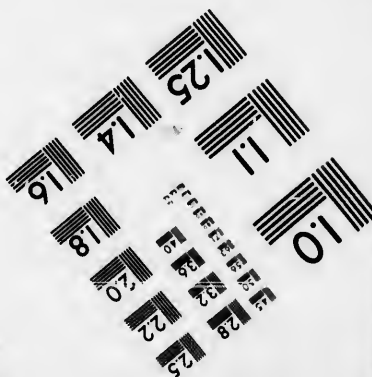
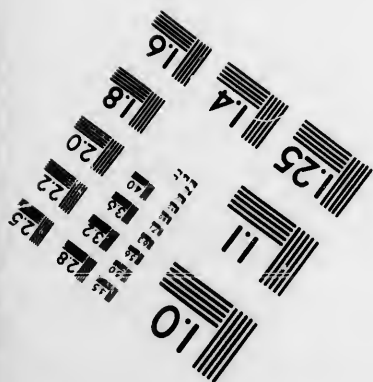
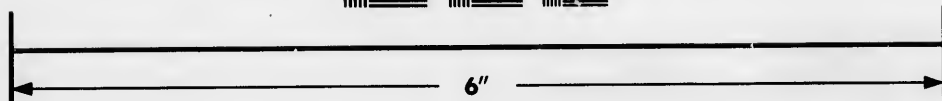
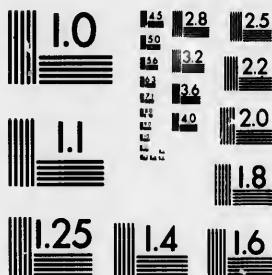


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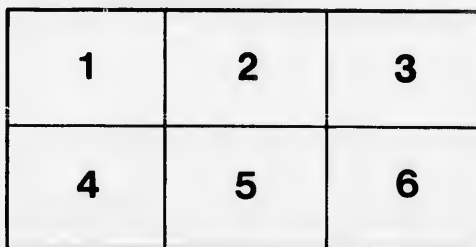
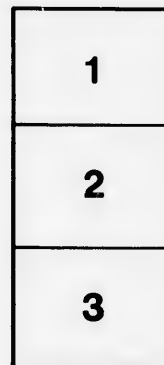
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NOTICES

OF

THE WAR OF 1812.

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG,
LATE A MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND SECRETARY OF WAR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE depressed condition, moral and physical, of the division of the left; the undecided state of naval ascendancy on Lake Ontario; the reported augmentation of British troops on the peninsula,¹ and the comparative unimportance of even a successful campaign on that theatre, made new combinations necessary. Of the measures adopted, the principal were—the speedy concentration of a force at Sackett's Harbor, which in the present divided state of the enemy's strength would be competent to the reduction of

¹ To produce this augmentation on the peninsula, and thus diminish the British force at Kingston and Montreal, Boyd, who succeeded Dearborn, was restricted to defensive measures only—a policy which, at the time of Wilkinson's arrival at Fort George, had brought together for the attack of that post, a British force, estimated at three thousand five hundred men.

Kingston ; while, contemporaneously with this movement, the division of the right should approach Montreal, for the purpose of demonstration or attack, as circumstances might render proper.¹

In prosecution of these views, Hampton, who had been assigned to the command of the detached column, was first in motion. Leaving Colonel Clarke with a brigade of Vermont militia, to draw Prevost's attention to the avenues of attack furnished by Misisqui bay, he, on the 19th of September, began a march from Cumberland Head, with "four thousand effective infantry, and a well-appointed train of artillery."² The road taken on this occasion was the direct one, leading through the villages of Chazy, Champlain, and Odel-town—the last mentioned of which he reached on the twenty-first; when, after having driven from it a small British advanced guard, the General discovered that his farther progress on this route was obstructed by a scarcity of water, amounting nearly to a total want. For this evil there was but one remedy—a retrograde movement to Chazy, and the adoption, at that point, of the western or Chateaugay route to the St. Lawrence. Receiving, while on his march, letters from the Secretary of War stating the unexpected detention of the division of the left at Fort George, and the necessity this created for

¹ Appendix No. 1.

² "Four thousand effective infantry and a well appointed train of artillery, ought to inspire you with some reliance upon our army, new as it is."—*Hampton's letter to the Secretary of War of the 12th October.*

moderating his movements, he halted at the Four Corners, where he remained till the 21st of October.¹

Having, during this month of comparative inaction, satisfied himself, that Prevost's disposable force did not exceed two thousand combatants—fifteen hundred of whom were Canadian militia, broken into detachments, and serving at points too remote from each other, for mutual support, he now determined to press forward, capture or drive before him all advanced parties found in his way, and arriving at Coghawaga, take such chances as might offer, of making himself master of Montreal, without seeking the aid or waiting the coming of the main army.²

Resuming his march accordingly, on the 21st, he, on the evening of the 22d, had accomplished twenty-four miles of the forty, which separated him from his object; gained an unobstructed road and open country, for six additional miles in his front, and placed himself within striking distance of Prevost's first line of defence, with little if any annoyance from the enemy—circumstances having no tendency to abate the feverish temperament which now impelled him forward.

The 23d and 24th having been employed in bringing up his artillery and baggage, and in improving the communications between himself and his base—he, on the 25th, despatched Colonel Purdy and the first brigade, to the southern side of the Chateaugay, with orders “to gain a ford eight miles below; there to recross the river in the night, and at daybreak of the

¹ Appendix, No. 2.

² Appendix, No. 3.

26th, to precipitate himself on the rear of the British position; while Izzard and the second brigade, under the General's own supervision, should assail it in front."

