; though having done nothing to render the place more defensible, and somewhat to make it less so; though neither promising, nor intending to sustain it, should it be attacked; and though actually withdrawing himself and the army to Seneca, nine miles distant from it —yet, in despite of all these circumstances of inhibition, he placed in fort Stephenson a detachment of one hundred and sixty United States infantry, with "a single and small piece of artillery, and seven rounds of cannon cartridges," under orders to *retreat*, if "the enemy landed in force and with cannon, provided *retreat should then be practicable.*"

We need hardly remark, that an order of this kind, which put to hazard a detachment of this magnitude, in an untenable post, with few of the means necessary for meeting either siege or assault, and which forbade a retreat, while this could have been made with certainty and safety; and for a purpose altogether unnecessary, as he had already

[1] Harrison's letter of the 21st of April, 1813.

concluded—that "*coming by water, Proctor had not neglected to bring with him artillery*"[1]—was, in its whole bearing, a direct violation of every military rule applicable to the case. Nor was the General's subsequent conduct better conformed to their injunctions.

Having on the 29th, sufficiently assured himself with regard to the number and equipment of Proctor's force, and suspecting that this formidable array might be directed against his own intrenched camp at Seneca; he at once determined, "to collect and destroy his surplus stores, abandon his present position and make good a retreat to Upper Sandusky" —leaving to the fate that might await them, the settlements on the southern shore of the Lake; the boats built and stores collected at Cleveland; and Perry's fleet, then fitting out and nearly ready for service, at Presque Isle.[2] But though willing and prepared to make these sacrifices, he could not but perceive that a mere presumption of danger to his own camp, would not justify the abandonment of Croghan's detachment, without some effort on his part, to extend to it the eventual security he sought for himself. On this point, however, the General's

1 "As the enemy, coming by water, could bring with facility any quantity of battering cannon against it, it must inevitably fall"—a fact assumed by the General, in the council of war, held on the evening of the 29th.—*McAffee's History*, p. 322.

2 That *this* was the great object of the expedition will be seen by Provost's letter to Proctor, of the 11th of July, and De Rottenburg's to Barclay, of the same month, Appendix, No. 19.

sense of duty was soon satisfied; forgetting alike the admonition contained in his first order to Croghan, "*not to hazard a retreat in the face of an Indian investment,*" and the fact, now perfectly known to himself, that such investment did exist;[1] he despatched to that officer a second order, for "*an immediate retreat,*" *at all hazards;* indicating the route by which he was to make it, but taking no step to *cover*, or otherwise *sustain the movement.* And, as if the task thus imposed, was not in itself sufficiently perilous, he farther prescribed—that the garrison, instead of employing all possible means to *mask* the operation, should *begin* "*by setting fire to their stores and barracks,*" and thus virtually announce their intention to the surrounding enemy.[2]

Fortunately, the great disposer of the events of this world, not unfrequently converts evil into good, and folly into wisdom. On the present occasion, we have seen, that by the first order given to Croghan, he was assigned to the defence of a post, which, in the General's opinion, "*could not be saved,*" and at the same time, forbidden to retreat, *in the face of an Indian investment;* and that by a second, he was ordered *to abandon this untenable post, and make good a retreat of nine miles, through a continuous forest filled with savages, without aid or support of any kind.* Left,

1 In Harrison's official letter of the 4th of August, he says—"Having heard the firing [at the fort] I made many attempts to ascertain the force of the enemy; but our *scouts were unable to get near the fort, from the Indians who surrounded it.*"

2 Second order given to Croghan, Appendix, No. 21.

therefore, to choose between taking the risk of a British assault, or an Indian massacre, this officer did not hesitate, and was thus compelled to disobey an order, which directly defeated its own object. Yet, under circumstances so unpromising, whether separately or collectively considered, results of the most benign character followed—the *defeat of the enemy's objects, present and prospective*, and the preservation of our own army, from *the disgrace of a wasteful and unnecessary flight*.[1]

A word or two, at parting, on the charge made by a battalion of Johnson's mounted regiment, (unequipped with either swords or lances,) on a corps of veteran infantry, well armed with muskets and bayonets, sustained by cannon, and numerically stronger than their assailants. That the charge was gallantly made, and eminently successful, (*winning the battle*, as acknowledged by the General himself, "*in a single minute*,") cannot be doubted; but to bestow on it, the additional praise of deserving its good fortune, must depend on a single fact, whether the measure was, or was not, adopted under a sense of the advantage furnished to the assailant, by this error of his enemy? If this question can be answered affirmatively, the merit of the charge will be greatly enhanced and fully established. The affair will no longer be subject to be classed with victories *merely*

[1] Extract from Governor Duncan's report of the defence of Sandusky, by Major Croghan, made to Mr. Mercer, chairman of the Military Committee of the House of Representatives, in 1834, Appendix, No. 20.

fortuitous; but take its place with those *inspirations*[1] (as they have been called) of Turenne and Bonaparte, which, *founded on the error of an enemy, and seen at a glance of the eye*, could justify the most palpable deviation from ordinary rules.

Another and last question on this subject—*On whose suggestion was the charge under consideration. made?* Did the General, as he insinuates, "find the daisy all himself?" or, was the conception of the project, the legitimate property of Colonel R. M. Johnson? Non nostrum tantas componere lites.[2]

Proctor's situation at Malden (after Barclay's defeat) made necessary on his part, a prompt retreat to Vincent, unencumbered with baggage; or, a vigorous defence of the post committed to his custody. By adopting the former, he would have saved seven hundred veteran soldiers and a train of artillery, for the future service of his sovereign; by adopting the latter, he would have retained the whole of his Indian allies (three thousand combatants); given time for the militia of the interior to come to his aid; had the full advantage of his fortress and its munitions—and a chance, at least, of eventual success, with a certainty of keeping inviolate his own self-respect, and the confidence of his followers. Taking a middle course between

[1] The affair more particularly alluded to in this passage, is the attack and capture made of the Spanish batteries, planted on the crest and covering the ascent of the Sommo-Sierra, by the lancers of the Imperial guard, in 1808. See Napier's Peninsular War, Vol. I, p. 402.

[2] Appendix, No. 21.

these extremes, he lost the advantages that would have resulted from either. His retreat began too late—was much encumbered with women, children, and baggage, and at no time urged with sufficient vigor, or protected with sufficient care. Bridges and roads, ferries and boats, were left behind him, neither destroyed nor obstructed; and when, at last, he was overtaken and obliged to fight, he gave to his veterans a formation, which enabled a corps of four hundred mounted infantry, armed with rifles, hatchets, and butcher-knives, to win the battle "in a single minute." Conduct like this, deserved all the opprobrium and punishment it received, and justly led to General Harrison's conclusion—that "his antagonist had lost his senses."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

The ministry of the elder Adams in England, began on the 10th of June, 1785. In a letter to the American Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on the 19th of July following, he says—"The popular pulse seems to beat high against America; the people are deceived by numberless falsehoods circulated by the gazettes, &c., so that there is too much reason to believe, that if the nation had another hundred million to spend, they would soon force the ministry into a war against us. Their present system, as far as I can penetrate it, is to maintain a determined peace with all Europe, in order that they may war singly against America, if they should think it necessary." In a second letter of the 30th of August following, he says—"In short, sir, America has no party at present in her favor—all parties, on the contrary, have committed themselves against us—even Shelburne and Buckingham. I had almost said, the friends of America are reduced to Dr. Price and Dr. Jebb." Again, on the 15th of October, 1785, he informs the American Secretary—"that though it is manifestly as much the interest of Great Britain to be well with us, as for us to be well with them, yet this is not the judgment of the English nation; it is

not the judgment of Lord North and his party; it is not the judgment of the Duke of Portland and his friends, and it does not appear to be the judgment of Mr. Pitt and the present set. In short, it does not at present appear to be the sentiment of any body; and I am much inclined to believe, they will try the issue of importance with us." In his two last letters, the one dated in November, the other in December, 1787, we find the following passages—"If she [England] can bind Holland in her shackles, and France from internal dissension is unable to interfere, she will make war immediately against us. No answer is made to any of my memorials, or letters to the ministry, nor do I expect that any will be done while I stay."

[No. 2.]

Letters from Colonel McKee (British Superintendent of Indian affairs) to Colonel England, dated 5th of July, and 13th and 30th of August, 1794, found among Proctor's papers, captured in 1813.—"I send this by a party of Saganas, who returned yesterday from fort Recovery, where the whole body of Indians, except the Delawares, who had gone another route, imprudently attacked the fort on Monday, the 30th of last month, and lost sixteen or seventeen men, besides a good many wounded.

"Every thing had been settled prior to their leaving the Fallen Timber, and it had been agreed upon, to confine themselves to taking convoys and attacking at a dis-

tance from the forts, if they should have the address to entice the enemy out; but the impetuosity of the Mackinaw Indians, and their eagerness to begin with the nearest, prevailed with the others to alter their system; the consequences of which, from the present appearance of things, may most materially injure the interests of these people; both the Mackinaw and Lake Indians seeming resolved on going home again, having completed the belts they carried with scalps and prisoners, and having no provision there, or at the Glaze, to subsist upon; so that his majesty's post will derive no security from the late great influx of Indians into this part of the country, should they persist in their resolution of returning so soon.

"Captain Elliot writes, that they [the British agents] are immediately to hold a council at the Glaze, in order to try if they can prevail on the Lake Indians to remain; but without provisions, ammunition, &c., being sent to that place, I conceive it will be extremely difficult to keep them together.

"I was honored last night with your letter of the 11th, and am extremely glad to find you are making such exertions to supply the Indians with provisions. Captain Elliot arrived yesterday; what he has brought will greatly relieve us, having been obliged yesterday to take all the corn and flour which the traders had here. Scouts are sent up to view the situation of the [American] army, and we now muster one thousand Indians. All the Lake Indians, from Sagana downwards, should not lose one moment in joining their brethren, as every accession of strength is an addition to their spirits.

"I have been employed several days in endeavoring to fix the Indians (who have been driven from their villages

and cornfields) between the fort and the bay. Swan Creek is generally agreed upon, and will be a very convenient place for the delivery of provisions, &c. The last accounts from General Wayne's army were brought me last night by an Indian, who says, the army would not be able to reach the Glaze, before yesterday evening; it is supposed on account of the sick and wounded, many of whom they bury every day."

[No. 3.]

Letter from President Washington to Mr. Jay, dated 30th August, 1794.—"As you will receive letters from the Secretary of State's Office, giving an official account of the public occurrences as they have arisen and advanced, it is unnecessary for me to retouch any of them; and yet, I cannot restrain myself from making some observations on the most recent of them, the communication of which, was received this morning only. I mean the protest of the Governor of Upper Canada, delivered by Lieutenant Sheafe, against our occupying lands far from any of the posts, which, long ago, they ought to have surrendered, and far within the known, and until now, the acknowledged limits of the United States.

"On this irregular and high-handed proceeding of Mr. Simcoe, which is no longer masked, I would rather hear what the ministry of Great Britain will say, than pronounce my own sentiments thereon. But can that government, or will it attempt, after this official act of one of their

governors, to hold out ideas of friendly intentions towards the United States, and suffer such conduct to pass with impunity?

"This may be considered as the most open and daring act of the British agents in America, though it is not the most hostile and cruel; for there does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well-informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that *all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of helpless women and children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of the agents of Great Britain in this country.* In vain is it then for its administration in Britain, to disavow having given orders which will warrant such conduct, whilst their agents go unpunished; whilst we have a thousand corroborating circumstances, and indeed as many evidences, some of which cannot be brought forward, to prove, that they are seducing from our alliances, and endeavoring to remove over the line, tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, and who have no causes of complaint, except pretended ones of their creating; whilst they keep in a state of irritation the tribes who are hostile to us, and are instigating those who know little of us, or we of them, to unite in the war against us; and whilst it is *an undeniable fact, that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing, and even provisions to carry on the war.* I might go farther, and, if they are not much belied, add, *men also in disguise.*

"Can it be expected, I ask, so long as these things are known in the United States, or at least, firmly believed, and suffered with impunity by Great Britain, that there ever will or can be any cordiality between the two coun-

tries? I answer—No. And I will undertake, without the gift of prophecy to predict, that it will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain long, if these posts are not surrendered. A knowledge of these being my sentiments would have little weight, I am persuaded, with the British administration, or perhaps with the nation, in effecting the measure, but both may rest satisfied, that if they want to be at peace with this country, and to enjoy the benefits of its trade, to give up the posts is the only road to it. Withholding them, and the consequences we feel at present continuing, war will be inevitable."

