

A comparison between Col. Williams modest letter, and Mr. O'Connor's version of the same affair will not be uninteresting to the reader:

"The issue of this expedition," says Mr. O'Connor, "was unfortunate, although in its progress it did honor to the Americans engaged. The enemy claimed a victory, and pretended to gather laurels, only because he was not vanquished. General Wilkinson, at the head of his division, marched from Champlain with the intention of reducing the enemy's fortress at the river La Colle.

"About eleven o'clock, he fell in with the enemy at Odell town, three miles from La Colle, and six\* from St. John's. An attack was commenced by the enemy on the advance of the army under Colonel Clarke and Major For-yth. Col. Bissell came up with spirit, and the enemy was forced to retire with loss. General Wilkinson took part in this action, and bravely advanced into the most dangerous position, declining frequently the advice of his officers to retire from imminent danger. The enemy having used his congrève rockets without producing any effect, retired to La Colle, where he was pursued. At this place an action was expected; but the enemy whose force, when increased by a reinforcement from the Isle aux Noix amounted to at least twenty-five hundred men, mostly regulars, *declined meeting the American force, although much inferior in numbers and means of warfare.*

"Several sorties were made by the enemy, but they were resisted with bravery and success. The conduct of every individual attached to the American command, was marked by that patriotism and prowess, which has so often conquered the boasted discipline, long experience, and military tactics of an enemy who dared not expose his *"invincibles"*† to the disgrace of being defeated by a less numerous force of Yankee wood-men."‡

This extract we would not venture to give without naming also the very page from which it was taken. Would any one, we ask, believe it possible that this writer was describing the repulse of four thousand Americans in an attack on a mill, garrisoned by one hundred and

eighty British—with somewhere about twelve hundred regulars and militia stationed in the vicinity. Even General Wilkinson was compelled to allow, on his trial, that the building was defended by a garrison of, not eighteen hundred regulars and five hundred militia, but of six hundred veteran troops.

Col. McPherson's testimony on the same occasion showed that in his estimation, at all events, the gallantry so much vaunted by Mr. O'Connor was not displayed, and he declared "that the army should have attempted to force a passage into the mill, and employed the bayonet at every sacrifice, or have renewed the attack, with heavier ordnance, at daylight the next morning."

How Messrs. O'Connor, Smith, and Thompson could, with the proceedings of General Wilkinson's trial open to the world, venture to put forth their statements would puzzle any one unaccustomed to their through, thick and through thin style of laudation and apology.

James is very severe upon the poor General for the note which he put forward in answer to Col. McPherson's assertion that "the bayonet ought to have been employed." To take such a post, wrote Wilkinson, with small arms, has often been attempted, but never succeeded, from the time of Xenophon who failed in the attempt down to the present day. Xenophon himself was baffled in an attempt against a Castle in the plain of Cai-cus, and also in his attack on the metropolis of the Dryanes, and in times modern as well as ancient, we have abundant examples of the failure of military enterprises, by the most distinguished chiefs."

Before giving James's comments on this note we would suggest to General Wilkinson and his three apologists that an attack on a Stone Castle with narrow slits for the double purpose of admitting light and discharging arrows, cross-bolts, or javelins, and an attack on a Mill, (where is not usually a lack of good sized windows,) with musketry and a well served battery of three heavy guns, are not quite one and the same thing. As the General has gone so far out of his way to find an excuse, we also may be excused for travelling back a few years, in order to confute his assertions. In that veracious historical

\* We presume Mr. O'Connor means twenty-six miles.

† These italics are Mr. O'Connor's.

‡ History of the War, page 219.