

on the morning of the following day. An order was issued for all the troops to be in readiness to move at an instant's notice, tents were struck, and wagons loaded. A deserter then made his escape to Fort George, bearing this note addressed to Major V. Huyek, 13th U. S. Infantry: "Every movement of the army is either an advance or retreat; about 2270 strong." This opportune bit of information was written by Noah Hopkins, a saddler at Queenston, who was the son-in-law of an American colonel, and seems to have been constantly employed as a spy. He was afterwards detected and hung for treasonable practices, on the 20th July, 1814. The intelligence brought by this man caused something like a panic in Wilkinson's camp, but finally two strong columns marched out to oppose the attack if one was intended, or profit by the retreat. As neither took place, they returned to their quarters without doing anything.

On the 1st of October Chauncey returned to Niagara, still watched by Yeo, who anchored at the mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek. Leaving about 1,800 regulars, militia and Indians to occupy the forts and camp, Wilkinson finally embarked the remainder of his forces and set off on his long projected expedition. Yeo's opportune appearance on the 7th of September had caused a delay of eighteen days; his return on the 20th had been responsible for the loss of another week, when time and fair weather was of the utmost importance. Although he had gained no brilliant success and had finally been compelled to seek safety in flight, his services to the army had been most meritorious and effective. "In executing his orders," even Mr. Cooper is constrained to admit, "the English Commodore, who was an officer of rare merit, manifested great steadiness, self-denial and address, and the skill and boldness with which he manœuvred received the applause of his enemies."*

The long beleaguering of the American camp was now about to close abruptly. As soon as General Wilkinson's purpose was placed beyond doubt De Rottenburg despatched to the defence of Kingston three of his strongest regiments and prepared to follow himself, leaving Vincent to maintain the blockade as long as possible. The defeat of the British squadron on Lake Erie was followed by General Procter's retreat from Detroit and his total rout on the Thames. Parties of New York militia raided the frontier between Fort Erie and the Falls, and large bodies of these troops were seen assembling at Lewiston and Fort Niagara.

"The Americans have possession of our side as far down as Samuel Street's, and have plundered all the loyal inhabitants of their property," writes Mr. Ridout on the 2nd October. "The

* Naval Hist. of U. S., II, 381.