[No. 4.]

Letter of credence given by the Governor-General of the Canadas to John Henry. "The bearer, Mr. John Henry, is employed by me, and full confidence may be placed in him for communications which any person may wish to make to me in the business committed to him. In faith of which, I have given him this, under my hand and seal, at Quebec, the 6th of February, 1809.

(Signed.) J. H. CRAIG."

Extract from the letter of instructions to Mr. Henry.

[Most secret and confidential.]

"*Quebec, 6th February*, 1809.

"It has been supposed, that if the federalists of the eastern states should be successful in obtaining that decided influence, which may enable them to direct the public

opinion, it is not improbable, that rather than submit to a continuance of the difficulties and distress to which they are now subject, they will exert that influence to bring about *a separation from the general Union.* The earliest information on this subject, may be of great consequence to our government, as it may also be, that it should be informed, *how far, in such an event, they would look to England for assistance, or be disposed to enter into a connexion with us?*"

Report made to Sir James Craig, under the preceding instruction, and dated Boston, March 7th, 1809. "Sir, I have now ascertained, with as much accuracy as possible, the course intended to be pursued by the measures and politics of the general government. I have already given a decided opinion, that a declaration of war is not to be expected; but, contrary to all reasonable calculation, should the Congress possess spirit and independence enough to place their popularity in jeopardy by so strong a measure, *the legislature of Massachusetts will give the tone to the neighboring states; will declare itself permanent, until a new election of members; invite a Congress, to be composed of delegates from the federal states, and erect a separate government for their common defence and common interest.*"

Time, that great betrayer of political secrets, has produced a curious illustration of the opinion given by Henry in the preceding report. Mr. Adams, *ci-devant* President of the United States, in a late publication admits, that in 1808, "he earnestly recommended to the friends of the administration of that day, the substitution of the *non-intercourse* for the *embargo;* and in giving his reasons for that preference, was necessarily led to enlarge upon the views and purposes of *certain leaders of the party, which*

had the management of the state legislature in their hands. He urged, that *a continuance of the embargo much longer, would certainly be met by forcible resistance, supported by the legislature, and probably, by the judiciary of the state;* that to quell that resistance, (if force should be resorted to by the government,) would produce a civil war; and that in that event, he had no doubt *the leaders of the party would secure the co-operation with them of Great Britain. That their object was, and had been for several years, a dissolution of the Union, and the establishment of a separate confederation, he knew from unequivocal evidence, although not proveable in a court of law; and that in the case of a civil war, the aid of Great Britain to effect that purpose, would be as surely resorted to, as it would be indispensably necessary to the design.*" It would be unjust to the party, thus accused by Mr. Adams, were we not to add, that the expositions subsequently made on this subject, do not sustain the opinions given by that gentleman.

[No. 5.]

As a specimen of the temper of the opposition of that day, we subjoin the following resolution of the Senate of Massachusetts, passed on the 15th of June, 1813, in consequence of the capture of his His Britannic Majesty's ship Peacock, by the American ship Hornet.

"*Resolved*, As the sense of the Senate of Massachusetts, that in a war like the present, waged without justifiable cause, and prosecuted in a manner which indicates that

conquest and ambition are its real motives; it is not becoming a moral and religious people, to express any approbation of military or naval exploits, which are not immediately connected with the defence of our seacoast and soil."

A further exposition of this temper will be found in an act of the legislature of Connecticut, declaring the law of the United States (authorizing the enlistment of minors) *unconstitutional*, and providing, that all persons acting under it within the state, should be punished by *fine* and *imprisonment*. The penal clause was, however, qualified at the instance of the Speaker of the House, and the punishment by imprisonment given up. About the same time, all troops of the United States were, by an act of the Corporation of Hartford, *excluded from the city.*— *Major (now General) Jessup's Report to the Department of State.*

[No. 6.]

Our authority for making this statement will be found in the following extract from a letter of the 28th of September, 1834, written by Major-General Jessup, of the army of the United States.

"As to the particular fact in relation to which you desire information, (the franking of the letters from which the enemy derived his knowledge of the declaration of war,) it rests on general report and *Mr. Gallatin's admission*, (made to General Findley, in 1812,) that *he had franked*

letters addressed to persons in the enemy's territory." Of letters, so *franked* and *addressed*, three have been noticed; *one* sent to the west, (probably to St. Joseph,) furnished the first authentic evidence of the declaration of war received there; and with it a good and sufficient reason, for attacking and capturing Michilimackinac and its garrison. Such was the substance of a report made by Lieutenant Hanks to General Hull, and the officer then serving as his Adjutant-General. A *second*, sent to Malden, (according to information given to General Jessup and the late Major Dugan, while at that place,) was received by the British commanding officer, on the 28th of June; and, no doubt, caused the attack and capture of the Cayahoga packet, carrying the sick and convalescent of Hull's army, with his and their baggage. A *third*, reached Detroit, "was there retained and seen by many persons, among whom, was General James Taylor, of Kentucky." Whatever may have been the motive of the letter writer, the injury done to the United States cannot be denied—as its direct, if not obvious effect, was to take from them and give to the enemy, the power of striking the first blow—an advantage, which often decides the fate of a campaign, and not unfrequently, that of a war.

[No. 7.]

Memorandum of statements made by General Winchester and Major Madison to the Secretary of War, on their return from captivity.

"To avoid embarrassing the service with a personal controversy, and at the request of General Harrison, though the elder Brigadier, I continued in the command of the advanced corps, then on the Au Glaize, under a promise on his part, that 'I should be soon re-enforced and sufficiently supplied.' Early in December, I received orders to advance to the Rapids; a point, selected by the General, for establishing a magazine for the supply of the expedition. From the freezing up of the rivers, which prevented the use of boats, and from not being provided with teams or pack-horses for transporting the baggage and provisions, and being consequently obliged to drag both by hand, over roads then deeply covered with snow, it was the 10th of January before we arrived at that post. When two days on the march, I received a letter from General Harrison, advising me to send back within contract limits, two of the regiments composing the brigade, which was now reduced by sickness and fatigue to less than nine hundred effectives. This advice I declined following, for the subjoined reasons—The post assigned to us had become highly important, from its being the site of our magazine, and from the fact, that it was considerably nearer to the enemy's main body than to our own; that the roads between Malden and the Rapids, were more easily travelled than those between the Rapids and General Harrison's head-quarters; that having no intermediate post to observe or interrupt a movement against us, if made by the enemy, they might come on secretly and invest and carry the position, without giving us the power of even making known our condition to the other parts of the army; and lastly, that being thus exposed to attack and out of sustaining distance, the post

had not the ordinary means of defence; having neither cannon nor fortification, nor intrenching or other tools, necessary for making the latter; nor even an order for so using them, if they had been provided—the only instruction given me being that 'of clearing my front of an Indian party, supposed to have established itself on Swan Creek, and making huts for covering the provisions and baggage.' Had I taken the General's advice, my effective force on my arrival at the Rapids, would not have exceeded four hundred effectives, left to defend themselves and the magazines, with muskets and rifles only, against the attacks of a British and Indian force, which General Harrison did not estimate at less than *four thousand combatants*. Having promptly fulfilled the order above mentioned, of driving off the Indian party, we proceeded to make a large and strong house; which besides covering our supplies, would be useful as a place of defence against the attacks of the enemy. Of our arrival and situation the General was informed, by the best means I had—a party returning to McArthur's block-house; by whom I also requested a fulfilment of his promise of a speedy re-enforcement. In this state of things, three expresses, bringing letters from Mr. Day of Frenchtown, arrived in my camp in quick succession, with information, that a British and Indian force had arrived there (about three hundred in number) with orders to seize and send to Malden, all inhabitants attached to the United States government, or suspected of being so attached, and with them, all horses and cattle, sleds, carioles, and provisions of every kind, and condemning at once the whole settlement to starvation, imprisonment or slaughter, in case of refusal or resistance. The information was forthwith communicated to a council

of war, who, after full discussion, unanimously agreed, that a detachment should be immediately marched against the British and Indian marauders. A detachment of six hundred men was accordingly sent under Colonel Lewis, of whose success on the 18th, General Harrison was immediately apprised, and a request made on General Perkins (whose post was nearest to me) for another battalion or regiment, and some artillery if practicable. Suspecting that Proctor would make an attempt to revenge this stroke, and knowing that our wounded men could not be removed, I hastened to re-enforce Colonel Lewis with Wells's regiment, (two hundred and fifty men,) and set out myself to join him, and arrived on the morning of the 20th. The town, lying on the north side of the river, was picketed on three sides—the longest, facing the north and making the front. Within these pickets, Colonel Lewis's corps was found. Not thinking the position elegible, nor the pickets a sufficient defence against artillery, I would have retreated, but for the wounded, of whom there were fifty-five; but having no sufficient means for transporting these, and equally destitute of those necessary for fortifying strongly, I issued an order for putting the place in the best condition for defence that might be practicable; intending to construct some new works, as soon as the means for getting out timber might be had. On the evening of the 20th, Wells arrived, and was directed to encamp on the right, in an open field, immediately without the picketing. On the 21st, a patrole as far as Brownstown was sent out, and returned without seeing any thing of an enemy; on the same day, a man from Malden came in, who reported, that the enemy were preparing to attack us, but knowing nothing of the kind or extent of the preparation made or

making, what he brought was thought to be only conjecture, and such as led to a belief, that it would be some days before Proctor would be ready to do any thing. The troops were now in high spirits, expecting the arrival of General Harrison with re-enforcements from the Rapids, where he had got on the 20th; despatching his Inspector-General on the same day with orders to me, 'to hold the ground we had got at any rate,' implying as we believed, an engagement on his part, to be soon with us and in force. Neither night-patrole, nor night-pickets were ordered by me, from a belief, that both were matters of routine and in constant use. Our force now amounted to seven hundred and fifty men, stationed as before mentioned; the volunteers within, and Wells's regiment without the pickets. Not to discommode the wounded men, who, with Colonel Lewis's corps, occupied the houses on the north side of the river, I at some increased personal risk, took quarters for myself and suite, in a house on the southern bank, directly fronting the troops and only separated from them by the river, then firmly frozen, and but between eighty and one hundred yards wide. While the reveille was beating on the morning of the 22d, the alarm was given, and was soon followed by an attack of the British on the front, and by that of the Indians on both flanks. I was with the troops in a few minutes, and found every man at his post. Finding the left of the line on the outside of the pickets somewhat galled by the enemy's fire, (in pursuance of a plan previously laid in case of attack,) I requested Colonel Allen to draw them forward, and bring them within the picketing. When this order had been nearly executed, and the head of the line was within a few steps of the entrance, where I stood,

some of the soldiers mistaking the movement for a retreat, sounded the alarm and began to fly, when the whole broke and rushed towards the river. I instantly ordered them to be reformed under the bank; but though great efforts were made by Colonels Lewis and Allen, and others, to effect this object, they failed; the panic of the men overcoming all authority. Parts of two companies from the picketing, brought out to aid in restoring order, were carried off by the current; and a daring Indian attack from both flanks being now commenced on the fugitives, all further resistance was overwhelmed. Colonel Allen fell, and Colonel Lewis and myself were captured. My farther agency was only that of an adviser. No longer hoping any thing from the intervention of General Harrison, and seeing one half of our force already captured or dispersed, I anticipated only the slaughter of those within the pickets who yet bravely held out; and assured by Proctor, that on a surrender, he would give honorable terms, I advised to that measure. Not being permitted to communicate with Majors Graves or Madison in person, my opinion was probably misunderstood, and certainly misrepresented, as after my own capture, I had no idea that I could legally exercise authority over them. I will not, however, pretend that I am able now to recollect the terms I used on the occasion, but the present is a true statement of what I intended."

