

the enemy. The land operations depend almost entirely on successes of the fleet, but to have relinquished one foot of ground on which we so proudly stand would have lost all our wavering friends and have proved destructive of our Indian allies."

When these orders reached him, De Rottenburg was reduced to the verge of despair. "What with sickness and desertion," he wrote on the 17th of September, "I am now almost *au bout de mon latin*, and my situation daily becomes more desperate. More than 1,000 men are laid up with disease, and officers in still greater proportion. Daily-five or six villains go off. There is no thoroughly healthy spot to retire to as far as York. Burlington is as bad as here. The fever and ague rages, and the inhabitants are as sickly as the soldiers. If you cannot send me fresh troops the country will be lost for want of hands to defend it. If I am attacked and forced back the sick will be lost for want of conveyance."

About the same time, Mr. Ridout states that "desertion has come to such a pass that eight or ten men go off daily. . . . Their deserters come in every day. They say that 4,000 men are at Fort George. The other day a Yankee picket shot two of our deserters dead. One of the 49th attempted to swim over by Queenston, but was killed by the sentry."

There can be no doubt that the distressed state of the blockading army was perfectly well-known to the enemy, and it is astonishing that he should have abstained from an attack, when success must have seemed all but certain. "If the enemy's sick list amounts to one thousand four hundred out of three thousand," the Secretary of War said to Wilkinson, "the enemy can undertake nothing with effect." When this was written, a return of the division at Fort George showed that it numbered 4587 rank and file, of whom 3422 were fit for duty.

Yet De Rottenburg gallantly prepared for the continuance of the blockade. When the autumnal rains fairly set in his position in and about the Black Swamp would no longer be tenable, and he proposed to remove his quarters to the high ground extending from Queenston to Chippawa.

For about ten days after General Wilkinson's arrival at Fort George he was confined to his bed, according to his own statement, by a "severe and unrelenting malady," which caused "much depression of the head and stomach." Others roundly asserted that he was suffering from the effects of drink. On the 16th he announced that he had "escaped from his pallet with a giddy head and trembling hand," but nothing had been heard from Chauncey since his departure, and the result of the naval action was still unknown. The militia had not yet arrived, but "the Indians," he