

OPERATIONS
OF THE
RIGHT DIVISION
of the
ARMY OF UPPER CANADA,
DURING THE
AMERICAN WAR
OF 1812.
&c, &c, &c

Much has been said and written in respect to the Red-men of the forest; but I do not recollect having ever met with a detail sufficiently accurate to convey a just idea of the character of these people. As they will occupy a tolerable portion of my attention, and frequently appear under circumstances which may incline the reader to incredulity, I will merely observe, that no one incident will be found committed to these pages, which may not be attested by every officer who served with the right division of the Canadian army. In fact, to that division alone were the more savage of the Indian race attached; and when it is considered, that among the warriors of at least twenty different tribes, there were those who had scarcely ever any previous intercourse with whites, and had seldom approached a fortified place but in open hostility, the indomitableness of their natures will cease to excite surprise. As it is my intention, to give a faithful account of the various cruelties committed during our struggle in Canada—cruelties we had not power to prevent, since perpetrated by an ally over whom we had no control—it may not be improper to advert to the motives for their employment. The Americans have invariably been loud in their condemnation of a measure which alone secured to us the possession of Upper Canada: with how little reason, however, will appear from the well-known fact, that every possible exertion was used, by the agents of their Government, to detach the Indians from our cause. Embracing the system adopted and followed by England for years, presents of all descriptions were issued to the warriors; while, in the council, the most flattering promises were made, the most seducing offers held forth, to induce them to make common cause with the invader. The wary chieftains, however, were not to be tempted by professions of friendship from those whose perfidy had long been proverbial with the Indian race. The bounties of England had been heaped on them with no sparing hand—the faith of the Government had never been violated—no spirit of interest or domination had chased them from the homes of their forefathers—the calumet of peace had never once been dashed from the lips of those they were called on to abandon; and they remained true to the faith they had pledged, staunch to the cause in which they had embarked. The natives, must have been our friends or our foes: had we not employed them the Americans would; and although humanity may deplore the necessity imposed by the very invader himself, of counting them among our allies, and combating at their side,—the law of self-preservation was our guide, and scrupulous indeed must be the power that would have hesitated at such a moment in its choice. The act of aggression was not ours—we declared no war against America—we levied no armies to invade her soil, and carry desolation wherever they came:—but we availed ourselves of that right, common to every

weak power—the right of repelling acts of aggression by every means within our reach. Yet though it is admitted that the Indians, while our allies, were in some instances guilty of those atrocities peculiar to every savage people; let it not be supposed that these atrocities were sanctioned either by the Government or by individuals. On the contrary, every possible means were tried by the officer commanding at Amherstburg, and Colonel Elliott, superintendant of Indian affairs for that post, to soften down the warlike habits of the natives. The most likely method of preventing the unnecessary effusion of blood was that of offering rewards for prisoners. This, however, except in a very few instances, was found to be ineffectual; for the character and disposition of the savage were not to be tamed by rewards, nor the impression of ages to be removed by such temptations. To have employed force, would have been to have turned their weapons against ourselves; and a body of five hundred troops, composing the utmost strength of the garrison, could have effected little against three thousand fiery warriors, unused to restraint, and acknowledging no power but their own will. The Americans themselves had Indians employed in their service—a few only it is true—but if they had not more, it was not owing to any want of exertion on their parts; and if it is admitted on the one hand, that they conducted themselves with more humanity, it cannot at the same time be denied on the other, that the feebleness of their numbers rendered them more immediately subject to the authority of the American commanders, neither can it be disputed, that compulsion alone bound them to the adverse cause, their families having been often detained as hostages to answer for their fidelity.

On the 18th of June 1812, a formal declaration of War against Great Britain and her dependencies was passed by both Houses of Congress, and approved by Mr. Madison the President—on the 20th it was officially notified by General Bloomfield to the American army, and in what spirit received by the war party may be inferred from the following account which appeared in the American papers of that period.

Gazette Office, Boston, August 2d, 1812.

This morning's mail gives us a few particulars of a most barbarous riot in Baltimore, instigated by the friends of the Administration, and completed by French Democracy. Our blood stagnates with cold horror at the enormity of the scenes; while our indignation is roused at the passive, and therefore encouraging department of the Police; and our grief is deep and most painful from the loss of the eminent, the patriotic and the worthy characters who have fallen a sacrifice to the fury of the friends of War, and upholders of the administration.

Baltimore, July 29th, 1812.

“The peace of our city has been again disturbed by the mob, the effects of which have been dreadful. On Monday morning, the “Federal Republican” was again issued from the press in this city. Mr. Hanson one of the Editors, expecting an attack, had collected his friends in the New office (which is a brick house in Charter Street)