

the convoy of French ships, and immediately afterwards came the advice of the repulse of the British fleet. Previous to the receipt of the latter intelligence Lord Cornwallis had determined to attack La Fayette at Williamsburgh—a reconnoissance by Lt.-Col. Tarleton demonstrated the perfect feasibility of such an attack by landing a division of infantry and artillery by means of the Caphosack Creek, in rear or on the flank of Williamsburgh, while the main army advanced in front. But while the British General was deliberating on this plan advices arrived from Sir H. Clinton, dated 2nd of September, and received on the 15th, in which he promised reinforcements, and to make every diversion in his power, intimating that Admiral Digby was expected on the coast. This intelligence, which a little reflection would have shewed Lord Cornwallis was impossible of fulfilment, caused him at once to suspend all preparations of attacking La Fayette, and blindly persisted in depending on Clinton's promises, which the defeat of the British fleet in the action of 5th September rendered utterly impracticable, deprived him of the only chance which remained of extrication from a difficult and untenable position.

An active and energetic General would at once have attacked La Fayette, whose whole force was not equal to the veteran troops under Lord Cornwallis' command, even when joined by the brigade which De Grasse brought from the West Indies. After defeating and scattering his army, which could have been effected with little loss, a march on Philadelphia would have given him Washington's troops in detail, and finally have placed Rochambeau's army in great peril,—or, failing that, a retreat to South Carolina was always possible, and the Franco-American army baffled in their designs, would have suffered all the consequences of a total defeat. The cause of the Colonies never would have sustained or recovered the shock, but want of enterprise on the part of Lord Cornwallis, and indecision on the part of the Commander-in-Chief, rendered all advantages useless. As a proof that a powerful party still existed favorable to British interests, about this time the loyalists of North Carolina mustered some 640 men under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Macniel, surprised Hillsborough, captured about 200 of the regular troops of Congress, with all their officers, the rebel Governor of North Carolina, his council, and twelve of the principal military officers of the district, and although they were attacked by surprise subsequently, losing their Colonel and another officer, yet they defeated their enemy with severe loss, and being reinforced, succeeded in effecting a junction with the garrison at Wilmington, to the commandant of which they handed over their prisoners.

Earl Cornwallis had encamped his army in front of the exterior line of defence at Yorktown, and in this position on the 28th

of September the first intelligence of the approach of the combined French and American armies were received. The British troops were drawn up in order of battle and anxiously expected an attack, but the advance of the allies was characterized by caution, and they seemed more inclined to reconnoitre the position than venture on direct attack. In this situation night closed on both armies, and the morning brought the following letter from the Commander-in-Chief:

NEW YORK, }
Sept. 24th, 1781. }

MY LORD,—I was honored yesterday with your Lordship's letter of the 16th and 17th instant and at a meeting of the general and flag officers held this day it was determined that above five thousand men, rank and file, shall be embarked on board the King's ships and the joint exertions of the army and navy will be made in a few days to relieve you and afterwards to co-operate with you. The fleet consists of twenty three sail of the line, three of which are three-deckers. There is every reason to hope we may start from hence the 5th of October. I have received your Lordship's letter of the 3th instant.

I have the honor to be, &c., &c.,

H. CLINTON.

The Right Hon. Earl Cornwallis.

P. S.—Admiral Digby is this moment arrived at the Hook with three sail of the line. At a venture, without knowing whether they can be seen by us, I request that if all is well upon hearing a considerable firing towards the entrance of the Chesapeake three large separate smokes may be made parallel to it, and if you possess the post of Gloucester four. I shall send another answer soon.

H. C.

In reply to this Lord Cornwallis informs Sir Henry Clinton that relying on his promise he has withdrawn the whole British force within the second line of defence at Yorktown, thus abandoning a good and easily defended position, where the discipline of his troops could make itself felt for one where they were cooped up unable to manoeuvre, where every round shot told, and where their valor only served to render destruction more terrible.

Immediately after sunrise the French and American Generals were apprised that the British army had abandoned the outer lines and retired to Yorktown. Excited by this unexpected turn of fortune they put the whole of their troops in motion, and for some time it was doubtful whether they would not launch them in a general assault against the over crowded British post, and owing to the unfinished state of the works, the want of abatis, the defects of the position which precluded the possibility of manoeuvring the troops or placing the artillery, would have made its success an easy possibility; but it is probable that Washington's caution was the principal reason why a perfectly feasible attack was postponed. In the course of the forenoon the combined forces took possession of the ground abandoned by the British, the works on which were of the greatest possible utility to them, for with the addition of one redoubt and the closing of the sloop on the Hampton road,

they served at once to invest the town and protect their own encampment.

On the 1st and 2nd of October advanced detachments of the allies with general officers and engineers reconnoitred the British lines, and it soon became evident that the principal attack would be directed against the left. In the evening the cavalry and mounted infantry of the legion were passed over the river to Gloucester. And on the following morning the commanding officer of that post led out a strong detachment to forgo the country in front of that village; in this he was very successful, but it led to a skirmish and finally a closer investment.

At Yorktown the British troops worked with great industry, while the artillery kept up a constant fire on the French and American works.

On the night of the 6th of October ground was broken for the first parallel on the left of the British works. It extended from the high grounds on the bank of the river for one thousand yards, as far as the ravine that approached the Hornwork previously described as covering the left centre. Its general distance from the defences of Yorktown was about 600 yards. The American troops guarded the trenches and conducted the attack on the right of the combined forces (British left) while the French were encamped on the left (British right). Trenches were opened by the French against the part of the British lines opposite to them. The batteries were opened on the 9th October, and two days' cannonade clearly demonstrated the badness of the defences and weakness of the position occupied by the King's troops. Within the *en ciente* of the works no place of security existed except under the cliff, every other part being searched by the enemy's shot and shell.

Father McMahon read the Papal rescript against the Fenians in New York on Sunday, when half the congregation instantly walked out of the church.

MILITARY FUNERAL.—The remains of Mr. Thos. J. Feeney were buried on Thursday the 21st ult., with military honors. The deceased having been long a member of the band of the 56th Battalion. His untimely death was much regretted by his comrades. — *P'cscott Telegraph*.

We understand that fifty boats, twenty-five feet keel by five feet beam, are in the course of construction on Orleans Island, and other places for the Canadian Government. The number at the island is seventeen. Those boats will be sharp at bow and stern, and capable of carrying seventeen men each. It is believed they are intended for inland navigation, for penetrating such lakes and rivers as the route to Red River, through Canadian territory, presents. It is highly probable that the Northwest water course will be disturbed by the keels of those boats ere many weeks. Whatever may be thought of the policy of the Dominion Government by Riel and his fellows, such indications as the above are not to be lightly regarded. — *Quebec Chronicle*.