

Disappointment of the Troops.

Disposition to deprive Hull of Command.

The British before Detroit.

acquainted him with the delay. Cass knew that time was precious, for Proctor, relieved of all apprehensions of an attack upon Malden, would doubtless send over a larger force of Europeans and savages to bar the way to the Raisin, and attack Brush there. He therefore sent this laconic dispatch to Hull: "SIR,—Colonel Miller is sick; may I relieve him?—L. Cass." Receiving no reply, he returned to Detroit, meeting on his way an express bearing to Miller positive orders for the whole detachment to return to head-quarters. Thus another favorable moment for achieving great good was lost by what seemed the timidity and instability of the commanding general. Miller was only twenty-two miles from the Raisin. Dispirited in the extreme, he and his troops left their camp at noon on the day after the battle, and made their way slowly back to Detroit.

Hull's shortcomings were freely spoken of, and the belief was inculcated among the troops that he was either traitorously inclined, or had become an imbecile. At times he would be shut up in his room¹ for hours, inaccessible to all but his son, who was his aid-de-camp; at others he appeared abstracted and confused—"sullen in deportment, and wavering in his orders."² His incompetency to meet the crisis at hand was felt by all, and his officers of every grade, after consultation, came to the conclusion that the salvation of the little army would only be found in depriving him of the command and giving it to another.³ Lieutenant Colonel Miller was invited to accept it. He declined, but expressed his willingness to unite with them in giving the command to M'Arthur, the senior officer of the volunteers, and one of the most vigilant and active soldiers in the army. It would be a bold step for subordinates to strip a commanding general of his sword and epaulets while at the head of his army, and, when they were ready to act, they naturally hesitated. Relief might speedily come from Ohio. Governor Meigs, it was suggested, might accompany it in person, and upon him the honor might properly be laid. Colonel Cass acted promptly on this suggestion, and wrote⁴ an energetic letter to the governor, urging him to press forward with re-enforcements and supplies. He informed him that the army had been reduced to a critical situation "from causes not fit to be put on paper." He told him that the golden opportunity for success had passed by, and mildly remarked that, unfortunately, the general and the principal officers could not view the situation and prospect of affairs in the same light. "That Malden," he said, "might easily have been reduced, I have no doubt. . . . But instead of looking back, we must now look forward. . . . Our supplies must come from our state." He called for two thousand men at least, and added, "It is the unanimous wish of the army that you should accompany them."

Before this letter was shown to the other officers a change in affairs had taken place. The British were congregating in force at Sandwich, and, in view of this menace, the following postscript was added to the letter: "Since the other side of this letter was written, new circumstances have arisen. The British force is opposite, and our situation has nearly reached its crisis. Believe all the bearer will tell you. Believe it, however it may astonish you, as much as if told by one of us. Even a c**** is talked of by the *****. The bearer will supply the vacancy.⁴ On you we

¹ "In my boyhood," says Judge Witherell, "I knew him well. His appearance was venerable and dignified; his heart was the seat of kindness; he was unquestionably an honest man. The general had a most excellent family. Mrs. Hull, a portly, fine-looking woman, made it the principal business of her life to visit the sick and provide for the destitute poor."

² Colonel Hatch says, "On a private consultation on the 12th of August with those known to be the most active of the subordinate officers and men of the volunteer regiments, it was decided to get up a Round Robin* (so called), addressed to the three colonels, requesting the arrest or displacement of the general from his command, and vesting, by common consent, the eldest colonel, M'Arthur, with all the powers incidental to chief command."

³ "The doubtful fate of this letter rendered it necessary to use circumspection in its details, and therefore the blanks were left. The word 'capitulation' will fill the first, and 'commanding general' the other."—Colonel Cass to the Secretary of War, Washington City, September 10, 1812.

⁴ The Murat (frond ruban) originally derived from a custom of the French officers, who, on signing a remonstrance or address to their superiors, wrote their names in a circular form, so that it might be impossible to ascertain who had signed it.

Pecuniary Aid for Brock

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