

than 900 miles, every part of which he determined to dispute inch by inch, and to defend by every means in his power.

It was in pursuance of the defensive line of policy which had been so wisely determined upon, as well with reference to his own resources, and the character of the enemy with whom he had to contend, as to the views and instructions of the British Government, that the Commander of the forces immediately after the commencement of the war, gave general instructions to those in command under him, to abstain from any unnecessary and uncalled for act of hostility upon the American territory. Notwithstanding these general instructions, much was of course left to the discretion of those who received them, in availing themselves of any fair opportunity of retaliating upon the enemy the aggressive warfare they might attempt, by attacking, wherever it might be done with any reasonable prospect of success, the contiguous forts and possessions of the Americans.

The private letter of 31st March, 1812, to Major-General Brock, from which an extract has already been made, evidently shews, that Sir George Prevost never meant to restrain the officers in command under him from acting upon the offensive, whenever circumstances were such as would justify their departure from the