Major Madison's statement.

"Our force, on the 22d of January, was between seven hundred and fifty and eight hundred men. The original detachment under Colonel Lewis was diminished by the action of the 18th with Reynolds, upwards of seventy-five

men—fifty-five of whom were wounded—and increased two hundred and fifty, by Wells's regiment, brought on by General Winchester. Proctor's force did not much, if at all, exceed one thousand men, three hundred regulars, the remainder Canadian militia and Indians. On the first (the regulars) Proctor's principal dependance was placed, but from the coldness of the weather and the depth of the snow, his artillery became unmanageable; and his infantry after doing its best, and losing one-fourth of its number, was not in either condition or disposition to renew its attack on the picketed part of our position.

"Our camp-police was, perhaps, not what it ought to have been; but I am not here the accuser or excuser of any one, though thoroughly convinced that the principal error of the campaign, and that which brought all other evils upon us, was the great distance at which the other parts of the army were kept. Had the disposition been different, had the main body been located within sustaining distance of the advanced corps, or had this corps been re-enforced by even a single battalion of five hundred men, ours would have been a victory instead of a defeat. As it was, so firmly did the few men holding the town believe in their power of defending it, even after General Winchester's capture, that it was with great reluctance they gave it up; and principally from a want of ammunition to continue the contest, and not from Proctor's threats of smoking or burning us out, which we knew to be ridiculous. A sight of the enemy's condition, which could not be prevented after our surrender, satisfied me that if we could have been supplied with ammunition, we might have held out, for no one could show more impatience to begin and continue a retreat than Proctor, embarrassed

as he was with wounded and dying men, with the prisoners he had made, and expecting to be attacked every moment by Harrison, of whose arrival at the Rapids he had been informed by an Indian runner, while the attack was going on."

[No. 8.]

Major Eve's testimony.

"A few days after General Winchester had assumed the command at fort Wayne, we were met at the St. Mary's by General Harrison, who called together all the field-officers who were at that place, with the Hon. Samuel McKee. General Harrison then stated that the army was in a deplorable situation—that he had relinquished the command to General Winchester; but from a letter which had met him at St. Mary's, he was at a loss to understand whether the Secretary of War intended that he (Harrison) or Winchester should have the command—that the troops at fort Wayne were much dissatisfied at being commanded by General Winchester, and that he had to take some pains to satisfy them. He then requested the officers present to say, who they, and the troops under their respective commands, would rather be commanded by. The answer to a man was, that they had rather be commanded by General Harrison. He then requested the officers to make that expression in *writing, and called on Mr. McKee* to draw up a written statement to that effect, observing at the same time, that

he would send it to the officers at fort Wayne, and if it was the wish of the army generally, that he should command, he would take it, and risk the consequences with the government. But upon reflection, (after General Harrison had retired,) *it was thought improper by the officers to sign the statement drawn up by Mr. McKee.* General Harrison was, in a few days afterwards, invested with the command by the Secretary of War, which made any further call on the officers unnecessary. I have only to state facts, without intending to eulogize General Winchester, or to injure General Harrison. With the former, I have very little acquaintance; but have no hesitation in saying, that I believe his conduct whilst in the army has been much misrepresented to his prejudice."

[No. 9.]

Extracts from affidavits in relation to the affair at Frenchtown, of the 22d of January, 1813, made by the late Governor Madison of Kentucky, Colonel William Lewis, and Major S. Garrard.

"Sometime between the 8th and 12th of January, we arrived at the Rapids of the Miami, where a co-operation was expected with General Tupper—but in that we were disappointed. In a few days after our arrival at the Rapids, I understood that General Winchester had received communications from the inhabitants of the Au Raisin settlement, making application to him for assistance and protection—which was repeated, with statements

that the enemy were plundering them of their property. A council of the officers was then called and their opinions taken. To the best of my recollections, they were unanimously of opinion, that a detachment ought to be sent to the relief of the inhabitants at Raisin, as soon as practicable. I cannot say whether or no General Winchester had any right to expect re-enforcements from General Tupper and Perkins, but it was generally believed that we would receive troops from them. I am well persuaded, that *could we have been re-enforced with five hundred additional men, a victory on the* 22*d of January*, 1813, *would have been the result instead of a defeat.*"

Extract from the statement of Colonel W. Lewis.

"*I think, had the General's force at Frenchtown been five hundred greater than it was, he would not have experienced a defeat.* I was immediately with General Winchester, during great part of the action, and can bear testimony to his coolness and bravery.

Extract from the affidavit of Major S. Garrard, Inspector of Brigadier-General Payne's brigade of Kentucky volunteers, made a prisoner at Frenchtown.

"On my return from Canada, I passed the Rapids, *where General Harrison informed me that General Winchester had every reason to expect re-enforcements on the* 21*st;* and further, that they were delayed in consequence of having, in the first instance, attempted an advance on the ice, which they were compelled to abandon, return back, and take Hull's road."

[No. 10.]

Orders given to General Dearborn by the Secretary of War in relation to the Niagara frontier.

June 26*th*, 1812.—"Your preparations [at Albany] it is presumed, will be made to move in a direction for *Niagara*, *Kingston*, and *Montreal*." *July* 15*th*.—"On your arrival at Albany, your attention will be directed to the security of the *northern frontier by the lakes*." *July* 20*th*.—"You will make such arrangements with Governor Tompkins, as will *place the militia, detached by him for the Niagara and other posts on the lake, under your control*." *July* 29*th*. —"Should it be advisable to make any other disposition of these restless people, [the warriors of the Seneca tribe of Indians,] you will give orders to *Mr. Granger* and the *commanding officer at Niagara*." *August* 1*st*.—"You will make a *diversion in favor of him* [General Hull] *at Niagara and Kingston*, as soon as may be practicable." How, we ask, was it possible for the General, with these orders in his portfolio, to believe, that the Niagara frontier had not been within the limits of his command? And if he did so believe, by what authority did he extend the armistice (entered into between him and Provost) to that frontier? As, however, the inaction which enabled Brock to leave his posts on the Niagara undisturbed and unmenaced, and even to carry with him a part of his force to Detroit, and there to capture Hull, his army and territory, was not noticed by any kind of disapprobation on the part of the government, the inference is fair, that it (the government) was willing to take the responsibility on itself.

[No. 11.]

Extract of a letter from Sir George Provost to General Brock, dated 30th of August, 1812.

"I consider it most fortunate, that I have been able to prosecute this object of the government (the armistice) without interfering with your operations on the Detroit. I have sent you men, money and stores of all kinds."—*See Life and Services of Sir George Provost.*

[No. 12.]

"*Albany, February 22d*, 1813.

"SIR,—In obedience to orders of the 8th instant, requiring from me 'a particular statement in relation to the affair at Queenstown,' I have the honor to transmit a journal of the incidents connected with that affair which fell under my observation.

"On the 10th of October, 1812, I waited on Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, commanding at fort Niagara, to report my arrival on the evening of the 9th instant, with a detachment of nearly four hundred of the thirteenth, at the Four-Mile Creek, in charge of military stores, and thirty-nine boats capable of carrying conveniently each thirty men. He informed me of an intended attack that night at Queenstown, and I requested orders to join the corps designated for it. Such orders he was not authorized to

give, but sent off an express that evening to General Van Rensselaer to procure them. They arrived (I have since learned) at Niagara about nine at night, but I was prevented by an accident from receiving them; and my detachment was saved a night's march in a storm, and exposure and march the next day, by which all the other regulars in that quarter were very considerably harassed; as, being without tents or camp equipage, they were obliged to keep on foot until they returned to their quarters. This intended attack, in which my detachment was not originally included, was to have been conducted by Colonel Van Rensselaer and Captain Machesney at the head of a party of regulars, but was defeated by some mistake or treachery of a man in charge of the boats.

"On the 11th, (the storm still continuing with unabated violence, and the road still covered with stragglers from the different detachments of regulars, which had marched the night before from fort Niagara and its vicinity to Lewistown, on the proposed expedition,) I rode to General Van Renssalaer's encampment in order to report more particularly the detachment under my command, and to request a place in the next attempt; mentioning that I should like forty-eight hours for preparation, being myself an entire stranger to the country, and the detachment being just off a long march expedition from Oswego, requiring some time for the issue of several articles of petit equipment, and for putting themselves in the best condition. It was intimated to me that I should have a part in the first attack, and that it would take place in a few days. On the 12th, about twelve o'clock, Colonel Van Rensselaer rode into my camp and informed me that I must march immediately to Lewistown—that he intended

to attack at Queenstown that night. The weather had cleared away early, and at this time my tents were struck, every musket and lock taken to pieces, and every thing in the camp going through the process of police usual on such occasions; I was also informed that the provisions for that day had not yet been received from fort Niagara and could not be before evening. Colonel Van Rensselaer stated, however, that we should be able to reach Lewistown early, and that he would have rations ready for them there. We conversed about my waiving rank with him, which I told him was impossible; but as it was equally impossible for me to command in a night-attack on a place I had never seen—as I was informed it was a critical moment which must be used—and as I was not disinclined to yield as much as possible to an officer of established reputation, and as I was, and knew my whole detachment to be anxious for an opportunity of seeing some actual service on any terms, I consented to take a part without interfering with his arrangements for it, and requested for myself only good guides, and a landing in good order at the proper point. The detachment accordingly moved a little before five o'clock in the afternoon, and marched or rather waded to Lewistown, where we arrived sometime before ten; and most of the men and some of the officers had then their first meal for that day.

October 13th.—At half-past three, Colonel Van Rensselaer woke me and informed me it was time to move. I formed the detachment, read to the officers General Van Rensselaer's orders for the battle, and conducted partly by a guide and by Colonel Van Rensselaer, marched to the river. On the way, Colonel Van Rensselaer in-

troduced my guide for the battle to me. Between four and five o'clock we embarked our first parties. The number of boats was eleven or twelve, I understood, averaging about twenty-five men each, being calculated to carry just half of our respective detachments at a time. The boats assigned to the detachment under my orders were on the right, i. e. down the stream. Having embarked the first party, and given orders to Captain Ogilvie to take charge of the embarcation of the next on the return of the boats, I chose the boat in which was my principal guide, one Hopkins, and a party selected agreeably to General Van Rensselaer's orders, for the advanced guard of my detachment in the attack. The first that reached the Canada shore was the boat in which Captain Armstrong commanded, Captain Malcolm and Lieutenant Hugunen being also on board; and the pilot being skilful, returned immediately and gave Captain Ogilvie an opportunity of executing his orders in part. The boat to which I had committed myself, (if the circumstances under which I embarked are appreciated, that phrase will not be deemed improper,) unhappily lost a row-lock on the right, which gave it a direction down the stream; and although an officer, Lieutenant Fink, remedied that evil in a great measure, so far as the oar was concerned, by holding it, the pilot wanted skill or presence of mind to alter his course; and no one else knowing any thing of the stream or point of landing, and it being perfectly dark, we were obliged to confide in him. Having in this manner gone farther down the stream than across it, we soon fell below the others, and the fire of the left of the village was directed against this boat. The pilot, panic-struck, turned about, but being ordered with severity to make the

Canada shore at any point, he made another effort *literally* groaning with fear. Hopkins, who was called on to assist him, was useless. The situation of a boat thus managed on a rapid stream when descending, not only subjected to the severest fire on the boats which was decidedly from the left of the village, (where they seemed prepared for accidents of this kind, or perhaps expected the principal debarkation below,) but also separated from the corps, may easily be imagined. It became necessary to take the steering-oar from the boatman, and return to the American shore. Here my guide, Hopkins, disappeared. Being several hundred yards below the point of embarkation, I returned on foot by the edge of the river, thinking I could more immediately procure a proper pilot, and cross from that place. In the meantime the troops landed and formed immediately on the bank, about twenty paces or less from the river, under Colonel Van Rensselaer. Here a severe fire continued for a few minutes; but having himself received several wounds, and no other person being acquainted with the force or defences of the enemy, or the topography of the village and its environs, he ordered the troops to fall below the bank by which they were in a great degree covered. In this scene, Lieutenant Valleau and Ensign Morris of the thirteenth, both men of the most estimable character, the latter quite a youth and of extraordinary promise, were killed; Lieutenant Rathbone of the first artillery, severely wounded, (since dead;) Captains Armstrong and Malcolm of the thirteenth, and Ensign Lent of the thirteenth, severely wounded, and Captain Wool of the thirteenth, also wounded.

