

to the north-east of the American island of Michilimacinac, and one of his first acts, on hearing of the declaration of war, was to send a notification of it to Captain Roberts, then in command at St. Joseph's, with instructions to make, if practicable, an immediate attack upon Michilimacinac. This order was acted upon by Captain Roberts with singular promptitude and decision, and on the 16th July he embarked with forty-five men of the 10th Royal Veteran Battalion, two hundred Militia under the command of Mr. Crawford, and two hundred and fifty Indians, composed principally of Sioux, Ottawas, and Chippewas. This force on the morning of the 17th effected a landing, and, without opposition, this vital post, with a garrison of some sixty regulars, was surrendered.—Lieutenant Hancks, the officer in command of the Americans, has officially stated that the summons to surrender the fort was the first information he had of the declaration of war. This, however, appears but little probable, when we remember that the Americans had been making preparations* for a decisive attack in this very quarter for nearly six months, and that General Hull's army alone, the fruit of this preparation, exceeded the whole available force in Upper Canada. Be this, however, as it may—with Michilimacinac fell at once General Hull's hopes of an easy and bloodless conquest of Canada,—spirit and confidence were thereby infused into the Indian tribes, and the poor old General—already familiarized with Indian warfare, finding them less inclined for neutrality, and the Canadian Militia less favorable than he anticipated—even at this time began to discover the fallacy of the expectations he had so prematurely formed. Michilimacinac, (or Mackinaw, as it is now more commonly called,) is an island in the Straits between the Lakes Michigan and Huron, about four miles from land at the nearest point—its name is derived from a fancied resemblance to a turtle's back. The fort,

on the south-east side, was situated on a rock, almost perpendicular in some places, extending nearly half round the island, and rising some two hundred feet from the water. It overlooked, and, of course, commanded the harbor, a beautiful basin of about a mile in extent, sheltered from Lake Huron by two islands stretching across its mouth, and leaving only a narrow ship channel by which to enter the harbor. This position was a most valuable one, as it commanded the passage by which, if necessary, Hull might expect his supplies or reinforcements. In the fort were a quantity of military stores and seven hundred packs of fur, the first fruits of the war.

While these scenes, so important in their effects, were being transacted in his rear, Gen. Hull commenced an advance on Fort Malden, or Amherstburg. At this time the British force on the frontier was nearly nominal, and could scarcely have been expected to offer much resistance, the garrison at Amherstburg, consisting of but about two hundred men of the 1st Battalion of the 41st Regiment, commanded by Captain Muir, a very weak detachment of the Royal Newfoundland Fencibles, and a subaltern's (Lieutenant Troughton's) command of Artillery—such was the material on which Canadians had to trust for a defence of one of the most important points along their frontier. This point was, indeed, of the most vital importance to the British, as it formed the key to their relations with the Indians of the West, and was, naturally, an object of very great interest to the enemy. General Hull had experienced no difficulty in ascertaining the weakness of its defences, and judging from the almost utter impossibility of its obtaining supplies, he looked forward to the fate of Amherstburg as an event which did not admit of a doubt—with this view, therefore, he laid his plans, and against this point was the thunder of the American artillery to be first directed. The fort at Amherstburg could not have sustained a siege of long duration, four bastions flanking a dry ditch, with a single interior defence of picketing, perforated with loop-holes for musketry, offering but little obstacle to an enterprising enemy; a few shells, indeed, would have sufficed to destroy all the defences, as, with the exception of the magazine, all the buildings were of wood, and covered with pine shingles unfit for resisting any missile. The

* We learn from General Armstrong, (Secretary at War at that period,) that preparations had been made along the whole Canadian frontier, in the fall of 1811, and that warlike stores had been sent to Burlington, on Lake Champlain. From the same authority we also learn, that General Hull began his march from Drayton, a frontier town in the State of Ohio, on the 1ST DAY OF JUNE, 1812, twelve days before the declaration of war, to co-operate with such other corps as might be destined to the invasion of Canada.—ED. A. A. M.