

for self laudation on the part of the Americans. The British fleet found it necessary, in consequence of a heavy gale from the north-west, to claw off a lee shore, without delaying to hoist up all their boats, some of which were cut loose, and drifted on shore. This was done to prevent getting embayed; and to every one, who may remember the situation of Oswego, the necessity of this will be apparent, especially when it is farther borne in mind, that a lee shore, on these lakes, even in a moderate gale, is so much dreaded, that, even at the present day, despite the superior build of vessels, and increased skill in seamanship, vessels are sometimes compelled to leave their anchorage twice or three times, and that it often takes a fortnight, or perhaps longer, to take in a load which a couple of days in fair weather would be sufficient for. The American

Retreat of the fleet.

writers represent these boats as prizes. Smith, O'Connor, and Thompson, all mention the retreat of the British fleet, but not one of them had the honesty to state the cause.

Another point to be commented on is the discrepancy as to numbers. General Brown declares, that over three thousand were landed; Mr. O'Connor reduces this number to two thousand; Smith states the numbers at between two and three thousand. Mr. Thompson only mentions seventeen hundred; and the American officer, whom we have already mentioned, estimates the number at twelve hundred. Armstrong eschews numbers, and merely mentions fifteen boats crowded with men.

These same writers have been quite as determined to reduce their own, as to swell the numbers of their opponents; and appear accordingly, one and all, to have carefully omitted in their list of combatants the militia, and to have confined their statement as to numbers to that of the regulars alone. We accordingly find that three hundred men, and no more, formed the heroic band who, for half an hour, resisted, according to General Brown, the onslaught of more than three thousand men. The same policy was observed with regard to the captured articles, and the government organs were

most assiduous in their attempts to represent the amount of loss "as most trifling." This proceeding afforded an opportunity to the opposition or federal papers of the day to tax government with wilfully deceiving the people. We have already shown what really was captured, and will now give in contrast the American accounts.

Mr. Thompson says:—"The enemy took possession of the fort and barracks, but for the little booty which he obtained, consisting of a few barrels of provisions and whiskey, he paid much more than an equivalent." Smith declares that we captured "nothing but a naked fort." O'Connor admits eight pieces of cannon, and stores worth one hundred dollars.

The returns made by the British are borne out by an American writer from Onondago, who estimates the amount at over forty thousand dollars.

The last point worthy of note is that, although the British troops remained for nearly 24 hours in the place, we do not find any complaint against them on the part of a single American writer. This was highly creditable to the troops, marines and seamen, and affords a very marked contrast to the behaviour of some Americans in an affair at Long Point, which we shall shortly have to relate. We will now give Sir James Yeo's version of the affair, and in our notes will be found* the general order issued by the American commander, General Brown.

* *American General Order.*

Head quarters, Sackett's Harbor,
May 12, 1814.

Major General Brown has the satisfaction to announce to the forces under his command, that the detachments stationed at Oswego, under the immediate orders of lieutenant-colonel Mitchell, of the third artillery, by their gallant and highly military conduct, in sustaining the fire of the whole British fleet of this lake for nearly two days, and contending with the vastly superior numbers of the enemy on the land, as long as the interests of the country, or the honour of their profession required; and then, effecting their retreat in good order, in the face of this superior force of the enterprising and accomplished foe, to the depot of naval stores, which it became their duty to defend, have established for themselves a name in arms, worthy of the gallant nation in whose cause they fight, and highly honourable to the army.