

he could, firing an occasional shot that always fell short, for his guns were small. On the river bank redcoats were several times sighted and there were skirmishes with the American rearguard, entailing a few casualties. The nearness of his foe troubled Wilkinson, for a strong British force could follow and attack the rear of that part of his army that must march along the road on the north-bank of the St Lawrence to join the flotilla at the foot of the Soo rapids. Scouts reporting a considerable body of British regulars encamped in a pine-grove three miles west of him, every precaution was taken against a night attack, the soldiers slept on their arms and strong patrols covered the camp. The night, however, passed without alarm.

How this force of British regulars came needs to be told. When Lieut. Mulcaster, R.N., sailed into Kingston harbor on the 6th November and reported to the commander, General Rottenburg, that the flotilla had sailed for Montreal, and that Kingston was not to be attacked, prompt action was taken. The sailor was asked if he would undertake to convey a corps of observation, in pursuit of the flotilla and he answered yes. Despatch was used, and, on the night of the 7th, four barges, bearing detachments of the 49th and 89th regiments, rowed out of Kingston harbor and found Mulcaster and his gunboats in waiting. The little force of redcoats was under command of Joseph Winton Morrison, colonel of the 89th, he being senior officer. The American fleet, under Chauncey, were blockading the river with the express object of guarding Wilkinson's rear by preventing the British gunboats on lake Ontario following him. The St Lawrence, however, is wide and at the foot of the lake has many islands. Mulcaster had a pilot who knew all the channels, and slipped past Chauncey in the darkness. Every expedition was used and next evening Prescott was reached, where the discouraging news awaited them that the Americans had safely run the gauntlet of Fort Wellington's guns. Being no longer necessary, part of its garrison was ordered to join the corps of observation. This reinforcement consisted of the two flank companies of the 49th, a body of militia, and thirty Indians, raising Colonel Morrison's force to 800. Anxious as he was to overtake the flotilla, he tarried long enough next day at the village of Hamilton, on the U.S. bank, to recover a quantity of military stores which the Americans