

2,600 troops aboard, traversed Penobscot Bay, and laid siege to the place. On August 7, according to Caleff, the Americans scoured the country round for the loyal inhabitants, destroyed their movables, killed their cattle for meat, and, having captured a number of persons, imprisoned them aboard ship.* For three weeks, McLean and his men held out, relief from Halifax failing to put in an appearance. On the morning of August 14, a party reconnoitering without the fort discovered that the Americans had abandoned some works which they had constructed, in their attempt to avoid a clash with the King's fleet, under the command of Commodore Sir George Collier, which had opportunely arrived from New York. In desperation, the American fleet sailed up the Penobscot River, where the imprisoned inhabitants were released, and the shipping was set on fire, while the enemy's troops retreated in various directions without opposition.** Thus Collier's coming resulted in the destruction of the American vessels and the dispersal of their land forces.† Among the ships that went up in flames on the Penobscot flats was the privateer *Vengeance*, to which Mr. Nutting owed his capture when first he sailed from England with Germain's despatches for Clinton.‡

No doubt some of the local inhabitants were recreant to their oath of allegiance. If so, McLean excused it on the score that they had been compelled to join the enemy; but he insisted that most of them had been employed in working for the Americans, "tho," he added, "some of them were in arms." Learning that a number of these people had withdrawn from their habitations with the intention of going to the westward, on account of the fear of the resentment of the British, McLean issued a new proclamation in order to reassure them and "prevent the breaking up of the settlement."|| Collier, however, was more severe in his judgment

*St. Croix Courier series, L.I.

**Ibid.

†Report on the Am. Mss. in the Roy. Inst. of G. Brit., II, 15, 16; Collects. Me. Hist. Soc., Series II, V. 1, 391, 392.

‡Batchelder, John Nutting, 80.

||Report of the Am. Mss. in the Roy. Inst. of G. Brit., II, 17.