



The Volunteer Review

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. III.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1869.

No. 50.

THE REVOLT

OF THE

British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER XXX.

The evacuation of Rhode Island by the American troops was hastened by the knowledge that Sir Henry Clinton was on the way with a reinforcement of 4,000 men for the garrison at Newport. Contrary winds prevented the landing of this expedition till the day after the Americans retreated. In order to accomplish something after coming so far he resolved to make a descent on New London in Connecticut, and clean out the nest of privateers that the numerous small bays and creeks in that neighborhood harboured, but on arriving off the mouth of the Connecticut River the wind again became contrary and prevented the fleet from entering. Placing Major-General Sir Charles Grey in command with orders to proceed to Buzzard's Bay, he returned to New York.

With the energy which distinguished Gen. Grey's career he destroyed the privateers, amounting, with their prizes, to seventy sail at Bedford and Fairhaven, a large quantity of stores and provisions, artillery and barracks, and at Martha's Vineyard several vessels, a large quantity of stores, and drove away sheep and oxen forming a large drove, altogether 93 sail of vessels were destroyed. The expedition in this service lost one man killed and four wounded, returning to New York on 7th September.

Another expedition was sent to Little Egg Harbour on the eastern coast of New Jersey. This place being a noted rendezvous for privateers, as it lay directly in the channel through which vessels usually passed into New York harbour, it was a most convenient station for annoying and interrupting the trade so that it was an object of considerable importance to clear it out. In order to effectually insure the success of the expedition and also allow provisions to be brought in, the army was put in motion, one division, under Lord Cornwallis, being

thrown across the Hudson, was posted with its right on that river and left on the Hackensack at Newbridge, while the other, under Gen. Kuyphausen, was posted with its left on the Hudson at Wippenham, and its right on the Brunx, this division occupying a position on the east bank of the Hudson. As the fleet gave the British troops command of the river both divisions could be joined on either side in twenty four hours, while Washington could not assemble his troops in less than ten days to act against that on the western shore and not at all on the eastern. Aware of this and knowing that it was not a forward movement, he kept his troops together and sent detachments out to interrupt and circumscribe the movements of the foragers. One of those consisting of a regiment of light horse, commanded by Col. Baylor, stationed at the village of Old Taapan, supported by a body of Militia at New Taapan, was surprised on the night of the 27th of September by the troops under Major Gen. Grey and completely cut to pieces. The detachment intended to surprize the militia at New Taapan advanced with such methodical slowness that ample time was given the militia to escape.

The expedition to Little Egg harbor was quite successful, ten large vessels were burnt, a large amount of property destroyed and a portion of Pulaski's legion surprised and cut to pieces. This expedition had been delayed by contrary winds and did not reach Little Egg harbor till the 5th of October, preventing in some measure its full effect, but it was of no permanent use being only a temporary raid, not effecting in the slightest degree the issues of the contest. Before the final operations at Little Egg harbor were closed the British army retired to New York, and no further movement was made in that direction during the remainder of the year.

The fleet being ready on the 28th of October, Admiral Byron put to sea and proceeded to Boston, for the purpose of attacking the French fleet, but "Fair Weather Jack's" usual good fortune attended him, for a storm on the 1st November blew his fleet out to sea, dispersed and damaged

them so that they were obliged to proceed to Rhode Island to refit, and while there on the 3rd of November the Count D'Estaing put to sea and bore away to the West Indies.

The mantle of procrastination which had enveloped Howe descended and completely enshrouded Clinton. A taste for petty and desultory expeditions, the results of which as victories were far more ruinous than defeats, seems to have been intensified in the military vices of his character. His troops were put into winter quarters and divided, one detachment of 5,000 troops were sent under General Grant to the West Indies escorted by a squadron of six ships, under Commodore Hotham. Another expedition sailed towards the end of November for the reduction of the Province of Georgia. The troops consisted of the 71st regiment, command by Lieut.-Col. Campbell, the naval force by Commodore Hyde Parker.

About this time the British Commissioners sailed for England, having totally failed in all the objects for which they had been sent out. It is not necessary to go over the various attempts made at opening a negotiation with Congress. The duplicity, treachery, and utter want of honesty manifested by the extreme Republican section of that body defeated all attempts at reconciliation. But the great mistake of the British ministry consisted in directing these Commissioners to treat with or recognize them at all. They were like old Lenthal's parliament, a mere handful. Not more than twenty, or, at most, thirty of the most violent and unscrupulous members could be got together for the despatch of business, and treating with those people who had already treasonable relations with France was beneath the dignity and adverse to the interests of the British people. Those men in no way represented the opinions of the Colonists, and a vigorous display of military operations would have done more to restore the authority of the British Crown and Parliament than all the smooth words or treaties which could be devised. But Whig selfishness crippled the resources of the country and trampled her honor in the dust. The Congress had been