

each platoon, and a tried sergeant will form a supernumerary rank and will instantly put to death any man who gives back." Thus read the orders of the day.

As usual, the British force had been considerably exaggerated by report. At the bridge over the Lacolle river, a stone mill, a log dwelling converted into a block-house, and a barn, were occupied by seventy Royal Marines under Lieutenants Caldwell and Barton, a corporal and three men of the Royal Artillery with a Congreve rocket-tube, Blake's company of the 13th Regiment, and a detachment of the Frontier Light Infantry under Captain Lewis Ritter, numbering in all 180 combatants, commanded by Major Richard Butler Handcock of the 13th Regiment, an officer who had been wounded under Abercromby in Egypt and had of late years seen some hard fighting in the Peninsula. At Whitman's house on the Richelieu, two miles away on the road to Isle aux Noix, there was a company of Canadian Fencibles; and at Burtonville, on the River Lacolle, two miles to the right, a company of the Canadian Voltigeurs. Isle aux Noix, seven miles distant, was occupied by 550 men under Lieut.-Colonel Richard Williams, composed of the flank companies of the 13th, and a detachment from the first battalion of Royal Marines; an aggregate force of less than 900, instead of 2,500, as reported. The nearest supports, consisting of the remainder of the 13th, and a weak battalion of embodied militia, were at St. Johns, fourteen miles from Isle aux Noix and twenty-one from Lacolle. The difficulty of assembling a sufficient force in time to repel a determined attack on the advanced post is obvious.

At daybreak on March 30th, a battalion of riflemen occupied Odelltown, and was closely followed by the remainder of Wilkinson's division, composed of the 4th, 6th, 10th, 13th, 14th, 20th, 23rd, 25th, 29th, 30th, and 31st Regiments of United States Infantry, a squadron of dragoons, and two companies of artillery with an eighteen, three twelves, and four six pounders. The advanced guard, composed of the riflemen and 30th and 31st Regiments, was commanded by Colonel Clark, who had already reconnoitred the British position and reported that the mill could be breached by a six pounder. The main body of the American army was divided into three brigades, under Generals Smith, Bissell and Macomb, each consisting of about a thousand infantry. By eight o'clock their advance became known to Handcock,