The better to accomplish the last part of this project, Izzard was early in motion on the 26th, and advancing along the northern bank of the river, reached a point at which he halted till the sound of Purdy's muskets should authorise the use of his own. Instead, however, of receiving this signal at daybreak, as was intended, it was not till two o'clock P. M. that any firing on the part of that officer was heard; and what then took place was in a direction, clearly indicating that he was yet distant from the ford, to which he was destined. Still, as the General's opinion was unshaken—"that the attack would soon be made, and when made, could not fail to be successful," the column immediately advanced; drove before it two pickets in succession, and was soon and successfully engaged with De Salaberry, the British commanding officer; who, after a short trial of strength, finding himself greatly overmatched and being apprehensive that without a prompt interposition of some kind, his defences would be either stormed or turned, resorted to a *ruse*, which for simplicity and effect, has never been surpassed since the siege of Jericho. Posting his buglers on different points of his scanty and covered line, they were ordered to sound loud and successive charges, which (as was intended) being mistaken by Hampton for proofs of the enemy's increased strength, and intention of renewing

the combat,¹ an immediate retreat was ordered and executed—carrying with it the poor but vaunted solace, that “no pursuit was made by the enemy.”

Little flattering as these circumstances were to the second brigade, those attending the movement of the first, were still less so. Misled by his guides and retarded by the darkness of the night, and the thickets and swamps he had to encounter, it was sunrise before Purdy got over six of the eight miles he had to march; when, falling in with an outpost of the enemy, he was drawn into a skirmish, and soon after into an ambuscade; the effects of which were completely fatal to all the objects of the detachment—breaking down alike the order and spirit of the corps, and making its immediate retreat necessary. Nor had the enemy, on this occasion, the courtesy to erect golden or other bridges to facilitate its escape; he, on the contrary, harassed it incessantly by night and by day, allowing it neither rest nor refreshment till the 27th, when, without the smallest attempt on the part of Hampton to cover the movement, Purdy succeeded in recrossing the river and joining the second brigade.

Thus ended the General's ill-judged project of capturing Montreal by means exclusively his own; and here, it may be safely presumed, began his criminal purpose of defeating any attempt made by another to effect an object which he had himself failed to accomplish. Calling to his aid a council of war, he found no difficulty in obtaining a unanimous opinion, that

¹ Christy's War in the Canadas, p. 145-6.

“to preserve the army and fulfil the views of the government, it was necessary that the former should immediately return to such position as would best secure its communications with the United States, and either retire into winter-quarters, or be ready to strike below.” In conformity with this opinion, the division was brought back to the Four Corners; where, on the 7th of November, it received an order to join the main army at St. Regis—to fulfil which, the General literally turned his back on the war, and retired to Plattsburg!

While the division of the right was making these displays of ill-directed and unprofitable labor, those of the centre and left, were held in a state of absolute inaction by the tardy movements of General Wilkinson; who, though ordered to the north as early as the 10th of March, did not reach Fort George 'till the 4th of September. Nor was the moment of this occurrence, though later than was desirable, altogether unpropitious—the weather was yet moderate, the navigation of the lake without peril, the mass of the enemy's regular force investing Fort George, his fleet absent from Kingston, and the garrison of that post reduced to eight hundred effectives.¹ Unfortunately, the importance of prompt movements so distinctly indica-

¹ “I am this moment informed by J, just from Kingston, that the only regular troops now there, are six companies of De Waterville's regiment with a few artillerists—and at Prescott, two companies of the same regiment. The additional force, at both places, is made up of embodied militia, worse than our own.”—*General Brown's letter to the War Department of the 28th of September.*

ted by these circumstances, and the advanced state of the season was either not seen, or not sufficiently appreciated by the commanding General; who, under pretences of a character not unequivocal¹ incurred a delay, which, besides involving the expedition in all the embarrassments of a Canadian winter, gave time to De Rottenburgh to reinforce Kingston; and to Yeo and the fleet to regain their covering and covered position under the batteries of the town. Having thus lost all hope of carrying, by direct attack, the first object prescribed by his orders, he was compelled to adopt the second—descend the St. Lawrence and in co-operation with Hampton, strike at Montreal. The condition of the weather at the time chosen for beginning this movement, the delays and losses sustained in its progress, and the abortive character of its end, will be sufficiently seen in the subjoined details, given by the General in his official report.²

“October 21st. Boisterous weather, left the Harbor and arrived at Grenadier Island.

“22d. Called for a return of the troops, found a large body yet in the rear, wrecked or stranded. Returned in quest of them and to order supplies of winter cloth-

¹ The pretences referred to were, the *absence of the fleet, the disordered condition of the boats and troops* arrived at Henderson's bay, and the defective arrangements made at Sackett's Harbor. Of these, the *first* and *second* were produced by acts of his own. In contradiction to the *third*, General Lewis, in giving his testimony on Wilkinson's trial, says—“On the 4th of October, *all at the harbor. was prepared for embarkation.*” See page 117 vol. 3d of Wilkinson's Memoirs.

² Appendix No. 4.

ing and shoes for the troops, who were nearly destitute. Observed at night on our way up, many fires on different points of the coast. Wind so high that I could not call at them.

“24th. The extent of the injury to our craft, clothing, arms and provisions, greatly exceeded our apprehensions; and has subjected us to the necessity of furnishing clothing, and of making repairs and equipments to the flotilla generally. In fact, all our hopes have been nearly blasted; but thanks to the same Providence that placed us in jeopardy we are surmounting our difficulties, and God willing, I shall pass Prescott on the night of the 1st or 2d proximo.

“25th. The General landed, and measures were taken to seize every pause of the prevailing storm to slip the flotilla into the St. Lawrence, with small detachments. But in these momentary and deceitful calms, we found it impossible to traverse with safety, the arm of the lake to Gravelly point, though distant only nine miles. In the several attempts made, many boats were driven ashore, and much provision and clothing lost. French Creek, nearly opposite the point where the enemy expected we should land, to attack Kingston, was made the general rendezvous of the troops and General Brown ordered to take command.

