

capacity of Howe or Clinton's understanding, Comte d'Estaing's operations in the West Indies should have been brought to a close by a general action, but the sailors in command were as obtuse as the soldiers, the French Admiral's blunders were quite as successful as the best designed and most elaborate tactics. England's interests had been confided to obstinate blockheads and stupid fools the consequences were easily to be foreseen.

Sir Henry Clinton appears to have learned nothing from Sir Wm. Howe's elaborate failure at Philadelphia, nor his own not very dignified retreat therefrom in 1778, and as a proof thereof the moment he became satisfied that Comte d'Estaing had sailed for Europe, he set on foot an expedition to Charleston in South Carolina where himself and Sir Peter Parker had ignominiously failed in 1776, and where he now seemed determined to wipe out that disgrace for his own satisfaction because it could in no way conduce to the interests of his country, but as events proved trailed his military prestige in the dust and seriously compromised her position amongst European powers. That the consent of the British Administration was given to any such movements can only be accounted for on the supposition that they were as ignorant of the proper objective point in this contest as Sir H. Clinton and therefore they allowed him to indulge in this last and most fatal experiment—for it was nothing more—because the Province of South Carolina in reality exercised no influence on the contest. A small squadron cruising off Charleston harbour would as effectually neutralise the power of the Province for good or evil as the most elaborate military operations, but Clinton consulted only his own feelings and with what success the campaign of 1780 will testify.

On the 23rd December, 1779, the troops designed for this disastrous expedition sailed from Sandy-hook under the command of Sir H. Clinton—leaving Lieut. General Knyp-hausen in command of New York. The usual time for the passage was ten days, but it was the end of January, 1780, before any of the ships arrived at Tybee, the rendezvous, some being taken by the enemy, others foundered; amongst which was one with all the heavy artillery, and all more or less damaged—nearly all the artillery and cavalry horses were lost. As it was necessary to refit before proceeding further it was the 11th February before the troops were disembarked on John's Island, thirty miles from Charleston—part of the fleet being sent round to block up the Harbour. While the troops slowly advancing through the passes from John's to James' Island, and from thence over Wappo cut to the main land until they reached the banks of Ashly River opposite Charleston. And such was the impediments offered to the advance of the troops or the slowness of the operations that it was the 30th of March before the troops encamped in front of the American lines, and on the 1st April they

broke ground at the distance of 800 yards from the Provincial works.

The time wasted by the British General in his slow advance was improved by the United States General in strengthening and enlarging the defences of Charleston—built on the tongue of a low peninsula formed by the Ashly and Cooper Rivers it was no hard task to render its land defences all but impregnable, but its sea defences were contemptible, its most formidable obstacle on that side being a bar or sand bank with so little water on it that it was necessary to take guns, provisions and water out of a 32-gun frigate to enable her to pass it. On the land side Charleston was covered by a canal connecting two swamps covered at half flood, the next was a double picketed ditch between which and the canal two rows of abattis were placed, and immediately in front of the place a line of redoubts and batteries mounting upwards of 80 pieces of artillery. The works resting on each river completely infladed both ends of the canal, while in the centre a formidable hornwork, closed during the siege, served all the purposes of a citadel. Inside the bay in Five Fathom Hole lay the American Commodore Whipple with a squadron of nine sail, the largest of which carried 46 and the smallest 16 guns, so placed as to command the bar, while the works on Sullivan's Island had been considerably strengthened. The garrison amounting to 7000 men were under the command of General Lincoln, but the chief reliance for a successful defence was placed on the shipping; but no sooner did the British fleet approach the bar on the 20th of March with the intention to pass it than Commodore Whipple quitted his station and took refuge under the guns of Fort Moultrie leaving Admiral Arbuthnot, who commanded the British fleet, liberty to enter at his leisure; but the spirit of procrastination was not alone confined to the Army, the gallant Admiral took only sixteen days to cross any part of his force over the bar, and the Commodore taking heart of grace because he was not pursued sailed out from under the protection of Fort Moultrie, gallantly ran for Charleston, passed into Cooper River where he sank part of his squadron to prevent the Admiral from following him—if the latter had crossed the bar at once and sailed up the Cooper Charleston must have surrendered before a parallel was opened, but like the General he did not like to spoil a display of strategy and science to benefit the country he was serving. On the 9th April the squadron under his command passed the bar and Fort Moultrie with very little loss and anchored at Fort Johnston on the right bank of the Ashly River and out of gunshot from the town. On the same day the first parallel was finished and the town being now invested in due form General Lincoln was summoned to surrender; his answer was short and firm:—

"Sixty days have passed since it has been known that your intentions against this town were hostile, in which time has been

"afforded to abandon it, but duty and inclination point to the propriety of supporting it to the last extremity." As contemptuous and scornful a rejection as the annals of warfare contain, and it is a matter of no astonishment that it should be so.

The batteries were opened on the town, but as General Lincoln had left his cavalry on the east bank of the Cooper River with orders to keep open the communication with the country, and as reinforcements were arriving the fall of the town appeared yet as far off as ever. However General Clinton detached Lieut.-Col. Webster with 1400 men to cut off the American cavalry, and on the night of the 14th April the advanced guard of this detachment, composed of Tonleton's and Ferguson's corps, surprised the American cavalry with the militia attached to them at Biggins' Bridge near Monk's Corners, thirty two miles from Charleston, completely routing and dispersing them with the loss of all their stores, camp equipage and baggage. This defeat laid open the communications of the garrison, and a reinforcement arriving from New York Earl Cornwallis was enabled to cross the Cooper River and effectually cut off the place from relief.

The besiegers pushed their works with vigor, the second parallel was completed on the 20th April and the third on the 6th of May, this latter drained the canal covering the front of the American works; and on the day on which it was completed the surrender of Fort Moultrie and defeat of the remains of the American cavalry by Tarleton's eventually sealed the fate of Charleston which surrendered on the 12th of May.

The prisoners taken in Charleston included the Deputy Governor and Council of the State, seven General Officers, a Commodore, 5000 soldiers, 1000 French and American seamen, 400 pieces of Ordnance with a large quantity of stores, 8 American armed vessels mounting 218 guns, 2 French vessels mounting 42 guns, 4 armed galleys, some brigs and other small vessels were either captured or destroyed. The British lost during this siege 76 killed and 189 wounded—that of the Americans was not correctly ascertained.

**A KNIFE GUN.**—The Prussian needle gun has a formidable rival in the form of a *zund-messergewehr*, or knife gun—the new breech-loader invented by Herr Mayhofer, of Kauschen, East Prussia. At the recent trial in Konigsberg, twenty five rounds with full cartridge, are said to have been fired off per minute. The missile penetrates at a distance of two thousand yards. The piece carries with great precision, and has the great advantage of a minimum of smoke. The invention extends to the cartridge as well as the gun. The inventor had repeated his offer to sell his patent to the Prussian Government, but it has not yet been accepted. He has spent his whole fortune, of twenty-five thousand dollars, in the production of the arm, and threatens to go to Austria or France if Prussia does not give him an answer soon.

A Boston paper reports a cock-fight under the head of "an ornithological discussion."