On my return to the upper ferry, I found there a scene of confusion hardly to be described. The enemy concen-

trated their fire upon our embarking place : no person being charged with directing the boats and embarkation, or with the government of the boatmen, they forsook their duty. Persons unacquainted with the river (which was indeed the case with most of the militia who had been encamped at Lewiston several weeks, whereas *all* the regulars had been marched there that night,) would occasionally hurry into a boat as they could find one, cross, and leave it on the shore, perhaps to go adrift, or else to be brought back by the wounded and their attendants, and others returning without order or permission; and these would land where they found it convenient, and leave the boat where they landed. During this state of things (the day just beginning to break) Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick arrived with a party consisting of Major Mullany's detachments of the 13th and 23d, and Capt. Machesney's of the 6th. He found me at the river's side, anxiously endeavoring to procure boatmen, and was himself bitterly disappointed by the impossibility of crossing his detachment. Deeming it improper to expose his troops in such a situation without use, he countermarched in the best order possible, but not without some confusion, owing to the narrowness of the ravine which led down to the river, and the severe fire of grape, cannister, and shells, which was directed on it. It was about this period, and from this fire, that Captain Nelson of the 6th, a gentleman equally respected and esteemed in his official character and private life, was mortally wounded.

While things were in this state on the American shore, and partial, and generally unsuccessful and ruinous attempts to cross were made by different officers, the troops that had crossed ascended, by order of Colonel Van R., the east side of the hill of Queenstown. Captain Ogilvie has the merit with his companions of having led on this

occasion. It was a few minutes after day-break when this movement, which was altogether unobserved by the enemy, was made. Finding no work, nor even a sentinel on the hill, they marched to the north side, half way down which was a one gun battery open in rear. Near it were paraded their principal force, which our best intelligence makes to consist of the two flank companies of the 49th, commanded by Captains Williams and Dennis. These fled on a single fire from the party in their rear on the height, but soon rallied, and did not finally retreat until they had made two unsuccessful attempts to get possession of the hill. In this affair Captain Wool of the 13th, a gallant officer, commanded, and displayed a firmness and activity in the highest degree honorable to him. Capt. Ogilvie and 1st Lieutenant Kearney of the 13th, 2d Lieutenants Randolph of the Light Artillery, and Carr and Hugunin of the 13th, and Ensign Reib, were also highly distinguished. On the part of the British, General Brock, and his aid, Colonel M'Donald, fell; both of the officers commanding the companies of the 49th were wounded, and they lost about twenty or thirty taken prisoners, most of them wounded. This affair ended in a few minutes after sunrise; and of the American party, few men and not an officer was killed or wounded.

But it is necessary to state further particulars of the disasters attending the embarkation and crossing of the regulars at this period, as they were the great cause of the destruction and confusion of the regulars that day, and of so small a number of them being engaged in the subsequent scenes.

It appears, then, that of four regular officers commanding corps, who actually attempted to cross before this affair of the morning, (all of them in different boats,) not one suc-

ceeded. They were Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, Major Mullany, Captain Machesney, and myself.

It appears, also, that five regular officers were taken prisoners immediately on landing on the left of the village, their parties being almost entirely cut to pieces in their boats. These were, Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick, Lieutenants Phelps (13th) and Clark, (23d) which three were severely wounded, and Lieutenants Bailey (3d Artillery) and Turner (13th Infantry).

The names of several other officers might be mentioned who were defeated in their attempts to land at the proper point, and were obliged to return.

Our best intelligence on this subject authorises me to state, that *at least* one hundred regulars were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners on the left of the village before or about sunrise.

About seven, or a few minutes past seven o'clock, I crossed; having for some time previous, as soon as the crossing became practicable, collected different detachments and sent them over. I found the senior officer there to be Captain Machesney of the 6th, who had, however, crossed but a few minutes before under my orders. Being in expectation of an immediate attack of the enemy in force, I employed myself in disposing of the prisoners which were still brought in; checking the disorders to which some of the troops seemed inclined; and arranging the fragments of the different detachments of regulars in their proper order. The gun, in the battery which has been mentioned, I found had been spiked by one of our own artillerists. In the course of an hour, in which I was momently expecting the approach of our main force with its artillery, and equipage, and supplies, a dragoon who, I suspect, threw himself into our hands, was brought to me

with a dispatch addressed to the commanding officer at Fort George. It was from the commanding officer at Chippeway, stating that the corps (Colonel Scott's) which had laid opposite the day preceding, had moved; that every thing was quiet there, and that he was ready to move. After interrogating the bearer, I sent him, in charge of an officer, with the dispatch to General Van Rensselaer. He was a native of the United States, personally known to one of our officers, and stated with great readiness and even interest, that the enemy were already in motion from that quarter, consisting of regulars and Indians, principally the latter. This gave a favorable occasion for a movement in the direction of Chippeway, and attacking this party on their march, and preventing their junction with the main force from Fort George. But at Queenstown every thing was stagnant. No considerable or regular embarkation appeared to be making on the opposite shore. A large stone house on the left of the village remained still in possession of the enemy, with two light pieces of artillery; and as not a piece of artillery had yet been brought over, it appeared impossible to attack it advantageously. After some time General Wadsworth appeared on the hill, thinking, as he told me, that his example might have a better effect than his orders in making the militia cross. He had seen the dispatch above mentioned, and was aware of the state of things on the hill. After some consultation he agreed that I should recross and represent it to General Van Rensselaer: this I did on meeting the General on the road about half a mile from the river. He informed me that he had ordered Colonel Scott across, and that he would himself cross in a short time. He ordered Captain Totten of the engineers to repair to the opposite bank, and lay out a fortified encampment, and caused the intrenching tools to be

brought down with a view to be sent after, which, however, was neglected to be done. In the course of an hour, while the General was giving his directions to his staff and preparing for the passage of the river, a small and distant fire of musketry was heard. It was evident that this attack was from the forces from Chippeway, and that it was in fact the commencement of an action which must perhaps decide the fate of the campaign in that quarter. At least half of the boats we had in the morning were lost or damaged; not half the troops had crossed, although it was by this time about eleven o'clock in the morning; Lieutenant-Colonel Scott had not received orders to take his artillery across; Captain Gibson had taken but one piece—a circumstance attributable to the small size of the only boat calculated for that service; and on reaching the embarking place, we found there a company of men, very handsomely equipped, which was just on the point of entering the boats when this firing was heard, but had thereupon halted, and now absolutely refused to cross; regarding neither the orders, nor threats, nor remonstrances of the General. Finding it useless to urge them further, he crossed, Major Mullany joining us just as we went on board the boat. The instant we ascended the hill, seeing the regulars engaged three or four hundred yards from the river, near a wood, I hastened to that point, and urging my way directly to the front, found there Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, with a gallantry I cannot too much extol, leading and animating the troops. This officer had a few minutes before checked the first charge of the Indians, and saved his troops from the disorder they had nearly been thrown into by the precipitate retreat of a party of militia. We soon reached the wood and penetrated some distance into it; but after some time it was represented to Colonel Scott

that the Indians here presented no object for a charge; that while their fire was bloody, ours produced a comparatively small effect; that the wood was not so desirable a position as one about two hundred yards nearer the river; and the intervening space being cleared, the attacks of the Indians must be made in the open field, and would, of course, be easily repelled; and we might take the order and position intended in the expected engagement. This change of position being approved by him, was made gradually and with care; small detachments being ordered to move to different points in rear, as with a view to meet other attacks, Colonel Scott and myself remaining with the last. After this movement had been accomplished, the fire of the Indians was of course less general and fatal, but it was never intermitted during the remainder of the day. About the time of this movement the first detachments of the British army were seen at a great distance on the plain on their march from Fort George. Meanwhile our numbers instead of increasing were diminishing. The boat in which General Van Renssalaer came over, returned immediately full of men, who had concealed themselves under the bank for the purpose of seizing opportunities to recross, and had embarked in his presence; and I understand they even crowded into the very boat in which he afterwards returned, with a view to bring over his principal force which was still on the American shore. At about a quarter of an hour after two o'clock in the afternoon, the British troops paraded in front of us, we being formed on the edge of the hill—the village in our rear, the river on our left, and a bush cantonment on our right. In this were disposed a number of regulars and a small party of volunteer riflemen, commanded by Lieutenant Smith of the militia, who was highly distinguished by his activity and courage. These

served to keep the Indians in check, although they still maintained a galling fire on the right flank. My opinion of the British force, founded on my own observation and subsequent information is, that they had from four to five hundred regulars, with four pieces of artillery, from five to six hundred militia, and three hundred Indians. Our whole force under arms at this time was less than three hundred, with but one piece of artillery, and not a dozen rounds for it; yet I am well persuaded a retreat, much less a surrender, was not thought of; and that the troops were in fact in as high spirits as if we had been superior. Such was the state of things when a note from General Van Rensselaer to General Wadsworth arrived, commanding him to save his troops, informing him that not a regiment or company would move to reinforce us; that he had himself seen the movements of the enemy, and knew that we were overpowered; and that he would endeavor to furnish boats and cover our retreat. He added in a postcript, that General Wadsworth might nevertheless govern himself according to circumstances under his more immediate view. General Wadsworth called together the senior officers of corps, read this letter, and asked their opinions. Nothing was decided on. Meanwhile, the enemy, manœuvering with great caution if not with some hesitation, moved in force by their right towards the river in such a way as to reconnoitre our whole front and left in part. Finding it difficult to believe, perhaps, that so small a body of men as that in view was the whole force they were to contend with, they then returned by their left, always skirting the woods, and presented themselves in line on our right flank. During these marches and counter-marches of the enemy, we were consulting, and at last determined to avail ourselves of the possibility of retreating suggested in General Van Rensse-

laer's letter. It was designed, accordingly, to throw our right on the road leading from the hill to the village, and form with the river in our rear. To do this it was necessary to march by the left which brought the militia in front of the column. They soon broke, on the commencement of the enemy's fire, and a perfect rout ensued. Not a boat being ready, nor any appearance of an attempt to bring them, we surrendered—were taken into the village of Queenstown, and treated with the greatest delicacy and humanity by General Sheaffe. The wounded were attended to here; the prisoners, private soldiers, were collected and marched to Newark; and, after being about an hour in the village, we marched with a guard, which was necessary to protect us from the Indians, to Fort George. We arrived there just at dark.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN CHRYSTIE,

Lieutenant-Colonel 13th.

General Thomas H. Cushing, Adjutant-General.

[No. 13.]

"Colonel Cochrane, formerly an aid-de-camp to Sir George Prevost, and at present Military Inspector, and attached to the District of New Brunswick, states, 'that the regular troops in the Canadas and New Brunswick, at the commencement of the war of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, did not exceed two thousand

men; but were increased from time to time, till, in 1815, their numbers amounted to about sixteen thousand five hundred.'

(Signed,) JAMES WATSON WEBB."

April 20th, 1830.

[No. 14.]

For orders given from the 26th of June to the 1st of August to General Dearborn, see Appendix No. 10. To these we now add the following:—*August the 8th.*—"Should the recruits and volunteers be found inadequate to immediate operations on the frontier, you are instructed to call on any Governor, or commander of a division or a brigade, for as many militia as you may deem necessary." *August 16th.*—"Proceed with the utmost vigor in your operations." *August 26th.*—"Every thing indicates the necessity of early and efficient operations on the Niagara and posts below." *September 21st.*—"Your arrangements for an attack on the British posts on the Niagara will, it is hoped, be in season." The General about this time proposed an attack to be made at the same time on Fort George, Kingston, and Montreal; to which the Secretary answered, "The President thinks not a moment should be lost in getting possession of the British posts at Niagara and Kingston, or at least of the former."

[No. 15.]

Letters from the Secretary of War to General Dearborn.

War Department, February 10th, 1813.