“November 2d. Commodore Chauncey, by concert,¹

¹ This concert should have been entered into sooner: as things were managed, the Commodore arrived too late, for the purpose of either covering the detachment from attack, or punishing the enemy for making it. General Brown, in a note to the Secretary of War, dated at French Creek, says—“my passage from the island to this

entered the St. Lawrence, fell down nearly to French Creek, and took a position to command the north and south channels. On the 1st of November, the enemy discovered, even amid the storm, our movement and position at French Creek; attacked the detachment under General Brown, about sunset, with a squadron of two brigs, two schooners, and many boats, laden with infantry for landing, should the cannonade make a sufficient impression. Captain McPherson, of the light artillery, very soon erected a battery of three 18 pounders, and returned their fire with such spirit and effect, that they fell down to a harbor beyond the range of his shot. Next morning the attack was renewed and repelled, and one of the brigs with great difficulty towed off by the squadron, which put into Kingston channel behind Grand Island.

"Nov. 3d. The rear of the army with the General more and more sick, sailed from Grenadier Island for the general rendezvous; where the chief part arrived in the evening. The General was carried on shore and lodged in a tent, his malady increasing in violence.

"4th. This day was devoted to final arrangements for the sailing of the flotilla. Weather moderating.

"5th. The flotilla got under way, and without accident fell down the river and landed early in the night below Morrisville. The General, suspecting he would be followed by the enemy, (as in the morning his course

place, was rough enough—but fortunate on the whole. Had we been attacked on the water, the whole of my command would probably have been lost.

had been discovered by three of their look-out boats,) and knowing that two of their armed schooners could jeopard his movement, gave orders for his flotilla to pass Prescott (then seven miles below) in the course of the night. But some confusion occurred from the novelty of the movement, and the order was countermanded.

“ 6th. This morning the health of the General appeared better ; he ordered the flotilla to descend to a point within three miles of Prescott ; and the day being fine, got into his gig and proceeded to reconnoitre the place. In the meantime the powder and fixed ammunition were debarked and placed in carts ; to be transported by land, under cover of the night, beyond the enemy’s batteries. As soon as the General returned, orders were issued for the debarkation of every man, (except so many as were necessary to navigate the boats,) who were directed to march to a bay ten miles below Prescott. Arrangements were made at the same time for the passage of the flotilla by that place ; the superintendence of which devolved on Brigadier-General Brown as officer of the day. About eight o’clock P. M. we had so heavy a fog, that it was believed we could pass the British fortress unobserved, and orders were accordingly given for the army to march, and the flotilla to get under way. The General in his gig proceeded ahead, followed by his passage-boat and family ; but a sudden change of the atmosphere exposed the latter to the enemy’s garrison, and near fifty 24 pound shot were fired at her, without effect ; while the column on land (discovered by the gleam of their

arms) were assailed with shot and shells, without injury. General Brown on hearing the firing, judiciously halted the flotilla until the moon had set; when it got in motion, but was perceived by the enemy, who opened upon it, and continued their fire from front to rear, for the space of three hours; and yet *out of more than three hundred boats, not one was touched*; and only one man was killed and two wounded. Before ten o'clock the next morning, the whole of the flotilla (except two vessels) reached the place of rendezvous. About noon this day, Colonel King, Adjutant-General of the army of General Hampton, arrived and waited on the Commander-in-chief; whom he informed that he had been to Sackett's Harbor with a despatch from General Hampton to the Secretary of War; that he had no communication, written or verbal, from General Hampton to him, (the Commander-in-chief) but that not finding the Secretary at Sackett's Harbor, he had thought proper on his return, to call for any communication he (General Wilkinson) might have to make to General Hampton. The General had intended in the course of this day, to send an express to that officer, *with an order to form a junction of his division with the corps descending the St. Lawrence*, and availed himself of the opportunity presented by Colonel King, to send such order.

"7th. The General having been exposed to the open air all last night, in consequence found himself ill. In passing Prescott, two of our largest vessels, loaded with provisions, artillery and ordinance stores, either through cowardice or treachery, had been run into the

river near Ogdensburgh and opposite Prescott. The enemy kept up so constant a cannonade on them that we found it difficult, and lost half a day, in getting them out. We perceived the militia in arms at Johnstown, directly opposite to us, and several pieces of field artillery in motion. Understanding that the coast below was lined with posts of musketry and artillery at every narrow pass of the river, Colonel Macomb was detached, about one o'clock, with the elite, to remove these obstructions; and the General got under way about half past three. Four or five miles below, we entered the first rapids of the river; and soon after passing them, two pieces of light artillery (which had not been observed by Colonel Macomb) opened a sharp fire upon the General's passage-boat,¹ but without any further effect than cutting away some of the rigging. Lieutenant-Colonel Eustis, with a part of our light gun-barges, came within shot of the pieces of the enemy and a cannonade ensued, without injury to either side. In the meantime, Major Forsyth, (who was in the rear of the elite of Colonel Macomb,) landed his riflemen, advanced upon the enemy's guns, and had his fire drawn by a couple of videttes posted in his route; on which their pieces were precipitately carried off. The General came to at dusk, about six miles below the town of Hambleton; where he received a report from

¹ The General was accommodated with two boats—a *gig* occupied by himself; and a *passage-boat* of much larger size, carrying his servants and baggage, which by preceding him monopolized the fire of the enemy.

Colonel Macomb, who had routed a party from a block-house about two miles below, and captured an officer.

