

rendering nugatory all Howe's endeavors and exertions of the previous campaign.

No sophistry can excuse the culpable inactivity of Howe and the British Generals. It is hardly possible that any man with common sense, not an idiot or traitor, would be guilty of the outrageous blunders those men committed with 30,000 well disciplined to allow an enemy not exceeding 5,000 men, ill-clad, badly supplied, and officered by farmers, tavernkeepers and doctors, to intercept the communications and establish themselves for six months within 25 miles of headquarters; to keep a division of twice their own number in a state of siege for that period, and to compel them to abandon the Province. Howe's imbecility did more for the independence of the United States than Washington's generalship, and if Byng was shot for timidity Howe should have been hung for laziness.

Of all the British conquests in New Jersey, Brunswick, situated on the Rariton and Amboy, at its mouth, alone remained, both having communication with New York by the sea. The inhabitants of the Province, well affected to the British, by the outrageous conduct and plundering propensities of the auxiliaries, the villianous neglect of Howe and his satellites, were converted into enemies, and seeing the prowess of the United States troops, the shameless cowardice and incapacity of the British officers, resolved to cast in their allegiance where they would at least meet protection, and became their most active and bitterest foes. During the operations of these six months the British troops lost more men in desultory skirmishes than would have been lost in a general action which would have crushed Washington's army.

So thoroughly lost were the commanding officers to all sense of professional honor that the very commissariat stores for their troops were allowed to be captured and plundered within three miles of Amboy, where the United States troops established a post, which they maintained throughout the winter and spring. Howe, with one division of his troops held in close siege within 25 miles of his headquarters, was in the meantime planning plundering raids into the districts occupied by the enemy, and those raids were so desultory and such elaborate care taken to spread the fullest possible intelligence of the force to be employed and its destination that Washington found no difficulty in most cases of frustrating its object, and very frequently punished the assailants severely.

Early in 1777 a number of loyalists amounting to several thousand men were embodied as Provincial regiments in the Royal service, of which Governor Tryon of New York, a man without military experience, was appointed Major-General.

Fifty miles above New York, on the east, or left bank of the Hudson, Peek's Hill, or Kill, village stands on a creek, the mouth of

which forms with the river a bay admirably situated for defensive purposes. Three miles inland, at the head of one of the passes through the highlands of the Hudson, stood Continental village on the Manor or estate of the Van Cortlandt family. As it had become apparent to some one in the United States service that the real plan of the campaign had not yet been devised, and that it was possible it might be found in an advance from Canada down the Hudson, and from New York up it. Peekskill furnished a good strategic position for a commissariat's depot as well as a covering point for the Eastern States, and where their troops could be most easily concentrated. Accordingly a large quantity of stores and provisions were accumulated, but with that caution which marked the operations of Washington's troops; they were placed at Continental village, while a force of 700 men occupied Peekskill. Sir William Howe detached 500 men under Lieut.-Col. Bird, from the 15th Regiment, with ten sail of frigates and transports, who landed on the 22nd of March, but found the United States troops had evacuated the village after setting fire to the barracks and such stores as they could not carry off. The British troops fired what was left of the village, and after losing some men in a skirmish re-embarked on the same day for New York.

On the 25th of April Major-General Tryon, in command of 2,000 men, embarked on board transports in the East River and proceeded through Long Island Sound to Campo in Connecticut where they landed. On the 26th they reached Danbury, where they destroyed stores and provisions to the value of £80,000 sterling. After setting the town on fire they retreated, harassed by the militia, by which they lost over 200 men and ten officers killed and wounded; obliged to keep constantly on the alert, avoid the direct road, and almost overwhelmed with fatigue, they succeeded in reaching their ships on the 28th of April, leaving the country in flames behind them.

During the progress of those discreditable marauding expeditions considerable fighting had taken place in the Jerseys. On the 12th of April Lord Cornwallis with a considerable detachment attacked Bondwick (seven miles from Brunswick) a post occupied by the American General Clinton with 1,200 men, who was obliged to retire with the loss of some field pieces and about 100 men prisoners. On the 19th of April an attempt to recover this post was made by General Vaughan, but he was repulsed with loss. At Piscatanay 2,000 United States troops attacked the 42nd regiment cantoned there, but after a furious fight of ten hours duration with much loss on both sides they were obliged to retreat -- this occurred on the 8th of May.

The cessation of many branches of industry consequent on the way this unhappy contest had been prolonged, threw many daring

spirits out of employment. The waters surrounding the islands of New York Bay afforded facilities for a contraband trade, in which occasional piracy was mixed, while the slothful indecision with which all affairs connected with either army or navy was managed by the brothers Howe, placed the tempting opportunity in the way of those reckless fellows who fought for their own hand, caring neither for King nor Congress. A large supply of provisions and general stores had been accumulated at Sagg Harbour on the Eastern shores of Long Island defended by a schooner of 12 guns and about one hundred English troops. Intelligence of this state of things was conveyed to the American General commanding at New Haven in Connecticut, who detached Col. Meigs with 170 men in whale boats to capture the place, destroy the provisions and shipping. This arduous service was thoroughly performed on the 6th of May by the destruction of twelve brigs and sloops, a large quantity of provisions, forage, and stores, besides capturing the whole guard, although to effect it the necessity had arisen of hauling or carrying the boats nearly eight miles overland, -- such energy contrasting strongly with the slothful and inactive movements of the British. It is said that Col. Meigs did not lose a man, and that he had effected his object and traversed 90 miles within twenty-five hours.

In the month of June Congress had been enabled to send some small reinforcements to Washington's army, who now advanced to Middlebrook, where they encamped along the crest of a ridge of hills in an unusually strong position, which he further strengthened by intrenchments and artillery.

As this virtually gave him the command of Brunswick and Amboy it hastened the preparations of the British General to open the campaign of 1777 or abandon New Jersey and New York. It was not possible for a man as Sir W. Howe to compel Washington to a change of position and tactics. He still commanded the lines of communication with the Eastern States, and Howe's knowledge of military science was not sufficient to point out that the only way to force him out of his fastnesses was a direct attack by fleet and army on every post on the Hudson between New York and Albany.

For the present he was left in possession of a plentiful country at leisure to recruit, and with foes in front whose apathy and indolence furnished a rare opportunity for training veteran soldiers at their expense.

As the charge of ignorance, imbecility and apathy has been brought against Sir Wm. Howe repeatedly in the course of this review of the events of a deplorable contest, which wrested from Great Britain one-half of the North American continent, it is only fair to shew the conclusive grounds on which those terms have been aptly predicated. As the strictures on his plans of campaign are themselves fair subjects of criticism, the fol-