

people of the neighbouring states, would induce them to interpose their influence, and such authority as their laws could enforce, to preserve a safe and peaceful communication with Her Majesty's subjects, who were most anxious, on their part, to live in harmony with them.

Unhappily, however, we were soon convinced that our hopes of peace and security were altogether groundless; that we were about to experience injuries far more serious than any we had hitherto suffered; that, in fact, we were not only to be subject to the predatory attacks of detached and independent bands of assassins and pirates, but that a great and influential community were combining secretly, but deliberately, to overthrow our government and our laws—to lay desolate our country, and to murder and destroy all who should venture to oppose their barbarous and wicked designs. It was some time before this unparalleled conspiracy was discovered, and in the meanwhile a series of outrages were committed by small parties of American citizens, to which it is necessary briefly to advert.

The first was the destruction of the Sir Robert Peel steamboat,—This vessel, quite new, and valued at ten thousand pounds, when on her way from Prescott to the ports at the head of Lake Ontario, stopped on the 30th May, at an island in the River Saint Lawrence, called Wells' Island, and within the limits of the state of New York, for the purpose of taking in wood. While lying moored to the shore, in full confidence of security in the port of a friendly power, and in the middle of the night, when all the passengers, (among whom were a number of ladies,) had retired to rest, she was boarded by a band of about thirty pirates, headed by a well-known free-booter;—These ruffians, armed and disguised, rushed into the cabins, hurried the passengers from their beds, and, with brutal violence, drove them on shore. The crew, not expecting the attack, and wholly unprepared for it, were unable to make resistance; the entire possession of the vessel was therefore easily gained by the assailants, who, after pillaging her of every thing valuable, including the money, watches, clothing, and other property of the passengers, towed her into the stream, where they set fire to her, and watched her until she was entirely consumed, and then returned to the American shore.

As might reasonably be expected, an outrage so unusual in any country, and wholly without a parallel in this, produced a powerful sensation throughout the British colonies—and it was believed that corresponding feelings of indignation would have been manifested on the opposite shores; and that every effort would be made to bring the perpetrators of this cowardly and atrocious felony to punishment. But although some expression of dissatisfaction did exhibit itself, it was slight in comparison with what was looked for, and what the enormity of the crime led every one to expect. A proclamation was issued by the government of the state of New York, offering a paltry sum for the apprehension of certain of the pirates; but although the majority of them, including the leaders, were well known, only one or two of them were arrested; who, being placed on their trial, notwithstanding the plainest evidence of their guilt, were, almost without hesitation, acquitted by the jury empannelled to try them. Up to this period, no event had occurred, connected with our border difficulties, that so shocked the feelings of the people of this province as this last;—It caused thousands who had previously indulged the belief, that the government and people of the United States were averse to the unprovoked and lawless aggressions which had been previously made upon us, to doubt the correctness of their opinions. They began to consider it unsafe to enter their harbours; and from that period to the present, it has been with reluctance that any well-affected subject of Her Majesty in this province has approached the shores of the United States, or engaged in intercourse of any kind with the citizens of that republic. The feeling of cordial good will that once existed between the people of the two countries, was greatly weakened, and subsequent events have almost entirely destroyed it. No proffer of indemnity has yet been made by the nation responsible for this great injury to our fellow subjects, and insult to the British flag; nor does it appear to be considered necessary by the American government, for the maintenance of its national honour, to do this plain act of justice without waiting a demand, which, we cannot doubt, is certain to be made and enforced.

The next instance of foreign aggression was the affair of Short Hills, where a bandit of the name of Morreau, headed a party of brigands, supposed to number about one hundred and fifty, who made a sudden and unexpected attack in the night time, on a small detachment of provincial dragoons, stationed in a wooden building in the township of Pelham, who, although assailed by more than ten times their number, defended themselves with the greatest courage and fortitude, and were at last subdued, not by the arms of the pirates, but by the building which they occupied being set on fire. The moment the ruffians got these gallant men into