"8th. This morning the flotilla fell down to a contraction of the river at a point called the White House, where the dragoons were assembled to be crossed. Brigadier-General Brown was ordered this morning to reinforce Colonel Macomb with his brigade, and to take the command; and the whole day and following night, were devoted to transporting the dragoons. About noon this day, we received information that two armed schooners and a body of the enemy in batteaux, estimated at 1,000 or 1,500 men, had descended the river from Kingston, and landed at Prescott; that they had immediately sent a flag across the river to Ogdensburgh, and demanded the delivery of all public property there, under penalty of burning the town. Not long after, information was received that the enemy had reembarked at Prescott, and were following us with seven gun-boats.

"9th. This morning very early, the enemy menaced our rear, and a slight skirmish took place between our riflemen and a party of their militia and Indians, in which we had one man killed, and the enemy were driven back. The cavalry, with four pieces of artillery, under the command of Captain McPherson, were attached to General Brown's command and he was ordered to march to clear the coast before us, as far as a point near the head of the Longue Saut. The rapidity of the current obliged us to halt the flotilla several hours, to enable General Brown to make good his march in time to cover our movement. During this period, the

enemy frequently threatened our rear, but never indicated an intention to make a serious attack. About 3 o'clock P. M. the flotilla got under way and came to about 5 o'clock at the Yellow house, (having floated near eleven miles in two hours,) where we encamped for the night.

" 10th. This morning the following order was issued:—

“ General Orders.

“ Head-Quarters, Tuttle’s Bay, Nov. 10th, 1813.

“ General Brown will prosecute his march with the troops yesterday under his command, excepting two pieces of artillery and the 2d dragoons; who, with all the well men of the other brigades, except a sufficient number to navigate the boats, are to march under the orders of Brigadier-General Boyd. This precaution is enjoined by regard to the safety of the men in passing the Longue Saut; and as this rapid is long and dangerous, the General earnestly requests the commanding officers of regiments and corps to examine the boats, and see them properly fitted, in order to avoid accidents as much as possible. Brigadier-General Boyd will take the necessary precautions to prevent the enemy who hangs on our rear, from making a successful attack; and if attacked is to turn and beat them. The boats are to resume the station assigned them in the original order respecting the flotilla; and for this, the commanding officers of regiments and brigades will be held responsible. The movement of yesterday was a reproach to the service. The flotilla will come to to-day at Barnhartz near Crab Island; and two

guns from the front will be the signal for landing. In case of an *attack in force beyond all expectation*, the corps under Brigadier-Generals Boyd and Brown are to co-operate with each other promptly and with decision. The general officer of the day will strictly attend, and see that the flotilla puts off and moves in the prescribed order; and will arrest any officer who presumes to deviate therefrom.

“Brigadier-General Brown marched, and about noon was engaged with a party of the enemy near a block-house on the Saut, erected to harass our flotilla in its descent. About the same time, the enemy were observed to be advancing on our rear; and their galley and gun-boats hove in sight, approached our flotilla (then on shore) and began to cannonade it. The slender structure of our gun-barges made it impossible for them to resist the long 24 pounder of the galley; this obliged the General to order two 18 pounders to be run on shore and placed in battery, a single discharge from which gave such alarm to the enemy's vessels that they retired up the river, accompanied by their troops. But these slight operations so far wasted the day, that our pilots were afraid to enter the Saut (a continued rapid of eight miles) with the flotilla; we therefore fell down within two or three miles of the head of it and came to for the night. By this time, the General had become so extremely ill as to be unable to sit up and was confined to his bed, in a small berth under the quarter deck of his passage-boat.

“11th. Having heard the firing of cannon yesterday (between General Brown and the enemy) and being

still unapprised of the result, it became necessary that we should hear from him before we committed ourselves to the Saut; which allows no retreat, no landing, no turning to the right or left. About 10 or 11 o'clock A. M. the Commander-in-chief received advice from General Brown, that "he had forced the enemy to retire before him, and had arrived near the foot of the Saut." Orders were immediately given for the flotilla to prepare to sail, and for General Boyd and his command to commence their march, when some firing took place from the gun-boats, and a report was brought to the Commander-in-chief that the enemy was advancing in column: on which he ordered General Boyd to attack them, and the flotilla not to leave the shore. But the report was soon after contradicted. A variety of reports respecting the enemy's movements were successively brought to the General, which impressed him with a conviction, that they had determined to attack his rear, as soon as the flotilla should put off and the troops commence their march; he resolved to anticipate them. He therefore sent Colonel Swift of the Engineers, with instructions to Brigadier-General Boyd, (who had been directed by the order of the preceding day to take command of the detachment on shore,) to form that detachment into three columns; to advance upon the enemy, to endeavour to outflank them and take their artillery.¹ Soon after this, the action com-

¹ Boyd, in his testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, says—my orders from General Wilkinson were—"should the enemy advance upon us, *beat them back.*" An order merely *defensive*, and entirely fulfilled. See p. 91, Vol. 3d.—*Wilkinson's Memoirs.*

menced, and for the numbers engaged, was extremely warm and bloody, for upward of two hours; during which time, in open space and fair combat, the raw, undisciplined troops of the United States, braved and frequently drove the best soldiers of the British army. The fortunes of this day were various; sometimes one line, sometimes the other giving away. Unfortunately during the shiftings of the action (by the death of Lieutenant Smith, a young officer of the highest promise,) the enemy got possession of a field-piece; the only trophy they obtained. It is difficult to speak of the precise numbers engaged on either side, because the detachment under General Boyd consisted of an indefinite number of his own, Covington's and Swartwout's brigades, ordered from on board the boats to lighten them, and save the hazard of the men's lives, in descending the Saut. Neither Covington, nor Swartwout were obliged to take part in the action with this detachment; yet they both entered the field, taking command of that part of the force which belonged to their respective brigades, where they exhibited the same courageous conduct which distinguished General Boyd; and to the great loss of the service, General Covington received a mortal wound, when encouraging and leading on his detachment. The numbers on our side, could not have exceeded sixteen or seventeen hundred men; while those of the enemy are reckoned by spectators, at from one to two thousand; but, 'tis probable, did not exceed fifteen hundred; consisting, as we are informed, of detachments of the 49th, 84th,

and 104th, with the Voltigeurs and Glengary regiment.'