"I have the President's orders to communicate to you, as expeditiously as possible, the outline of campaign which you will immediately institute and pursue against Upper Canada:—

1st. 4000 troops will be assembled at Sackett's harbor.

2d. 3000 will be brought together at Buffalo and its vicinity.

3d. The former of these corps will be embarked and transported under convoy of the fleet to Kingston, where they will be landed. Kingston, its garrison, and the British ships wintering in the harbor of that place will be its first object. Its second object will be York, (the capital of Upper Canada) the stores collected, and the two frigates building there. Its third object, Forts George and Erie and their dependencies. In the attainment of this last there will be a co-operation between the two corps. The composition of these will be as follows:

1st.	Bloomfield's brigade, - - -	1,436
2d.	Chandler's do, - - -	1,044
3d.	Philadelphia detachment, - - -	400
4th.	Baltimore do, - - -	300
5th.	Carlisle do, - - -	200
6th.	Greenbush do, - - -	400
7th.	Sackett's Harbor do, - - - -	250
		4,030

8th. Several corps at Buffalo under the command of General Porter, and the recruits belonging thereto, - -	3,000
Total,	7,030

The time for executing the enterprise will be governed by the opening of Lake Ontario, which usually takes place about the 1st of April.

The Adjutant-General has orders to put the more southern detachments in march as expeditiously as possible. The two brigades on Lake Champlain you will move so as to give them full time to reach their place of destination by the 25th of March. The route by Elizabeth will, I think, be the shortest and best. They will be replaced by some new raised regiments from the east.

You will put into your movements as much privacy as may be compatible with their execution. They may be masked by reports that Sackett's Harbor is in danger, and that their principal effort will be made on the Niagara, in co-operation with General Harrison. As the route to Sackett's Harbor and to Niagara is for a considerable distance the same, it may be well to intimate, even in orders, that the latter is the destination of the two brigades now at Lake Champlain.

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG."

War Department, February 24th, 1813.

"Before I left New-York, and, till very recently, since my arrival here, I was informed through various channels, that a winter or spring attack upon Kingston was not practicable on account of the snow, which generally lies to the depth of two, and sometimes of three feet, over all that northern region during those seasons. Hence it is that

in the plan recently communicated, it was thought safest and best to make the attack by a combination of naval and military means, and to approach our object, not by directly crossing the St. Lawrence on the ice, but by setting out from Sackett's Harbor, in concert with, and under convoy of the fleet. Later information differs from that on which this plan was founded; and the fortunate issue of Major Forsyth's last expedition shews, that small enterprises, at least, may be successfully executed at the present season. The advices, given in your letter of the 14th instant, have a bearing also on the same point, and to the same effect. If the enemy be really weak at Kingston, and approachable by land and ice, Pike, (who will be a brigadier in a day or two,) may be put into motion from Lake Champlain by the Chateaugay route, (in sleighs) and, with the two brigades, cross the St. Lawrence where it may be thought best, destroy the armed ships, and seize and hold Kingston, until you can join him with the other corps destined for the future objects of the expedition; and, if pressed by Prevost before such junction can be effected, he may withdraw himself to Sackett's Harbor, or other place of security, on our side of the line. This would be much the shorter road to the object, and perhaps the safer one, as the St. Lawrence is now every where well bridged, and offers no obstruction to either attack or retreat. Such a movement, will, no doubt, be soon known to Prevost, and cannot but disquiet him. The dilemma it presents will be serious. Either he must give up his western posts, or, to save them, he must carry himself in force, and promply, to Upper Canada. In the latter case he will be embarrassed for subsistence. His convoys of provision will be open to our attacks, on a line of nearly one hundred miles, and his position at Montreal much weakened. Another decided advantage

will be, to let us into the secret of his real strength. If he be able to make heavy detachments to cover, or to recover Kingston, and to protect his supplies, and after all maintain himself at Montreal and on Lake Champlain, he is stronger than I imagined, or than any well-authenticated reports make him to be.

With regard to our magazines, my belief is, that we have nothing to fear; because, as stated above, Provost's attention must be given to the western posts and to our movements against them. He will not dare to advance southwardly while a heavy corps is operating on his flank and menacing his line of communication. But on the other supposition, they (the magazines) may be easily secured; 1st, by taking them to Willsborough; or 2d, to Burlington; or 3d, by a militia call, to protect them where they are. Orders are given for the march of the eastern volunteers, excepting Ulmer's regiment and two companies of axe-men sent to open the route to the Chaudiere.

"The southern detachments will be much stronger than I had supposed. That from Philadelphia will amount to nearly one thousand effectives.

(Signed,) "JOHN ARMSTRONG."

[No. 16.]

Extract from a letter of the late Major-General Brown.

"*Head-Quarters, Brownville, July 20th*, 1813.

"I have delayed giving the estimate you requested, of the enemy's forces in Canada, during the years 1812 and

1813 of the late war, that I might examine my minutes and papers the more carefully.

"At the commencement of the war, Sir George Provost had the command of very few regulars. The number placed under the orders of Governor Brock for the defence of Upper Canada, was never equal to twelve hundred men; and at no time did the command of this distinguished chief consist of less than 'one third of old men and invalids fit only for garrison duty.' No considerable increase of force on the part of the enemy took place during the campaign of 1812, and I have never been able to discover that at the opening of the campaign of 1813, [June 26th,] there were more than five thousand regular troops in the Canadas. The force, whatever it may have been, was principally in the Upper province. By the 27th of May of that year, the enemy had assembled on the Niagara about two thousand men, to resist any incursion—and at Kingston, about one thousand, for the projected attack on Sacket's Harbor, under the command of Sir George in person. The two columns would not have exceeded *three thousand* combatants, and I have it from unquestionable authority that the left column sustained a loss of full *four hundred* men."

[No. 17.]

Letter of Colonel Connor, of the 18th of March, 1816.

"Of the immense depôt I know nothing but by report, which stated that it had been carried to Sacket's Harbor,

and had there been burnt by the mistake of the Commodore's brother. Of the contents of Sheafe's papers, many of which Colonel King and myself examined, I know enough to convince me that during the winter and spring of 1813, the British garrison of Kingston was extremely weak and quite insufficient for defence.

"I am, &c.

(Signed) "SAMUEL CONNOR."

"GENERAL ARMSTRONG."

[No. 18.]

Letter from the Secretary of War to General Dearborn.

(*Private.*)

"*Washington*, 15*th May*, 1813.

"DEAR GENERAL,—Your affair of the 27th ult. is matter of public and private congratulation; much qualified, however, by the loss of Pike and the escape of the frigate, the capture or destruction of which, was, according to the Commodore's calculations, to give him a decided and permanent ascendency on the Lake. Another drawback upon it, less apt to be noticed by ordinary critics, but in itself very vexatious, is the escape also of Sheafe with the main body of his regular force. Under the present circumstances of Great Britain, bound as she is, neck and heels, to the prosecution of the war in Europe, she can ill afford to send to this country, either men or money, to support the *petite guerre* in which she has so inconsiderately involved herself with us. From informa-

tion the most direct and respectable, I am assured that her regular force in both the Canadas has at no time since the declaration of war exceeded three thousand men; and that at the present time, by casualties, (death, desertion, &c., always at work thinning the ranks of an army) this force is reduced at least one-fifth. Taking then this fact for granted, we cannot doubt but that in all cases in which a British commander is constrained to act defensively, his policy will be that adopted by Sheafe—to prefer the preservation of his troops to that of his post, and thus carrying off the kernel leave us only the shell. To counteract this policy, becomes, therefore, a special duty on our part—requiring the strictest attention, as well in projecting as in executing our attacks. On this head, my distance from you and my very insufficient knowledge of the topography of the country in which you act, make it improbable that any suggestion I could make, has not already presented itself to your mind. As a general maxim, however, I may be permitted to say, that in concentrating our whole force on any given point of an enemy's position, we necessarily leave all others open to him for escape; whence it follows, that to deprive him of this advantage, two attacks (if our force permit it) should be made, and one of these so directed as to shut him out from all means of retreat; or at least to force him into roads, where finding little or no accommodation, he may sustain the greatest possible loss. In your late affair, I have thought (perhaps erroneously) that had the descent been made between the town and the barracks, things would have turned out better. On that plan, the two batteries you had to encounter, would have been left out of the combat; and Sheafe, instead of retreating to

Kingston, must have sought refuge at fort George. In the affair before you, nothing will, I hope, be omitted, nor any thing be misunderstood; and that with regard to the garrison in particular, it will not be permitted to escape to-day that it may fight us to-morrow. For obvious reasons, I have made this letter private. On the records of the War Department it would appear to carry with it an official censure, whereas, it is in truth nothing more than the suggestions of one, who for both your sake, and his own, wishes you the fullest and most unqualified prosperity."

[No. 19.]

"*Head-Quarters, Kingston, July 11th*, 1813.

"Dear Sir,—Having sent Captain McDonald to England with despatches, your letter of the 27th ultimo, addressed to him, I opened. I was much pleased it contained a report of Mr. R. Dickson's arrival at Mackinac on the 11th.

"Your wants have been supplied as far as I had the ability of doing so. In addition to the specie and paper-money, and articles of clothing, forwarded for the right division from hence, in charge of Captain Chambers and Lieutenant M'Clean, a considerable supply of shoes, trowsers, &c., were embarked in a flotilla going to York a few days ago, for Detroit and Michilimackinac.

"The ordnance and naval stores you require must be taken from the enemy, whose resources on Lake Erie

must become yours. I am much mistaken if you do not find Captain Barclay well disposed to play that game. I conclude the whole of the forty-first regiment is placed under your command. The presents for the Indians are not arrived from England, but I shall direct two hundred guns for them, to be purchased at Montreal and forwarded to you, with a proportion of powder and ball by the Ottawa.

"I request you will communicate with me upon all occasions, with the characteristic frankness which distinguishes a zealous and good soldier.

"I have the honor, &c.

"GEORGE PROVOST."

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL PROCTOR."

St. David's, July 18th, 1813.

"SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, and have to inform you in reply thereto, that a force of nearly four hundred men are directed to march in successive divisions upon Long Point, as detailed in my letter to General Proctor of this day's date. I am fully impressed with the indispensable necessity of an attack upon Presque Isle, and should have co-operated with you long ago, had I possessed the means of so doing. I trust it will not yet be too late, and that you will lose no time in making your arrangements for taking up the troops from Long Point.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"FRANCIS DE ROTTENBURG,

"*Major-General.*"

"COMMODORE BARCLAY."

[No. 20.]

Extract from Governor Duncan's Report.

" McAffee, the historian of the late war, and Dawson, the biographer of General Harrison, have studiously kept out of view, that the object of the invasion was the *destruction of our ships under Commodore Perry at Presque Isle, and the boats and stores at Cleveland.* These were looked upon with great solicitude by the British, were reconnoitred, and on one or two occasions were attempted to be destroyed by landing a small force from their fleet.

" They have also failed to account for the movement of the whole British force down the Lake in the direction of Cleveland and Erie, before their defeat at Sandusky; which was attacked to gratify their Indian allies, who demanded the scalps and plunder of the place. They have kept out of view the fact, that *General Harrison had determined to retreat to the interior after burning all the supplies he had collected;* that he ordered Major Croghan to *abandon and burn fort Stephenson;* that his *refusal to obey and failure to arrive at head-quarters*, prevented this retreat, and *consequent destruction of our fleet and millions of public stores;* and the exposure also, of *five hundred miles of frontier, to the combined enemy.* Both have stated, that General Harrison never doubted that Major Croghan would be able to repulse an enemy of near two thousand men (and which they say he understood to be five thousand) with *one hundred and thirty men*, (Croghan's effective force on the day of the battle,) *one six-pounder*, with ammunition for only *seven shots*, and about *forty rounds for the*

small arms, when the fact was notorious, that General Harrison was heard to say during the siege, while the firing could be heard in his camp, and speaking of Croghan, '*The blood be on his own head*, I wash my hands of it,' not doubting for a moment, nor did any one with him, that the garrison would be cut off.

