

Whatever were Ripley's reasons for dissatisfaction, it is certain that the movement of his division across the river was made more slowly than that of the other, under General Scott. It is absolutely necessary not to pass over these indications of want of unanimity among the American commanders, as it would otherwise be laying ourselves open to the same charges that are so justly preferred against American historians of distorting the truth. This insinuation must be particularly guarded against by the English chronicler of the war, inasmuch as it generally falls to his lot to recount the defeat of large bodies of Americans by very inferior force; hence other reasons must be sought than the mere difference in the bravery of the troops, and these are very readily found in the incapacity and quarrels of the commanders.

The two divisions having crossed on the 3rd of July, invested Fort Erie, which, being incapable of actual defence, both from the nature of the fortifications and the smallness of its garrison, was at once surrendered. Here we would direct attention to that part of General Brown's despatch where it is stated that "Fort Erie did not, as I assured you it should not, detain me a single day." This is particularly absurd, when it is remembered that, by American accounts, the garrison only amounted to one hundred and seventy, and that General Wilkinson in his memoirs distinctly states that "Fort Erie was in a defenceless condition."

The American divisions landed, one a mile and a half above, and the other the same distance below Erie, so that no opposition could be brought to bear from the guns of the fort: and, on its surrender, the garrison was promptly despatched across the river, and marched into the interior of New York State, a detachment of artillery and a few infantry being left as a garrison; three armed schooners, under the command of Lieutenant Kennedy, being stationed as a further security under its walls.

It was not until 8 A.M. that General Riall received the intelligence of the Americans having landed, and he instantly, on receipt of the information, ordered five companies of

the Royal Scots to advance as a reinforcement of the post. The advance of this body was, however, checked by the intelligence of the surrender of the fort. General Riall then determined on an immediate attack, but was induced, by its being represented to him that the 8th regiment was hourly expected from York (now Toronto), to postpone the attack until the morning of the 4th. On the morning of the 4th the attack was accordingly made.

In the letters of *Veritas*, some very pertinent remarks are made on this subject, which we transcribe:—"General Riall's attack upon the enemy, under so great a disproportion of force, as probably five to one, has been censured by many; but the probability is, that if he had not done so, and broke in upon their plan of operations, by that daring and unexpected manœuvre, they, probably, without the aid of their fleet, would (by appearing to threaten an attack upon our lines at Chippewa) have marched to the left, and have actually cut off our communication with Burlington, as originally intended.

"In this view of the subject, his attack was fortunate, and the retreat afterwards made by him is deserving of credit, from having been effected in good order, without loss of men, artillery, stores, or baggage; so that the confidence of his troops remained unabated. Had he retreated in the first instance without fighting, the probability is that his men would have been dispirited, as considering such a retrograde movement then premature."

We fully concur with the opinions expressed by *Veritas*, which we think are fully borne out by a consideration of the plans laid down by the Secretary at War, and the adoption of this movement by General Riall, when ignorant of the force of the enemy, can only be considered as a proof of the judgment and bravery of that officer, who was only anxious to prevent a junction with the force that might be expected in the fleet.

*From Major-General Riall to Lieutenant-General Sir G. Drummond.*

Chippewa, July 6.

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that the enemy effected a landing on the morning of the 3d instant at the ferry, op-