"With respect to the courage displayed by our officers, it would be useless to enter into details, since they all manifested in their respective stations, equal intrepidity. The names of the meritorious dead and wounded, will be recorded in another place. The firing ceased by common consent, about 4 o'clock P. M.; our troops were formed in front of the enemy, who were also in line, when they separated; the enemy to their camp, and we, to our boats. The troops being much exhausted, it was considered most convenient that they should embark, and that the dragoons, with the artillery should proceed by land. The embarkation took place without the smallest molestation from the enemy, and the flotilla made a harbor near the head of the Saut, on the opposite shore.

"Nov. 12th. The flotilla sailed early this morning, and passed down the Saut without discovering either boats or troops of the enemy, and arrived in the forenoon at Barnhartz; where the Commanding General received a letter from *Major-General Hampton*, by the hands of Colonel Atkinson his Inspector-General, which *blasted all his hopes and destroyed every prospect of the*

"The military part of the detachment from Kingston, consisted of a few artillerists with light pieces—the 49th and 89th British regiments, and two small parties of Voltigeurs under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison of the 89th, making together 800 combatants. The naval force directed by Captain Mulcaster, consisted of nine gun-boats and one galley. Of unarmed boats, and seamen, number not known."—*Result of General Brown's enquiries after the war.*

campaign. A council of war was called on the receipt of this communication, which was submitted to their consideration; whereupon, the council determined, that '*the conduct of Major-General Hampton, in refusing to join his division to the troops descending the St. Lawrence, (to carry an attack on Montreal) rendered it expedient to remove the army to French Mills on Salmon river.*' This determination was carried into effect on the 13th."

Relieved by this unexpected termination given to General Wilkinson's expedition, from all further apprehensions with regard to Montreal and Kingston, the British Commander-in-chief now hastened to place on the peninsula a force, that should be competent not only to the maintenance of the commanding positions he yet held at Stony Creek and Burlington heights, but to the defence of the district generally, against any new attempt at invasion. With these views, a corps of twelve hundred men, composed of a few artillerymen, the Royal Scots, 49th and 100th regiments of the line, aided by a small provincial corps and two hundred Indians, were assigned to the service, and placed under the command of Lieutenant-General Drummond.

This officer believing that activity and boldness furnish in all cases the best means of repelling aggression, and never fail to be successful against an enemy unpractised in war and destitute of discipline, promptly assumed the *offensive*; and as a first step, pushed forward his elite (about four hundred combatants) as far as Twelve Mile Creek, in the direction of Fort George. Colonel Murray, the officer commanding this detach-

ment, falling in at that place with a reconnoitring party from the fort, killed one and captured four of their number ; and so decidedly impressed the remainder with respect for his strength, that on their report, Brigadier McClure (a militia officer on whom the command had now unfortunately devolved) came at once to the conclusion—that the post, with the defence of which he was charged, “not being tenable against so formidable an enemy” must be quickly abandoned ; the garrison removed to Fort Niagara, and the exposed part of the frontier protected, by destroying such Canadian villages in its front, as would best afford shelter to the enemy during the winter.¹

This new and degrading system of defence, which by substituting the torch for the bayonet, furnished the enemy with both motive and justification for a war of barbarism, was carried into full execution on the 10th of December. On that day, Fort George was dismantled and abandoned ; the garrison withdrawn to Fort Niagara ; Newark reduced to ashes, and an order subsequently given to Colonel Graves, commanding a small corps of artillerists, to open a fire of hot shot on the neighbouring village of Queenstown.²

¹ “This day a scouting party came in contact with the enemy’s advance ; lost four prisoners and one man killed. This movement determined me to call a council. All agreed that the fort was not tenable, when I, in consequence, gave orders for evacuating it.”—*McClure’s letter of the 10th December 1813.*

² “The village of Newark is now in flames, and the enemy completely shut out of both hope and means of wintering near Fort George.” And again “the enemy has appeared in considerable force on the opposite shore ; but having deprived them of a shelter

These achievements accomplished, the Brigadier (now ensconced behind the walls of Fort Niagara) was indulging in a proud and flattering prospective of the wisdom and efficiency of his conservative system, when information reached him, that Murray instead of being turned from his purpose by the burning of Newark, had determined to winter in Fort Niagara; and had accordingly arrived at Fort George on the 12th, where he but awaited the coming of Drummond, with the remainder of the army and a supply of boats, to begin the enterprise.

Information like this, as may readily be supposed, wrought a sudden and entire change in the quality of the Brigadier's dream; reducing it—to the discovery of some plausible pretence for withdrawing himself from the perils of the approaching storm.¹ This was soon found “in the greater convenience furnished by Buffalo for calling out militia” when on the 16th, though believing that the fort would be attacked in a day or two, and though putting no faith in the fidelity of Leonard, to whom he committed its custody, he

there, they are marching to Queenstown. I have therefore directed Colonel Graves, with two pieces of artillery, to open a hot shot on Queenstown, and deprive them of quarters there also.”—*McClure's letter of the 25th December.* See also Appendix No. 5.