"These historians have also published two letters, as part of their history, written by Major Croghan and others, to allay *the excitement against Harrison, for his neglect to support Croghan, when he lay within three hours' march of the fort, with a strong force.* Those patriotic officers wrote these letters, it has been said, to save the army and prevent them from following up the indignation manifested in the States against the General destined to command them—believing it of the utmost importance at that moment, that he should stand well with the army and the country; and it is further said that they were written under the belief, that every thing should be placed before the public in a proper light at the end of the campaign.

(Signed) "JOSEPH DUNCAN."

"General Mercer,

"*Chairman of a Committee of the House of Representatives.*"

Second Order to Major Croghan.

"*Head-Quarters, Camp Seneca,*
"*Adjutant-General's Office, July 27th*, 1813.

"Sir,—Immediately on receiving this letter you will abandon fort Stephenson, set fire to it and repair with your command this night to head-quarters. Cross the river and come up upon the opposite side. If you should deem, and find it impracticable to make good your march

to this station, take the road to Huron and pursue it with the utmost circumspection and despatch. By command.

"God be with you.

"A. H. HOLMES, *Assistant Adjutant-General.*

"P. S. Effect your retreat in the manner heretofore directed you.

"A. H. HOLMES, *A. A. G.*"

"MAJOR CROGHAN."

[No. 21.]

Letter from Colonel R. M. Johnson.

"*December* 22*d*, 1834.

"DEAR SIR,—I have just received your favor of the 17th, containing certain inquiries as to the battle of the Thames, 5th of October, 1813, in Upper Canada.

"1st. The mounted regiment under my command, consisted of one thousand men at the time of the charge.

"2d. They were armed with muskets and rifles, and tomahawks or small hatchets, and butcher-knives.

"3d. The British had one brass field-piece, (six-pounder,) the same that was taken by us in the revolutionary war at Saratoga, and retaken from us at the surrender of Detroit by General Hull. It was placed in the road near the Thames, not far from the centre of the British line.

"4th. The British formed two lines, resting on the Thames and running out to a swamp two or three hundred yards from the river and parallel with it.

"5th. I presume Proctor was stationed considerably in the rear of his troops, and probably commenced his flight the moment he saw his forces defeated and taken prisoners.

"6th. I think the best ground for defence was selected.

"7th. The [militia] infantry were stationed a reasonable distance in the rear of the mounted regiment, in order of battle, say from one half to one mile. My brother, Colonel James Johnson, charged the British forces with the first battalion, (five hundred men,) and succeeded without the loss of a man—one horse killed, shot in the head—in advancing, he received the fire of one line of the British, and then of the other, in close succession; the cannon was not fired. I crossed the swamp with the second battalion, (five hundred men,) and fought against the Indians, (supposed fourteen hundred warriors, under Tecumseh,) without any aid whatever. A regiment was ordered to re-enforce me at the close of the battle; but did not reach us until the battle was over and the Indians had fled. The official report is incorrect in saying, that the hard fighting on the left was by a part of Governor Shelby's men. We had no assistance, except that of a few scattering volunteers from the infantry, who might have pushed into our ranks. I was wounded and could give no information to the commanding General, and he did not know at the time he made his report, that I had crossed the swamp with my regiment; as when he gave the order to make the charge, he thought from my information, that I could not cross the swamp; which I discovered I could do a few minutes after he left me, and believing that it was most safe, and that my regiment was sufficient, I divided my force as stated above, and the victory on both

sides was complete; but, no doubt, the instantaneous capture of the British, and the early death of the Indian chief, were powerful operating causes in our favor.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) R. M. JOHNSON.

N. B. *It is due to truth to state, that I requested General Harrison to permit me to charge,* and *knowing that I had trained my men for it during our short service, he gave the order.*

[No. 22.]

Red Hook, January 2d, 1812.

DEAR EUSTIS—Yesterday's mail brought your hypothetical note, which I hasten to answer by a few suggestions that, if approved, may be readily drawn out into as much detail as may be useful.

1st. An abundant supply of what is technically called the *materiel* of war is indispensable. This single term includes arms, equipments, and ammunition, in all their varieties; tents, blankets, and clothing; cavalry and draught-horses; oxen, wagons, carts, entrenching tools, &c. &c. To make a competent provision of these will require a large expenditure of money, but to this you must submit, for two unanswerable reasons—the one, that without them, war cannot be made, either morally or successfully; the other, that their cost, *now*, will be from 50 *to* 100 *per cent. less* than it will be *after the declaration of war.*

2d. When obtained, these supplies should be placed in magazines, the location of which must be governed by two considerations—the security of the articles deposited in them, and the facility and safety with which these may be brought into use. To each magazine should be attached a Laboratory, for fixing ammunition, making and mending gun and other carriages, repairing arms, &c.

3d. If you have remote posts, liable to attack, and difficult to sustain, and having no direct or important bearing on the progress or issue of the war, hasten to dismantle them and withdraw the garrisons.

4th. Resting, as the line of Canadian defence does, in its whole extent, on navigable lakes and rivers, no time should be lost in getting a naval ascendancy on both, for *cæteris paribus*, the belligerent who is the first to obtain this advantage, will (miracles excepted) win the game. Whether the commercial craft, at present employed on these waters, can be made useful for the purpose, I do not know; but among the sages, now assembled at Washington, you cannot fail to find some one who can answer the question.

5th. Without a knowledge, nearly approximating the truth, of the force you will have to contend with; of the disposition made of this, and of the character, physical and artificial, of the posts occupied by it, you will be compelled to make war *conjecturally*; and, of course, on data furnishing no just conclusions with regard to either the number or composition of your own army, or of the kind and extent of operations which ought to be assigned to it. That a state of peace, like the present, will be more favorable than one of war for acquiring this preliminary information, cannot be doubted; and if it be true, as I have been told,

that the British posts are victualled by American contractors, these agents (who by their vocation must have free access to them) may probably form the safest and surest medium through which to obtain it. But, whatever be the means employed for accomplishing this object, a moment should not be lost in putting them into exercise.

6th. The number and composition of your army (as already suggested) should be decided by the service given it to perform, and the kind and degree of resistance your enemy may be able to oppose to it. Though, from present appearances, it be true that the exigencies of the war in Europe will disable England from sending promptly any important aid, strictly military, to the Canadas ; it does not follow that she will omit to employ such other means as she may possess, to supply the deficiency. Of these, the most vexatious to us would be a portion of her armed vessels, acting separately or in squadron, on our long and defenceless line of sea-coast; while, at the same time, hordes of savages are let loose on the women and children of the West. And that, in the event of war, Great Britain will not hesitate to employ this policy in both its branches, cannot be doubted by those who have any recollection of what her past conduct towards the United States has been, or who are now capable of perceiving the impunity to herself and the mischief to us with which she may pursue it.

From this general view of the subject it follows, that in composing your army, you must be careful to provide corps specially adapted for two purposes—the *protection of your own frontiers*, eastern and western, and the *invasion* of those of your enemy. Of each of these I offer the following outline.

For the former, divide your coast into military districts —open in each a rendezvous for *volunteer-association* and *local defence*, with engagements commensurate with the war, and pay and emoluments, such as are now given to the regular army. Of this description of force the maximum may be *twenty battalions* located as follows:

1 at Portsmouth, 2 at Boston, 1 at Newport, 3 at New-York, 1 at Philadelphia, 3 at Baltimore, 3 at Norfolk, 2 at Charlestown, 1 at Savannah, and 3 at New-Orleans. Each of these stations to be well supplied with heavy guns for position—furnaces for heating shot, light pieces, well horsed, for field service, and muskets and bayonets for camp and garrison duty. Corps, thus constituted and equipped, well instructed in the use of their arms and respectably commanded, will do much to check, if they do not entirely prevent, predatory excursion—the evil most to be apprehended from the crews of single ships, or from those of small squadrons not sustained by infantry.

For western defence employ western men, accustomed to the rifle and the forest, and not unacquainted with the usages and stratagems of Indian warfare. To their customary arms add a pistol and a sabre; and to ensure celerity of movement, mount them on horseback. Give them a competent leader and a good position, within striking distance of Indian villages or British settlements. Why not at Detroit, where you have a strong fortress and a detachment of artillerists? Recollect, however, that this position, far from being good, would be positively bad unless your naval means have an ascendancy on Lake Erie; because Buffalo, Erie, Cleaveland, and the two Sanduskys must be its base or source of supply. The maximum of this corps may be six battalions.

Lastly, for a successful invasion of the Canadas, (the great operation of the war, because that only by which Great Britain can be brought to a sense of justice,) you must rely on a regular army. Of this description of force, you have now the skeletons of ten regiments; which, if completed, will give you ten thousand combatants—a corps that, in the present circumstances of England, and aided by militia for the purposes of demonstration, will be competent to great achievements. Hasten then to fill up the rank and file of your present establishment: and to existing inducements for enlisting, add an increased pay, and a liberal bounty at the end of the war.

Should better information with regard to your enemy's strength make an increase of your own expedient, give one or two additional battalions to each of your seven regiments of infantry—a mode of increasing an army much to be preferred to creations altogether new. For, besides being obviously more economical, the direct association of raw recruits with old soldiers has the effect of making the former efficient in half the time it would otherwise take to do so—the example of comrades being a principle of tuition much more active than the instruction of officers.

On this head it is but necessary to add, that the whole of your disposable or field force, when obtained, should be immediately assembled at some given point, from which, the moment that war shall be authorized, it may begin its operations. Under present views, Albany, or its neighborhood, should be the place of this rendezvous; because, besides other recommendations, it is *here* that all the roads leading from the central portion of the United States to the Canadas, *diverge*—a circumstance which, while it keeps up your enemy's doubts as to your real point of attack,

cannot fail to keep his means of defence in a state of division.

7th. In sketching the composition of an army, two branches of it, the one having charge of its discipline and its movements, the other of its subsistence, must not be forgotten. For the first (a General Staff) I refer you to Grimoard's publication, which I sent to the war department from Paris, some years ago. If this book be not already translated into English, no time should be lost in naturalizing it for the use of the army.

The second or feeding department, is of three kinds—that founded on Cæsar's maxim, that "war should sustain war," though fashionable at present, is, in fact, a system of indiscriminate plunder; forbidden alike, as I hope, by the moral feelings and political views of the United States. The remaining two are sufficiently known, under the names of the Contract and Commissariat systems. To recommend either, as exclusively and under all circumstances the best, would show only great ignorance or great folly. In old and well-peopled districts, where corn and cattle are abundant, prices little subject to change, roads safe and unobstructed, and the means of transportation (teams or boats) easily procured, the contract plan is the best—because the most economical, sufficiently punctual in the discharge of its engagements, and, from the settled character of its terms, rarely, if ever, embarrassing the government with extra or unexpected charges. In districts of an opposite character, where the population is thin and poor, supplies scarce and high priced, roads few and bad, and much exposed to obstruction, the commissariat must be submitted to; though certainly liable to great abuse, from the ignorance, indolence, or knavery of the agents em-

ployed. The best remedy for the evils of this system will be found in subjecting the agents to military law, and in rigorously enforcing its provisions.

8th. and lastly. A project of campaign, conformed to military maxims, must embrace three things: 1st. *An object of important or decisive character;* the attainment of which will give a successful issue to the campaign if not to the war. 2d. *A line of operation*, as short and perpendicular to this object, as possible; and 3d. *A well secured base*, on which must be accumulated and ready for transportation, all supplies necessary to sustain the operation. Each of these rules has its own special laws, but it is only of the first that I will say more at present than a few words.

In invading a neighboring and independent territory like Canada—having a frontier of immense extent; destitute of means strictly its own for the purposes of defence; separated from the rest of the empire by an ocean, and having to this but one outlet—this *outlet forms your true object or point of attack;* because, if gained, every thing depending upon it is gained also. Such was the consequence of the capture of Quebec in the war, which ended in 1763; and such would again be the consequence of the reduction of that capital, had we the means to effect it. Unfortunately, from deficient foresight in the government, these are wanting. Still, though unable to do what in the abstract would be best, it by no means follows that we should omit to do what may be both practicable and expedient. Such, in my opinion, would be the *capture of Montreal*—a post, which, commanding alike the navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Otawa, if seized and held, would give the same control over all that portion of the Canadas lying

westward of itself, that Quebec now exercises over the whole territory: Kingston, York, Fort George, Fort Erie, and Malden, cut off from their common base, must soon and necessarily fall. To reach this object, your line of operation may be taken on either side of Lake Champlain, provided you have secured the command of the lake; in which case also, Albany, Greenbush, Troy, Whitehall, &c. covered by a dense population, or secured by a large river, no where fordable by infantry, will give you a sufficient base. When begun, the movement should be made rapidly and audaciously; and the better to secure its success, three demonstrations by masses of militia, may be employed: one on the Niagara, to keep within their walls the garrisons of Forts George and Erie; a second at Sackett's Harbor, to produce a similar effect on whatever force may be found at Kingston; and a third in Vermont, so placed on the eastern side of the Sorel as to menace the British posts on that river.

