

Gen. Lincoln had been appointed by Congress to the command of the troops of the Southern States, and on the 3rd of January having collected the remains of How's beaten troops he established his headquarters at Perrysburg, on the north bank of the river fifteen miles above Savannah.

Col. Campbell's expedition reached Augusta without opposition, and as many inhabitants flocked in to take the oath of allegiance he detached Lt.-Col. Hamilton with 200 mounted infantry to encourage the loyal and disarm the disaffected, but he soon found how deceptive those appearances were. He met with opposition in many places, and at last was attacked by Col. Pickens with 500 militia, but they were defeated with some loss. During the attention this movement excited a body of loyalists assembled under Col. Boyd in North Carolina, and attempted to force their way into Georgia to form a junction with the British troops. Col. Pickens fell in with this corps and defeated it at Kettle Creek with the loss of their commander and a considerable number in killed and wounded. About 300 however, succeeded in effecting a junction with the British army.

Augusta being too distant from Savannah and of no importance was evacuated. Meantime General Lincoln's force, which was constantly increasing, extended his posts along the frontier in a similar manner to the British, and finally detached General Ashe with 1500 militia to strengthen the post opposite Augusta and improve any opportunity which might arise for crossing the river. On his arrival he found Augusta had been evacuated by the British troops and therefore in accordance with his instructions he crossed the river and followed them as far as Brier Creek. As this was a plan for placing the British army in a state of blockade, Lieut.-Col. Prescott, with a detachment of 900 men, on the 3rd of March, got into the rear of the American troops, and while a brisk attack was made by another detachment in front, surprised and totally defeated them, with a loss of 150 killed, 27 officers, the second in command, and 200 men prisoners, a great number drowned in attempting to cross the river, seven pieces of artillery; several stand of colors, all their ammunition, baggage, and stores, and so completely was the detachment destroyed that out of 2,000 men only 450 rejoined Lincoln's troops; the loss of the British amounted to five killed and eleven wounded.

Fresh reinforcements having reached Gen. Lincoln he again resumed his project of establishing a post at Augusta, for the purpose of intercepting the communications of the British army with the interior and preventing the meeting of the Provincial delegates for Georgia, who had agreed to hold a convention there in May for the purpose of renewing the allegiance of the Province to Great Britain. His force amounted to 5,000 men, of these he left about 1,000 to

garrison Perrysburg and Black Swamp, and with the rest on the 23rd of April he commenced his march up the Savannah River. Five days afterwards Gen. Prescott, with a view to make him return, passed the greater part of his force into South Carolina. The American posts at Perrysburg and Black Swamp were at once evacuated and Gen. Moultrie, who commanded, unable to withstand the force opposed to him, retreated to Charlestown, destroying the bridges in his rear. Expresses were dispatched after Lincoln who refused to return, believing it only a feint of the British General, merely detaching 300 chosen troops to reinforce Moultrie, continued his march. Prescott's original intention was as Lincoln had surmised, but meeting with no opposition and it being seriously reported to him that Charlestown was in a perfectly defenceless state, he suffered himself to be hurried onward with the idea that he could capture it before Lincoln arrived for its relief, and the further he advanced the stronger those assurances became.

At Charlestown all was confusion and dismay. Standing on a point of land between the Ashley and Cooper rivers at their junction; the defences landward were of no account, while seaward and on both rivers it was formidable, and as the British troops were advancing on the defenceless side it is evident that the fate of the town was in a critical position. However, as Prescott advanced with elaborate slowness the people of Charlestown by employing their slaves carried a series of lines and abatis across the peninsula from one river to the other, and having collected the garrisons of the forts on the bay collected a force 3,300 for the defence of the town. On the 10th of May the British troops crossed the Ashley River and on the 17th appeared before the lines of Charlestown—the distance to Savannah being about 112 miles. On the next day the town was summoned to surrender, but as time was a matter of great consequence with the citizens they contrived to spend the whole day in negotiations, in the course of which they made a proposal for the neutrality of the Province during the rest of the war, and leaving its fate to be determined by the peace. But the whole was refused by Gen. Prescott who demanded the surrender of the garrison as prisoners of war. But during the night he withdrew the British force across the Ashley River because the lines were too strong to be assaulted.

The expedition was well planned but badly carried out. The possession of Charlestown would have ruined the ascendancy of Congress at the South. It was the true strategical point and not Savannah, and it is more than probable it would have fallen before an energetic assault, the British troops being 2,400 men, but they had no artillery. After foraging for some days they returned towards the coast, and, embarking on board the fleet, sailed to John's Island,

where they established themselves until the arrival of a supply of provisions from New York.

Gen. Lincoln had reached Augusta before he was convinced that a more serious affair than a mere feint was intended. Establishing a post there he returned down the Savannah River for three days and recrossing it pushed for Charlestown by forced marches until he reached Dorchester at the entrance of the peninsula, and took post there till the British retreated to the coast.

The coast of both Carolinas, Georgia and Florida is covered by a fringe of islands of greater or less extent throughout the whole distance from Cape Hattaras to Cape Florida. Those islands cover large bays, cataracts and inlets, making, as a general rule, safe and commodious landlocked harbours.

John's Island, of which the British had taken possession, is the first large and important one of the group south of the entrance to Charlestown harbour, and is separated from the mainland by an inlet known as Stone River. Its principal use being as a base of operations for foraging parties, and an important *point d'appui* for future operations against Charlestown as well as to compel Gen. Lincoln to act entirely on the defensive, and leave Georgia free. With those objects in view Gen. Prescott had strongly fortified a position on the island and another at the ferry on the mainland, which latter consisted of three strong redoubts joined by lines of communication with John's Island by a bridge which the numerous sloops and schooners belonging to the army furnished.

It was clearly Gen. Lincoln's intention to drive the British troops from this strong position, but having reconnoitered in force on the 4th of June he thought proper to retire as the lines were then manned by 2,500 men.

On the 16th of June Lieut.-Col. Prescott departed for Savannah, carrying with him 1,000 troops and the whole of the vessels which had formed the bridge except an armed float capable of carrying 20 men. Orders had been issued to Col. Maitland to evacuate the post at stone ferry, a work of difficulty and danger in consequence of the limited means of communication at hand. The three days preceding the 20th of June were occupied in those operations, but on that day Gen. Lincoln, who had learned the weak state of the garrison, attacked it at the head of 5,000 men and eight pieces of artillery. At seven in the morning he drove in the British picquets, which were luckily advanced a considerable distance in front of the works, and the firing on this occasion gave Col. Maitland, the officer in command, the first intimation of his danger. A detachment of two companies of the 71st regiment was sent out in advance to ascertain what force was advancing. These fell in with the left wing of the United States troops already formed, and without a mo-