¹ Nor was this all. Though informed of the enemy's intention, and of the *very night on which* the attack was to be made,—he neither hastens back to secure the only fortified post within his command, nor even takes the trouble of apprising the garrison of the danger that awaited it! How small is the difference, so far as the public interest is concerned, between conduct like this, and that which the General imputed to Leonard.

began his retreat westward. Unfortunately, these anticipations of danger, arising as well from the character of his successor, as the intentions of the enemy, were literally fulfilled.

Drummond, who had joined Murray on the 14th, reasoning from what he had seen of McClure's conduct, and from the reported habits and prejudices, personal and political, of Leonard, promptly assented to Murray's project of surprising Fort Niagara; and of making a general and desolating inroad, on the hamlets and villages of the American frontier. In prosecution of these objects, his whole disposable force was transferred, in the night of the 18th, to the American side of the river; when the elite under Murray, now increased to five hundred and fifty combatants, marched directly on the fort, cut off two picket guards in succession, seized two sentinels planted at and near the gate, obtained from these the countersign, and entered the fort, without giving the slightest alarm to the garrison.

Thus far, in a view strictly military, Murray's movement was well conducted, and merits applause; but the use subsequently made by that officer of his adversary's crime, or of his own good fortune, cannot fail to degrade him both as a man and a soldier; since, "what in either character, has been gained without loss or resistance, should be held without bloodshed." Yet of the sleeping, unalarmed, and unresisting garrison of Fort Niagara, sixty-five men were killed and fourteen wounded—more than two thirds of whom, were *hospital patients*.

The success of this part of the exercise being ascer-

tained, Rial, who with a column of seven hundred men (including two hundred Indians) held a covering position in the rear of the fort, proceeded to execute what remained of the plan; and it must be admitted, with little more of opposition from any quarter, than if the justice of the proceeding both as to character and extent, had been unquestionable. Beginning with the villages and intermediate houses on the bank of the river, all were sacked and burned from Youngstown to Buffalo, both included; and so universal was the panic produced by the invasion, that had it not been stayed by the voluntary retreat of the enemy, a large portion of the frontier would in a few days more have been left without a single inhabitant; so true it is, that "*fear betrays, like treason.*"¹

REMARKS. When in the progress of the war it was discovered, that the command of the army was a burthen, too heavy for General Dearborn to carry with advantage to the nation or credit to himself, two remedies were suggested—the one, a prompt and peremptory recall of the General from command; the other, such an augmentation of his Staff, as would secure to the army better instruction, and to himself, the chance of wiser counsels. Of these two modes of proceeding, the latter was preferred, and Generals Wilkinson and Hampton selected to fulfil its intentions. Before however this arrangement could be completed, the increased and increasing illness of Dearborn, made his removal indispensable; when, in right of *seniority*, Wilkinson be-

¹ Appendix No. 6.

came the head of the army ; and Hampton, the commander of the division of the right, serving on detachment.

Having thus briefly suggested the views under which these veterans were brought to the north, we proceed to give a few additional details and a short critique, which besides enabling the reader to judge correctly of the causes which gave to the campaign its disastrous and disgraceful termination, will abundantly illustrate the opinion of the Great Frederick, that "Generals may, like Prince Eugene's jackass, have made twenty campaigns, without knowing any thing of tactics."

Pursuing the chronological order of the narrative, we begin with Major-General Hampton's blunders:—

1st. His march from Cumberland Head, was wrong in point of time ; being a whole month earlier than Wilkinson's movement from Sackett's Harbor ; to which by the plan of campaign, it was intended to be subsidiary, and nearly simultaneous.¹

2d. The extent given to it, was injudicious ; as every step taken beyond Chazy, made co-operation with the

¹ This error was hastened if not produced by a letter from Wilkinson of the 30th of August. The following is an extract from it. "The enemy having changed his system from defence to offence, is now assembling his whole disposable force at the head of the lake, to attack Fort George—thus placing himself at too great a distance from Montreal, to give seasonable succor to that city. He certainly presumes upon our imbecility ; and we as certainly should take advantage of his presumption. *General Hampton should without delay cross Champlain, and commence his movement towards St. Johns'—taking the Isle aux Noix in his route or not, as circumstances may justify.*"

main army, more difficult; diminished the effect of the movement as a demonstration, and unnecessarily exposed the division to a separate attack.

3d. The object aimed at, (a position at Acadie) if attained, was not only unimportant to the purpose of the campaign, but positively mischievous; inasmuch, as it would have placed the division in what is technically called a *cul de sac*—the centre of a circle, the whole circumference of which, if not already occupied, could have been promptly seized by the enemy; whence it follows, that to have preserved a communication with his own base, the American General must have hazarded a battle with Prevost's whole disposable force.

Fortunately an unexpected scarcity of water, recalled the General to his senses; and supplying for the moment the want of professional judgement, put a full stop to his march on Acadie, and eventually, directed it on the Four Corners—a position, which for purposes of either demonstration or co-operation, was precisely that, which he ought to have taken at the opening of the campaign.

4th Of the General's plan of attack, we need hardly say, that it was in all its parts, in direct opposition to military maxims, and thus necessarily self-condemned to disaster and disgrace. The rules which justify this censure, are among those of the most distinguished masters of the art, Napoleon, Montecuculli, &c.

1. "It is against all sound principles, to divide your force into corps, between which there can be no communication, or such only, as may be hazardous or

difficult. This error is greatly aggravated, if committed while in the presence of an enemy, whose communications are easy and safe.

2. "When from any cause, a departure from the preceding rule becomes unavoidable, no action requiring *multiplied means* and *concerted movements*, should be given to the detached corps—it should have in itself, strength enough to effect the entire object."

3. "Never attack the front of a fortified position, if it be possible to turn it: a corollary from this maxim is, to turn that flank which (other things being equal) presents the fewest difficulties."