Though taking for granted, as stated above, that the capture of Montreal would involve that of all posts westward from itself, it will no doubt be proper that the six battalions of mounted gun-men should march on Malden, as soon as they shall be apprised that the campaign on Lake Champlain is opened. And here we must stop: what remains of the subject, being *Tactical*, and governed by circumstances as they occur in the camp or the field, must be entirely left to the genius and judgment of your Commanding General. I am, &c.

(Signed) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Hon. WILLIAM EUSTIS, Secretary of War.

[No. 23.]

Letter from General Harrison to the Secretary of War.

"*Head-Quarters, Chilicothe, March 17th*, 1813.

"SIR,—The known candor of your character, is a sufficient security for my receiving your pardon for the liberty I take, in making objections to the plan of operations communicated in your letter of the 5th instant. If there is a positive certainty of our getting the command of Lake Erie, and having a regular force of three thousand five hundred, or even three thousand, well-disciplined men, the proposed plan of setting out from Cleveland, and landing on the northern shore, below Malden, would, perhaps, be the one by which that place and its dependencies could be most easily reduced. I am unacquainted with the extent of the preparations that are making to obtain the naval superiority upon Lake Erie, but, should they fail, and the troops be assembled at Cleveland, it would be difficult to get again upon the proper track for making the attack round the head of the Lake. The attempt to cross the Lake from Cleveland should not be made with any other than well-disciplined troops. A comparatively smaller number of men of this description could effect the object, and for those, means of conveyance might be found; but the means of transporting such an army as would be required of militia or undisciplined regulars, could not be procured. I can see no reason why Cleveland should be preferred as the point of embarkation for the troops, or the deposite of provisions or stores. These are already accumulated at the Rapids of Miami, or in situations to be easily sent thither, to an

amount nearly equal to the consumption of a protracted campaign. Although the expense and difficulty of transporting the provisions, artillery and stores for an army, round the head of the Lake, would be very considerable, the Lake being possessed by our ships, and the heavy baggage taken in boats along its margin, the troops would find no difficulty in the land route. The force contemplated in your letter is, in my opinion, not sufficient to secure success. Admitting that the whole should be raised by the time pointed out, they would be very little superior to militia; the officers having, with scarcely an exception, to learn their duty before they could instruct their men; we have therefore no alternative but to make up by numbers the deficiency of discipline.

"I am well aware of the intolerable expense which attends the employment of a large militia force. We are now, however, in a situation to avoid those errors which made that of the last campaign so peculiarly heavy. Our supplies are procured, and so deposited that the period for the march of the army from the advanced posts can be ascertained to an hour, and of course the troops need not be called out until the moment they are to act. Experience has convinced me that militia are more efficient in the early, than in the latter part of their service. Upon the whole, it is my decided opinion, that the Rapids of Miami should be the point of rendezvous for the troops, as well as the principal depôt. Indeed, it must necessarily be the first deposite—the provisions for the army being so placed that they can be taken to the Lake in no other way. The artillery and a considerable supply of ammunition are already there. Boats and *perouges* have been built in considerable numbers on the Au Glaize and

St. Mary's rivers; and every exertion is now making to increase them, intended for the double purpose of taking down the provisions to the Rapids, and for coasting the Lake with the baggage of the army in its advance. I had calculated upon being able partially to use this mode of transportation, even if the enemy should continue their naval superiority on the Lake; but with this advantage on our side, the whole baggage of the army could be safely and expeditiously carried along the coast in the boats and *perouges*, which could be taken into the strait to transport the army to the Canada shore.

"As I have before observed, the army, unencumbered with heavy baggage, would find no difficulty in marching round the Lake at any season, but what the enemy would create, and we have the means of subsisting a force that would be irresistible.

"The objections to proceeding this way, stated in my letter to Colonel Munroe, arose from the time that would be necessary to construct boats after we should have arrived at the strait; but this objection is entirely obviated by our obtaining the command of the Lake, as the boats and *perouges* built upon the Miami will answer the purpose. With regard to the quantum of force, my opinion is, that not only the regular troops, designated in your letter, but a large auxiliary corps of militia should be employed. The only objection arises from the expensiveness of troops of that description. This, however, could not be an object, considering the very short time that it would be necessary to employ them. Let the moment for the commencement of the march from the Rapids be fixed, and the militia might be taken to that point, proceed and accomplish the object, and return home in two months.

"Amongst the reasons which make it necessary to employ a large force, I am sorry to mention the dismay and disinclination to the service which appears to prevail in the western country; numbers must give that confidence which ought to be produced by conscious valor and intrepidity, which never existed in any army in a superior degree, than amongst the greater part of the militia who were with me through the winter. The new draughts from this State are entirely of another character, and are not to be depended on. I have no doubt, however, but a sufficient number of good men can be procured, and should they be allowed to serve on horseback, Kentucky would furnish some regiments that would be not inferior to those that fought at the river Raisin; and they were, in my opinion, superior to any militia that ever took the field in modern times. Eight troops of cavalry have been formed in Kentucky, to offer me their services, and several of them were intended for twelve months' volunteers. Governor Shelby has some thoughts of taking the field in person—a number of good men will follow him.

"Every exertion shall in the meantime be used to forward the recruiting service; for a few weeks I think that my service would be more useful in that than in any other employment."

"*War Department, April 4th*, 1813.

"Sir,—Your despatches of the 17th ultimo, from Chilicothe, have been received, and I hasten to repeat to you the views of the President, in relation to the next campaign, and the injunctions growing out of these, with regard to the employment of militia, &c.

"Our first object is to get a command of the Lakes.

Means to accomplish this object have been taken, and we have the fullest assurance, that by the first day of June it will be accomplished.

"This fact assumed, there can be no longer a doubt by what means, or by what route, the division of the army assigned to you, ought to approach Malden. A passage by water will carry you directly to the fortress you would attack, without impairing your strength by fatigue, or diminishing it by battle. A passage by land will, on the other hand, call for great efforts, and expose you to great losses, which if they do not destroy, will at least cripple you. The former will be easy, safe and economical; the latter, difficult, dangerous, and enormously expensive.

"On the other supposition, that we fail to obtain command of the Lake, a new question will arise—whether the campaign shall take an offensive or defensive character? Be this question determined as it may, the utmost extent which can be given to the force employed, will be seven thousand effectives.

"Various reasons determine this point. The enemy have never had in the field, for the defence of Malden, more than two thousand men. Their number has no doubt been hitherto limited by their means of subsistence, and this cause is not likely to suffer any material change in their favor during the ensuing campaign. More than seven thousand men, therefore, would be unnecessary on our part. Again, to maintain a greater number, would be impracticable in the present state of the treasury.

"It now remains only to signify to you, clearly and distinctly, the kind of force the government mean hereafter to employ in offensive operations, if it can be obtained.

"When the legislature, at their last session, adopted the

measure of augmenting the army to fifty-two regiments of the line, it was expressly with the view of superseding hereafter the necessity of employing militia, excepting in moments of critical invasion. In obedience to this policy, the President assigned to the eighth military district of the United States, four of these new regiments, which, if filled, and superadded to the two regiments of the line now in that district, and the twenty-fourth now in march for it, will give a total of seven regiments, or seven thousand men. This number forbids the belief, that any employment of militia draughts will be necessary, when it shall have been collected. Until, however, this be done, or at least until time be given for the experiment, so many militia only are to be called out, as shall be necessary for the defence of your posts on the Miami, and of your depôts of provision on the Lake. And should the recruiting service go on less prosperously in the patriotic States of Kentucky and Ohio, than in other parts of the Union, you are in that case, and in that case only, authorized to call out so many militia draughts as will make good the deficiency; and organizing these under the rules already prescribed, await the farther orders of the President in your camp at the Rapids.

"To these orders I have to add, that you will regard it as your duty to keep this department regularly and frequently informed of the actual condition of the troops under your command; as well in regard to equipment and supplies of provision and ammunition, as to number, discipline and health; and that your weekly and monthly reports shall include also the state of the ordnance and quartermaster's departments, noting particularly, the number of horses and oxen employed by both. You will readily perceive the necessity of giving this order, when I state, that

no return of any description from your division of the arr
has ever been received at the Adjutant-General's office. Your
proportion of the new staff has been given to you. Captain Adams has been appointed Assistant Adjutant-General, and Mr. Bartlett, Deputy Quartermaster-General of your division. The Brigadiers Mc Arthur and Cass are employed in superintending the recruiting service. A letter from the latter, gives reason to believe that this will go on well in the State of Ohio.

"I am &c.

(Signed) "JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"MAJOR-GENERAL HARRISON,

"*Com. 8th Mil. Dist. U. S.*"

Letter to Governor Meigs, of Ohio.

(*Private.*)

"*War Department, March 28th*, 1813.

"SIR,—I have this moment been informed by a Senator from Ohio, that the plan of campaign presented to General Harrison, has not been fortunate enough to meet the approbation of that officer; and that there is reason to fear that the objections made to it on his part (which it appears he has taken no pains to conceal) are likely to make an unfavorable impression on public opinion.

"Under these circumstances, I have believed it to be my duty to exhibit to your Excellency a brief view of the objections, fiscal and military, to the *land march*, which the General prefers; and on the other hand, to state the grounds on which the approach to Malden is directed to be made by water, and under convoy of the fleet.

"1st. The great expensiveness of a land movement.

The cost to the public (according to a statement made in December last by the General) for '*transportation alone*,' during the six weeks required for a land march to Malden, would of itself be sufficient to build and equip a naval force on Lake Erie, which would give us a decided and permanent command of that Lake.

"2d. The increased number of the army, which according to another statement of the General, will be indispensable, from the altered character of the western militia; composed as it will now be of men greatly inferior to the gallant bands of the last campaign, and with regard to whom, *numbers alone must compensate for the want of spirit and patriotism.*

"3d. The bad policy of any plan which, like that proposed by the General, leaves your enemy to choose the time and place of this attack, and with these, the power of compelling you to hazard a battle, upon plans and dispositions of his making.

"4th. The farther and incalculable advantage, of availing himself to the utmost of the Indian hordes attached to him—who, on a long march of six weeks, through swamps, forests, and thickets, will find a battle-ground in every mile, peculiarly adapted to their arms, powers, and habits —a circumstance which renders them more formidable than double the number of British grenadiers would be, on the same ground.

"On the other hand, if we turn to the new plan, none of these objections against it will be found. It makes necessary no augmentation of force, nor increase of expenditure. It carries you directly to your object, in full health and spirits—unimpaired by battle, hunger, or fatigue. It avoids all the waste and embarrassment of land transportation,

and what, on military principles, will alone decide the question of preference between the two modes of proceeding, it instantly and completely neutralizes the whole Indian force, (now noted by the General at four or five thousand combatants,) and leaves the battle to be fought on the part of the enemy, by British regulars and Canadian militia.

"Your Excellency will best know how, and to whom to communicate these views.

"I am, &c.,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

[No. 24.]

"War Department,

Wilna, October 30th, 1813.

"Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 5th and 24th instant.

"The despatch by Captain Brown, of the 22d inst., and which, with him, was lost in Lake Erie, suggested, as an ulterior movement, the coming down to the Niagara river, and putting yourself on the right and rear of De Rottenburg's position before Fort George; while General McClure, with his brigade of militia, volunteers, and Indians, should approach it in front. The enemy seems to have been aware of this, or some similar movement, as he began his retreat on the 9th, and did not stop until he had gained the head of Burlington bay, where I understand, by report, he yet is. This is his last stronghold in the peninsula; routed

from this he must surrender, or make his way down Lake Ontario to Kingston. His force is estimated at twelve or fifteen hundred effectives, the capture or destruction of which would be a glorious *finale* to your campaign. Our operations in this quarter are but *beginning* at a time when they ought to have ended.

