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HISTORY OF THE WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

DURING THE YEARS 1812, 1813, AND 1814.

CHAPTER XI.

Before entering on the subject of the expedition against Sackett's Harbor, we would premise that we have hitherto endeavoured to do full justice to Sir George Prevost, wherever it appeared that blame had been unjustly imputed to him, and to point out the real quarter to which discredit should attach, whether the causes of his failure might be attributable to the orders from the Home Government, by which he was in a great degree fettered, or arose from the insufficient force under his command, and the extended frontier which he was called upon to defend. We can scarcely, then, be accused of blindly or capriciously joining in a crusade against this officer's memory in the present instance, the more especially as we have diligently sought to discover, in the American accounts of the descent on Sackett's Harbor, some extenuating causes for the failure of a movement, on which the ultimate success of the war seemed so mainly to depend, to which the attention of the entire Province was directed, which, in consequence of the presence and co-operation of the two commanders-in-chief, the inhabitants had flattered themselves would have a very different result, and

the failure of which inflicted a blow on the military character of Sir George Prevost from which it never recovered.

Prone to exaggeration as we have in most cases found American historians, it is a singular feature in the present instance, that they seem to have laid aside their natural characteristic, and to have modestly set forth, with but little coloring of misrepresentation, the facts as they really occurred. This moderation bears the harder on Sir George Prevost, as it would almost seem as if his discomfiture appeared in their eyes something scarcely worth boasting of, ready as they always were to lay hold of every circumstance, however trivial, (and of this we have already adduced several striking proofs,) that they could in any manner distort, or magnify into a victory.

Without farther preamble, then, we would remind the reader, that Commodore (Sir James) Yeo's arrival from England, with a party of officers and seamen, had given an impetus to the naval preparations at Kingston, and that the vessels there had been manned and equipped in a manner sufficient to warrant the expectation, that the fleet, under so able a commander, might once more boldly appear on the lake. Great, therefore, was the delight of all, when it was ascertained that Sir George Prevost's consent had been obtained for employing, this acquisition of naval strength, in a combined attack, on the important post of Sackett's Harbor, now considerably weakened in its defences, by the absence of Commodore Chauncey's fleet, and of the numerous army which had recently been stationed there.