4. "Nothing can be more rash in itself, or contrary to rule, than to present a flank march to an enemy in position; and the more so, should he occupy heights, at the foot of which you must defile."

5. "Night marches, made by two or more corps, moving from different points and having a common rendezvous and object, generally fail from a want of punctuality in meeting; whence it follows as a rule, "never to employ them, but under circumstances the most favorable—faithful and intelligent guides to indicate the route; strong pioneer parties, to remove obstructions; and estimates, carefully made by practical men of the staff, on the retarding influences of weather, roads, and distances."

In addition to the faults thus noticed, and which may have arisen from want of knowledge or want of judgement, two others must be added which can in no way be palliated or justified—involving as they do, much professional error and great moral depravity.

Such was his abandonment of Purdy's column to its fate, without awaiting its arrival at a place of rendezvous, given by himself; and such also was his refusal to join the main army at St. Regis, when ordered to do so, by his commanding officer—a crime, not a little aggravated by the false pretences, under which he attempted to justify it.¹

Wilkinson's errors, will not be found to be fewer in number, nor less grave in point of character, than Hampton's.

1st. "In one of the pauses made in his journey from the south, the General found time to instruct an officer of his own grade, but of later appointment, in the important duty of self preservation. "Remember," he said, "that a general officer does not expose his person, but in the last resort. Subordinates execute, while chiefs command; to mingle in the conflict, is to abandon the direction. Why are so few French Generals killed in their sanguinary battles? Because they know themselves to be master workmen, and how to direct their journeymen. While giving the general direction, they hold in reserve selected corps, to watch the tide of battle; always ready to improve an advantage or retrieve a misfortune."²

Such were the bases of our veteran's conservative system; which had they obtained the authority of established rules, would, at Lodi and Arcole, have placed Bonaparte behind a village or a swamp, till the battles fought at those places, had been either half won, or

¹ Appendix No. 7 ² Wilkinson's Memoirs of his own times.

half lost. Let us test their truth by a few well-known facts, derived from modern history—French, British and American. Was it then we ask, by refusing to expose themselves to danger that Dubois was killed at Roveredo? Baruel and Quenain at Cassaria? Joubert at Novi? Caffarelli and Bon at Acre? Dessaix at Marengo? D'Espagne at Aspern? St. Hilaire and Lannes at Esling? La Salle at Wagram? Bessieres at Rippach? Bruyeres at Rippenbach and Duroc at Lutzen? And again: was it by committing to subordinates and journeymen the front of the battle, that Abercrombie fell at Canope? Moore and Baird at Corunna? Crawford, McKinnon and Walker, at Ciudad, Roderigo? Kempt, Harvey, Bowes and Picton, at Badajoz? Brock, at Queenstown? Ross, at Baltimore? And Packenham, Gibbs and Keane, at New Orleans? Will a glance at our own chronicles lead to a different conclusion? Where fell Montgomery and Arnold, in the attack on Quebec? Where Mercer, in the combat at Princeton? Where Nash, in the Battle of Germantown? Where Wooster, in that of Danbury? Where De Kalb, in that of Camden? And where Wayne, at the storming of Stony Point? All, at the head of the corps they respectively commanded, and in the very front of the battle. Examples thus numerous and pointed, abundantly show, that the pretended rules on which Mr. Wilkinson would rest his life-preserving system, are not only unsupported, but expressly contradicted, by professional usage.

Nor, on examination, shall we find that the reason he employs to sustain them, is better entitled to respect,

than the rules themselves. For if it be true, as he asserts, that "*to mingle in the conflict, is to lose the faculty of commanding*", why interpose Generals in any stage of a battle, but to "make confusion worse confounded?" Will it be pretended, that a General who has lost the power of guiding a *first attack, by partaking in it*, will be competent to direct a *last resort*—which, as all know, besides ordinary difficulties and dangers, involves many of both, peculiar to itself? Again: if battles are not fought on principles as strictly mechanical as those of a puppet-show, how are subordinates to execute the orders of an absent chief, without interposing some act of authority peculiarly their own? And if not, by what magic or miracle, will they escape that moral cholera, which, on Mr. Wilkinson's theory, would be so fatal to all Generals, who should dare to mingle in a conflict? That there have been officers of high rank, whose self-possession has been greatly disturbed, if not wholly annihilated, in the presence of an enemy, can neither be denied nor dissembled; but to take for granted that the infirmity is universal, as Mr. Wilkinson does, is a palpable libel on military character and conduct; and not to be atoned for, by the condemnation it necessarily inflicts on the libeller himself.

Of the tactical sketch, which our veteran would impose on his pupil as a French order of battle, we may safely say—that it is a mere fiction; without either prototype or parallel. What! all the Generals of an army posted out of harm's way, and at the heads of selected corps, there to await one of two contingencies—

a victory already won, or a misfortune already incurred! To show how little this is conformed to French tactics, let it be contrasted with the *defensive* and *offensive* orders of battle, most practised and approved by the hero of a hundred fights. "For the *former*, the first of your two lines, should deploy; and the second, be formed in columns of attack by battalions. For the *latter*, two lines of battalions, each formed in column on its two central platoons, is to be preferred; the heads of the second line fronting the intervals of the first, and the openings between the columns, filled with artillery and marksmen. To give to this order its greatest impulsive action, each brigade must have its first and second line, and be so placed that every general officer may have his reserve at hand, without waiting to draw it from any other quarter."¹

2d. When on the 5th of August, Mr. Wilkinson arrived at Washington, having by the removal of Dearborn, become Commander-in-chief of the northern army, the plan of campaign approved by the President, was communicated to him, with a request—that "if on ex-

