

one scalp, raking up all the horrors of the revolutionary war, and proving most distinctly how safe he, in common with other American writers, were to make up a case of cruelty, even by implication, against the British.

Sheaffe was superseded, as it is supposed, for his blunders in the defence of York, and certainly not without cause, as he appears on the occasion to have acted without judgment or any fixed plan. Numerous as his mistakes were, they still sink into insignificance, when we compare them with those of the American commanders, who failed in two great points, the capture of the frigate, and the prevention of Sheaffe's escape. Had General Dearborn been on the field, instead of being in safety three miles from the shore, on Pike's death, he might have prevented the escape of Sheaffe with the main body of the regulars; as it was, Col. Pierce, who succeeded to the command, was totally without orders, and knew not what to do. This would have been most important, for situated as Great Britain, at that time, was, she could have ill afforded to send more men to this country, and, scanty as were the means of defence, the capture of Sheaffe's force, small as it was, would have been a fatal blow. General Armstrong, in his letter to Dearborn, dwells particularly on this point, and writes, "I am assured that the regular force in both the Canadas has at no time since the declaration of war, exceeded three thousand men; and at the present time, by casualties, this force has been reduced at least one-fifth. Taking then this fact for granted, we cannot doubt but that in all cases in which a British commander is constrained to act defensively, his policy will be that adopted by Sheaffe, to prefer the preservation of his troops to that of his post, and thus carrying off the kernel, leave us only the shell. In your late affair, it appears to me that had the descent been made between the town and the barracks, things would have turned out better. On that plan, the two batteries you had to encounter, would have been left out of the combat, and Sheaffe, instead of retreating to Kingston, must have retreated to Fort George." General Armstrong's ignorance of the nature of the ground has led him to make some remarks not quite deserved:

nor did he make allowances for the strong east wind; yet there is very little doubt but that, had General Dearborn been a man of energy, much more might have been effected. A still more glaring instance of want of judgment occurred, however, in the next movement we have to touch upon; the descent upon Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara River.

One object of the expedition against York; Descent upon Fort George. the capture of the stores, having been accomplished, the troops were re-embarked, in the hope that they would be able to proceed to the second and more important movement, without loss of time. Baffled, however, by light and adverse winds, it was not till the sixth day (8th of May) after leaving York, that they arrived off Fort George. It now cost General Dearborn three weeks to dispatch his wounded to Sackett's Harbor, and bring thence reinforcements; as Ingersol says, "a month of precious time was consumed before the attack on Fort George, and then again the commander-in-chief remained on board a vessel; while his army, six thousand strong, attacked and carried the place."

The British force on the Niagara line amounted, at that time, to about eighteen hundred regulars, and five hundred militia. The regular force consisted of the 49th Regt. and of detachments from the 8th, 41st, Glengarry and Newfoundland corps, with a small body of artillery, the whole commanded by Brigadier General Vincent. Eight companies of the 49th, five companies of the 8th, three companies of the Glengarry, two of the Newfoundland regiment, and a portion of the artillery, were stationed at Fort George, "amounting," says James, "to less than one thousand rank and file." About three hundred militia and some fifty Indians were also stationed at this post. We have seen on Armstrong's authority, that the Americans numbered, with the reinforcements drawn from Sackett's Harbor, six thousand men. A sufficient superiority (six to one) having been secured, the American general considered himself prepared for the attack on the post, before which he had spent three weeks, and on the 27th May, the batteries on the American side of the Niagara being ready for action, and