

ANGLO-AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

Vol. III.—TORONTO: SEPTEMBER, 1853.—No. 3.

HISTORY OF THE WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

DURING THE YEARS 1812, 1813, AND 1814.

CHAPTER IX.

We concluded our last chapter with the observation that "we could find no grounds for sympathy with General Dearborn," and farther consideration of the subject induces us to bring forward additional reasons in support of that assertion.

We have already shown that General Dearborn was, (if we may so express it) his own master, and almost unfettered by instructions, during the entire autumn of 1812. He had ample time, with adequate means to prepare an army of five or six thousand strong, whom, if it had been only to keep them healthy, it would have been better to put in motion. The English Generals had many greater difficulties to contend with, in defending Canada, than the Americans to conquer it. Bonaparte's career in Italy, and Wellington's in Spain, began with, and overcame, much greater disadvantages, and so it ever will be, a true General must struggle against prejudices and hindrances, inflicted by his own constituents, and look on them as things to be overcome, and harder of achievement than the mere subduing the troops opposed to him. The American commanders were not men of this stamp, and, in consequence, the exfoliation of Generals during the

first campaign was excessive, and allowing all indulgence for the novelty of their position, and perhaps the difficulty of sustaining themselves, it was right not only that they should be superseded, but it was also just that they should be censured. The campaign of 1812 ended in a total eclipse of American military pretensions, without leaving one lingering gleam of hope, and the commander-in-chief's inactivity, tantamount to miscarriage, afflicted the friends of the war with the conviction that they were doomed to defeat.

Some of Ingersol's conclusions on this subject are so remarkable as to claim notice, for the extreme ingenuity evinced in finding out good reasons for being beaten, and in showing that Americans were not vanquished by the prowess of their adversaries, but that, "encountering on the threshold of Canada only such insignificant obstacles as Voyageurs, traders, travellers and Indians, animated with but a faint spirit of resistance to invasion," they were conquered by the inactivity and poltroonery of their commanders alone. The same writer adds, "A man of talent leading our armies to Montreal, as might have been done in 1812, would have probably, brought the war to an end that year. England was completely surprised and unprepared for it. Such a General at Detroit, Niagara or Champlain as would have driven the English beyond Montreal, might have produced immediate peace. Hull and Dearborn, and executive inefficiency were answerable for prolonging the war, the vigorous and successful commencement of which might have creditably closed it soon."