

cutive is often, that is, with popular opinion to back it, enabled to strike a blow and commit a wrong, which in a less free country would not be submitted to.

With respect to the behaviour of the British troops on this occasion, we would remark, that General Smyth's displays of force entirely failed to produce the effect he had desired, and that

it was unanimously decided at a council, held on the night of the 30th, composed of regular and militia officers, that "They did not consider a retreat at all necessary, nor a measure to be looked forward to, and that but a small reinforcement would enable them to repel any force which General Smyth might have it in his power to bring against their country.

ordered to be again at the place of embarkation at eight o'clock on the morning of the 30th of November. On their arrival they were sent into the adjacent woods, there to build fires and remain until three o'clock A.M., of the 1st of Dec., when it was intended to put off two hours before day-light, so as to avoid the enemy's cannon in passing the position which it was believed they occupied below, to land above Chippewa, assault that place, and, if successful, march through Queenston for Fort George. For this expedition the contractor was called on to furnish rations for 2500 men for four days, when it was found he could furnish the pork, but not the flour; the deputy quarter-master called for 60 barrels, and got but 35.

The embarkation commenced, but was delayed by circumstances, so as not to be completed until after daylight, when it was found the regular infantry, 688 men, the artillery, 177 men. Swift's volunteers, estimated at 236, companies of federal volunteers, under Captains Collins, Phillips, Allison, Moore, Maher, and Marshall, amounting to 276 men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel McClure, 100 men of Colonel Dobbin's militia, and a few men in a boat with General P. B. Porter, had embarked—the whole on board amounting, exclusive of officers, to 1465 men, or thereabouts; and it was two hours later than had been contemplated.

There were some groups of men not yet embarked; they were applied to, requested and ordered by the Brigade-Major to get into their boats—they did not. The number of these the Brigade Major estimated at about 150. It was probably greater.

It then became a question whether it was expedient to invade Canada in open daylight, with 1500 men, at a point where no reinforcement could be expected for some days. I saw that the number of the regular troops was declining rapidly—I knew that on them chiefly I was to depend.

I called together the officers commanding corps of the regular army, Colonel Parker being sick. Those present were Col. Porter of the artillery, Col. Schuyler, Col. Winder, and Lieut.-Col. Coles.

I put to them this question—Shall we proceed? They unanimously decided that we ought not.

I foresaw that the volunteers who had come out for a few days, would disperse—several of them on the evening of the 28th broke their muskets. I foresaw that the number of the regular troops would decrease; the measles and other diseases being amongst them; and they were now in tents in the month of December. I informed the officers that the attempt to invade Canada would not be made until the army was

reinforced; directed them to withdraw their troops, and cover their huts immediately.

You say that on Saturday every obstruction was removed, and that a landing might have been effected "without the loss of a single man." This proves you unacquainted with the occurrences of the day. Colonel Winder, in returning from the enemy's shore in the morning, lost a tenth part of his force, in killed and wounded. The enemy showed no more than 500 or 600 men, as estimated by Colonel Parker, and one piece of artillery, supposed a nine-pounder. That force we no doubt might have overcome, but not without loss; and that, from the great advantage the enemy would have had, might have been considerable.

To recapitulate—My orders were to pass into Canada with 3000 men *at once*. On the first day of embarkation, not more than 1100 men were embarked, of whom 400, that is, half the regular infantry, were exhausted with fatigue, and want of rest. On the second embarkation, only 1500 men were embarked, and these were to have put off immediately, and to have descended the river to a point where reinforcements were not to be expected. On both days, many of the regular troops were men in bad health, who could not have stood one day's march; who, although they were on the sick report, were turned out by their ardent officers.

The affair at Queenston is a caution against relying on crowds who go to the bank of Niagara to look on a battle as on a theatrical exhibition; who, if they are disappointed of the sight, break their muskets; or, if they are without rations for a day, desert.

I have made you this frank disclosure without admitting your authority to require it, under the impression that you are patriotic and candid men; and that you will not censure me for following the cautious counsels of experience; nor join in the senseless clamor excited against me by an interested man.

I have some reason to believe that the cautious counsel given by the superior officers of my command was good. From deserters, we learn that 2344 rations are issued daily on the frontiers, on the British side. Captain King, prisoner at Fort George, writes to an officer thus—"Tell our friends to take better care of themselves than it appears I have done."

I am, gentlemen, with great respect, your most obedient

ALEXANDER SMYTH,

Brigadier-General.

P.S.—It will be observed that the force *ready* could be no otherwise ascertained than by an *actual* embarkation—it being uncertain what portion of the volunteer force would embark.