"I am, &c.,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"Major-General HARRISON."

"BOONVILLE, *November 3d*, 1813.

"When I wrote to you from Wilna it was doubtful whether our attack would be made directly upon Kingston or upon Montreal. Reasons exist for preferring the latter, and have probably determined General Wilkinson to go down the St. Lawrence. In this case the enemy will have at Kingston, beside his fleet, a garrison of twelve or fourteen hundred men; had we not a corps in the neighborhood, these might do mischief, and even render insecure the winter station of our fleet. To prevent this, it is deemed advisable to draw together at Sacket's Harbor a considerable military force. There are now at that post between four and five hundred men of all descriptions, sick, convalescent, and effective; Colonel Scott's detachment (about seven hundred) are on their march thither, and it is barely possible that Colonel Randolph's (not arriving in time to move with the army) may be there also; this does not exceed three hundred and fifty. McArthur's brigade added to these will make a force wholly competent to our object. This new disposition will render necessary the employment of so many of the militia and volunteers, now in service under Gen-

eral McClure, as you may deem competent to the safe-keeping of forts George and Niagara and their dependencies. I am, &c.,

"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"Major-General Harrison."

"Head-Quarters,

Newark, Nov. 16th, 1813.

"Sir—Commodore Chauncey with the fleet arrived here yesterday morning, and informed me that he was ready to receive the troops to convey them down the lake; and that the season was so far advanced, rendering the navigation dangerous to the smaller vessels, that it was desirable they should be embarked as expeditiously as possible. *As a very small part of the militia and volunteers had arrived, and the situation of Sackett's Harbor appearing to me to require immediate reinforcement, I did not think proper to take upon myself the responsibility of postponing the departure of the troops for the lower part of the lake*, conformably to the directions contained in your letter of the 3d inst.

"The information I received yesterday from two respectable citizens who were taken near Fort Meigs in June last, and who made their escape in an open boat from Burlington, confirms me in the propriety of sending them off. These men state that the *troops were hurrying to Kingston from York as fast as possible;* the regulars going down in boats, and the militia bringing the latter back.

"I am, &c.,

"WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON."

"Hon. John Armstrong, *Secretary of War*."

[No. 25.]

In producing the disaster at Queenstown, two causes were efficient, which, as they are not touched upon in the text, we will note here. It appears from the letter of General Van Rensselaer, given below, that the assailing force was to consist of two columns; the one, composed of militia, led by Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer; the other, of regular troops, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Chrystie. Instead of remaining at the head of his corps, the first-mentioned of these officers, embarked with a part of the regular detachment, and was, soon after reaching the Canada shore, disabled by wounds. The movement of the militia column became necessarily embarrassed by the absence of its commander, and this absence will also sufficiently account for the insubordination and reluctance to embark, afterward evinced by that portion of the American force. Had Colonel Van Rensselaer remained at his post, instead of thrusting himself where his presence was not needed, the militia would, in all probability, have crossed the river, and the result of the action have been different. Again: why did not General Wadsworth, after the first success of the attack, take possession of the village in his front, which would have afforded a covering to his troops, and more than counterbalanced the inequality of numbers which existed between the two armies, after the arrival of General Sheafe and his reinforcement?

Letter from General Van Rensselaer to General Dearborn, October 14th, 1812.

HEAD-QUARTERS, *Lewistown.*

SIR: As the movements of the army under my command, since I had last the honor to address you, on the 8th inst., have been of a very important character, producing consequences serious to many individuals, establishing facts actually connected with the interest of the service, and safety of the army; and as I stand prominently responsible for some of these consequences, I beg leave to explain to you, sir, and through you to my country, the situation and circumstances in which I have had to act, and the reasons and motives which governed me; and if the result is not all that might have been wished, it is such, that when the whole ground shall be viewed, I shall cheerfully submit myself to the judgment of my country.

In my letter of the 8th inst., I apprised you that a crisis in this campaign was rapidly approaching, and that (to repeat the same words) "the blow must be soon struck, or all the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing; and worse than nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonor." Under such impressions I had, on the 5th inst., written to Brigadier-General Smyth, of the United States forces, requesting an interview with him, Major-General Hall, and the commandants of United States regiments, for the purpose of conferring on the subject of future operations. I wrote Major-General Hall to the same purport. On the 11th, I had received no answer from General Smyth; but in a note of the 10th, General Hall mentioned that General Smyth had not yet then agreed upon any day for the consultation.

In the meantime, the partial success of Lieutenant Elliot, at Black Rock, began to excite a strong disposition in the troops to act. This was expressed to me through various channels, in the shape of an alternative; that they must have orders to act, or at all hazards they would go home. I forbear here commenting upon the obvious consequences to me personally, of longer withholding my orders under such circumstances.

I had a conference with —— as to the possibility of getting some person to pass over to Canada and obtain correct information. On the morning of the 4th, he wrote to me that he had procured the man who bore his letter to go over. Instructions were given him; he passed over, and obtained such information as warranted an immediate attack. This was confidentially communicated to several of my officers, and produced great zeal to act; more especially, as it might have a controling effect on the movements at Detroit, where it was supposed General Brock had gone, with all the force he dare spare from the Niagara frontier. The best preparations in my power were therefore made to dislodge the enemy from the heights of Queenstown, and gain possession of the village, where the troops might be sheltered from the inclemency of the weather.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick's flying artillery, and a detachment of regular troops under his command, were ordered to be up in season for Fort Niagara. Orders were also sent to General Smyth to send down from Buffalo such detachment from his brigade as existing circumstances in that vicinity might warrant. The attack was to have been made at 4 o'clock of the morning of the 11th, by crossing over in boats from

the old ferry opposite the heights. To avoid any embarrassment in crossing the river (which is here a sheet of eddies), experienced boatmen were procured to take the boats from the landing below to the place of embarkation. Lieutenant Simms was considered the man of greatest skill for this service. He went ahead, and in the extreme darkness, passed the intended place far up the river, and there, in a most extraordinary manner, fastened his boat to the shore, and abandoned the detachment. In this front boat he had carried nearly every oar which was prepared for all the boats. In this agonizing dilemma stood officers and men, whose ardor had not been cooled by exposure through the night to one of the most tremendous northeast storms, which continued unabated for twenty-eight hours, and deluged the whole camp. The approach of daylight extinguished every hope of success, and the detachment returned to camp. Colonel Van Rensselaer was to have commanded.

After this result, I had hoped the patience of the troops would have continued, until I could submit to a council the plan suggested in my letter of the 8th, that I might act under, and in conformity to, the opinion which might then be expressed. But my hope was idle, and the previously excited ardor seemed to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage. Brave men were mortified to stop short of the object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt.

On the morning of the 12th, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act would involve me in suspicion, and the service in disgrace. Viewing affairs at Buffalo as yet unsettled, I had immediately countermanded the

march of General Smyth's brigade, upon the failure of the first expedition; but having now determined to attack Queenstown, I sent new orders to General Smyth to march; not with the view of his aid in the attack, for I considered the force detached sufficient, but to support the detachment should the conflict be obstinate.

Lieutenant-Colonel Chrystie, who had just arrived at the Five Mile creek, had late in the night of the first contemplated attack, gallantly offered me his own and his men's service, but he got my permission too late. He now again came forward, had a conference with Colonel Van Rensselaer, and begged that he might have the honor of a command in the expedition. The arrangement was made. Colonel Van Rensselaer was to command one column of three hundred militia, and Lieutenant-Colonel Chrystie a column of the same number of regulars.

Every precaution was now adopted as to boats, and confidential and experienced men selected to manage them. At an early hour of the night, Lieutenant-Colonel Chrystie marched his detachment by the rear road from Niagara to camp. At 7 in the evening, Lieutenant-Colonel Stranahan's regiment moved from Niagara Falls; at 8 o'clock, Mead's; and at 9, Lieutenant-Colonel Blain's regiment marched from the same place. All were in camp in good season. Agreeably to my orders issued upon this occasion, the two columns were to pass over together; and as soon as the heights should be carried, Lieutenant-Colonel Fenwick's flying artillery was to pass over, then Major Mullany's detachment of regulars, and the other troops to follow in order.

At dawn of day the boats were in readiness, and the troops commenced embarking under the fire of a commanding battery mounting two 18-pounders and two 6. The movement was soon discovered, and a brisk fire of musketry was poured from the whole line of the Canada shore. Our battery then opened to sweep the shore, but it was for some minutes too dark to direct much fire with safety. A brisk cannonade was now opened on the boats from three different batteries—our battery returned their fire, and occasionally threw grape upon the shore, and was itself served with shells from a small battery of the enemy. Colonel Scott, of the artillery, by hastening his march from Niagara Falls in the night, arrived in time to return the fire with two 6-pounders.

The boats were somewhat embarrassed with the eddies, as well as with a shower of shot; but Colonel Van Rensselaer, with about one hundred men, soon effected his landing amid a tremendous fire directed upon him from every point; but to the astonishment of all who witnessed the scene, this van of the column advanced slowly against the fire. It was a serious misfortune to the van, and indeed to the whole expedition, that in a few minutes after landing, Colonel Van Rensselaer received four wounds. Under so severe a fire, it was difficult to form raw troops. By some mismanagement of the boatmen, Lieutenant-Colonel Chrystie did not arrive until sometime after this, and was wounded in the hand, in passing the river. Colonel Van Rensselaer, still able to stand, with great presence of mind ordered his officers to proceed with rapidity and storm the fort. This service was gallantly performed, and the enemy driven down the hill

in every direction. Soon after this, both parties were reinforced, and the conflict was renewed in various places—many of the enemy took shelter behind a stone guard-house, where a piece of ordnance was briskly served. I ordered the fire of the battery to be directed against the guard-house, and it was so effectually done, that, with eight or ten shot, the fire was silenced. The enemy then retreated behind a large storehouse; but in a short time the rout became general, and the enemy's fire was silenced, except from a one gun battery so far down the river, as to be out of reach. A number of boats now passed over unannoyed, except from the one unsilenced gun. For sometime after I had crossed over the victory appeared complete; but in the expectation of future attacks, I took measures for fortifying my camp immediately. The direction of this service I gave to Lieutenant Totten, of the engineers. But very soon the enemy were reinforced, by a detachment of several hundred Indians from Chippewa. They commenced a furious attack, but were met and routed by the rifle and bayonet. By this time I perceived my troops were embarking very slowly. I passed immediately over to accelerate their movements, but to my astonishment I found that, at the moment when victory was in our hands, the ardor of the unengaged troops had subsided. I rode in all directions, urged the men by every consideration to pass—but in vain.

At this time, a large reinforcement from Fort George was discovered coming up the river. As the battery on the hill was considered an important check against their ascending the heights, measures were immediately taken to send them a fresh supply of am-

munition, as I learned there was left but twenty shot for the 18-pounders. The reinforcement obliqued to the right from the road, and formed a junction with the Indians in the rear of the heights. Finding, to my infinite mortification, that no reinforcement would pass over; seeing that another severe conflict must soon commence; and knowing that the brave men on the heights were quite exhausted, and nearly out of ammunition, all I could do was to send a fresh supply of cartridges. At this critical moment, I despatched a note to General Wadsworth, acquainting him with our situation—leaving the course to be pursued to his own judgment, with assurance, that if he thought best to retreat, I would endeavor to send over as many boats as I could command, and cover his retreat by every fire I could make. But the boats were dispersed, many of the boatmen had fled panic-struck, and but few got off. But my note could but little more than have reached General Wadsworth, about 4 o'clock, when a most severe and obstinate conflict ensued, and continued about half an hour with a tremendous fire of cannon, flying artillery, and musketry. The enemy succeeded in re-possessing their battery, and gained advantage on every side; the brave men who had gained the victory, exhausted of strength and ammunition, and grieved at the unpardonable neglect of their fellow-soldiers, gave up the conflict."