

What may really be the nature of your orders I will not pretend to determine. Nor indeed is it necessary at present. If we admit them to be as *positive* as a Cabinet ever framed, still you will not be justifiable, if you appear to have acted with imprudence, and contrary to the suggestions of reason and experience. The instructions of an Officer can never be so understood by him as to imply absurdity; nor can his command be so construed as to have defeat for its purpose. This doctrine holds good in general. Let us apply it to your particular case.

You was appointed to the command of an army equal to the most arduous attempt. Your troops were healthy and well disciplined; your officers of approved courage, and distinguished reputation. As in all probability the enemy would trust much to the strength of their posts, you was furnished with the best train of artillery that was, perhaps, ever allotted to second the operations of such an army as yours. It was hoped, by those who had planned the expedition, that the most decisive advantage would attend the first efforts