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The Provincials continued their retreat till they arrived in the borders of the river Sorel, which falls into the St. Lawrence at the distance of about 140 miles from Quebec, where they joined some of those reinforcements that had not been able to proceed farther to their assistance; but the whole were now sunk in spirit, and debilitated in act. To complete their misfortunes, the small-pox had spread through all their quarters.

These discouraging circumstances were not sufficient to damp the spirit of enterprize in their leaders. A very daring, and not ill-laid plan, was formed for the surprize of the kings forces at the Three Rivers; which, if it had been attended with all the success it was capable of, might have been ranked among the most considerable military achievements of that nature.

Provinci-
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The British and Brunswick forces were at this time much separated. A considerable body were stationed at the Three Rivers under the command of Brigadier General Frazer. Another under that of Brigadier General Nesbit, lay near them on board the transport. A greater than either along with the Generals Carleton, Burgoyne, Philips and the German General, Reidesel, were in several divisions by land and water, on the way to Quebec. The distance from Sorel was about fifty miles, and several armed vessels, and transports full of troops, which had got higher up than Three Rivers, lay full in the way.

In the face of all those difficulties, a body of about 2000 men, under the command of a Major General Thompson, embarked at Sorel in fifty boats, and coasting the south side of what is called the Lake of St. Peter, where the St. Lawrence spreads to a great extent, arrived at Nicolet, from whence they fell down the river by night, and passed to the other side, with