¹ "Pour une bataille défensive en position, la première ligne déployée, et la seconde en colonne d'attaque par bataillons, offrent l'ordre le plus parfait. Pour aller à l'attaque, je préférerais deux lignes de bataillons en colonne d'attaque sur les pelotons du centre, en plaçant la seconde ligne en face des intervalles de la première. Les intervalles d'un bataillon à l'autre seraient remplis par de l'artillerie ou des tirailleurs. Pour donner à l'action impulsive tout l'avantage possible, chaque brigade aura sa première et sa seconde ligne, pour que chaque officier général ait ses moyens de réserve à sa disposition, sans être obligé de les attendre d'ailleurs." *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon*, Chap. XIV. Vol. 3. p. 223.

mination he found anything objectionable in its principle or details, he would freely suggest such modifications of either, as in his opinion might be necessary or useful." The result of this reference was not such as might have been expected from a soldier of forty years' service. Overlooking every military maxim applying to the case, and not paying more respect to the admonition furnished by the impotent, if not disgraceful conclusion of his predecessor's campaign; he adopted the great and leading error, into which that commander had fallen? Assuming as a fact, "the incompetency of the means given him for the reduction of Kingston, and that without a decided naval ascendancy on the lake, the measure would be impracticable"—"will it not be better," he said, "to strengthen our force already at Fort George; cut up the British in that quarter; destroy Indian establishments and (should General Harrison fail in his object) march a detachment and capture Malden. After which, closing our operations on the peninsula, razing all works there and leaving our settlements on the strait in tranquillity, descend like lightning with our whole force on Kingston, and having reduced that place and captured both garrison and shipping, go down the St. Lawrence and form a junction with Hampton's column, if the lateness of the season should permit."¹

It will readily occur to the military reader, that the General's project stood self-condemned by its palpable inconsistency; for if, as he asserts, the disposable force

¹ Wilkinson's letter of the 6th August.

given him, while fresh and entire, unexhausted by fatigue and undiminished by sickness or battle, was incompetent to the capture of Kingston, what reasonable ground of hope existed, that this very force, after cutting up one enemy, beating and capturing another, breaking down Indian establishments and sweeping from the peninsula everything hostile, would after all be in condition not only to *reduce Kingston and capture both fleet and garrison* ; but, if the *weather permitted*, descend the St. Lawrence, effect a junction with Hampton, and *invest or attack Montreal* ? We need scarcely add, that this strategic labor of the General, had no tendency to increase the executive confidence in either his professional knowledge or judgement. Still the President hoped, that "if the opinions it contained, were *mildly rebuked*, the General would abandon them, and after joining the army, would hasten to execute the plan already communicated to him." Such however was not the course contemplated or pursued by Mr. Wilkinson. Errors, whether arising from want of judgement or want of principle, are seldom given up without a struggle. In the present case, so strong was the General's preference for "long and moderate wars" to those of short and audacious character, that soon after his arrival at Sackett's Harbor, he convened a council to whom he submitted the following questions :—¹

1. "Shall we wait *in our present positions* a combat between the rival squadrons for a supremacy on the lake ? or,

¹ Appendix No. 8.

2. "Shall we assemble at Fort George a sufficient force—cut up the enemy in that quarter; then descend to this place [Sackett's Harbor] call the division from lake Champlain, incorporate the whole and make a direct attack on Kingston."

Of these projects, had No. 1 been adopted and the troops kept in "their present positions" until the question of naval ascendancy was settled by a decisive battle between the fleets, the whole army would have been condemned to a state of total inaction; not merely during the campaign, but during the war—as it is a well known fact, that neither squadron, on Lake Ontario, would fight on the invitation of its adversary; and (what is yet more remarkable) that the party having the temporary ascendancy, was never able so far to avail himself of it, as to compel his adversary to fight a *decisive battle*. Again: had plan No. 2 been preferred, the effect would have been to consummate Prevost's policy, in quieting all fear, on his part, as to the security of *Kingston* and *Montreal*—the two *vital points* in his line of defence. Fortunately the council to which these and other projects were submitted, unanimously rejected the General's favorites, and adopted No. 3 of the plans prescribed by the government.

3d. Having thus failed in his new attempt, he on the 2d of September, set out for Fort George; for the professed purpose of hastening the removal of the division of the left to Sackett's Harbor. It was not however till the 4th that he arrived at that post; nor until the 16th, that "with trembling hand and giddy

head" he was able to make an official communication to the Secretary of War. Of the subjects discussed in this letter, the plan of campaign was still uppermost. "From the best information," he says, "the enemy near us, have three thousand men on paper; of whom fourteen hundred are sick. Shall I make a sweep of them or not, to the hazard of our main object? *Not, unless that main object is jeopardized by the fate of our squadron. It would require an operation of three weeks.*" Two days after coming to this decision, he renews the subject under an evident change of opinion. "*Shall I,*" he demands, "*leave the enemy within four miles of this post, making a wide investment of it from Kingston to the Four Mile creek? or, shall I break him up? With our prospects, the decision is embarrassing—change them by an abandonment of the main object, and our course is direct, viz: to take possession of Burlington bay and cut up or capture the whole division in this quarter; which may be estimated at three thousand regular troops.*"¹ I pray you to deliberate on

¹ At the moment of all this swaggering, the General was seldom out of his bed; and quite unable to mount a horse. Boyd's testimony as to the state of his powers mental and physical, from the time he joined the army till he had retreated from Canada, is given in the following words—"When the General arrived, he was so much indisposed in mind and body, that in any other service, he would perhaps have been superceded in command. His health continued in this state till witness left him at French Mills." Page 80, Vol. 3d Wilkinson's Memoirs. This statement of Boyd's is fully confirmed by the General's own representation which makes out a case of decided incompetency, throughout the campaign. See his official letters and Diary.

these points and give me your advice without delay."¹ This request was not refused, and the advice sought for, recommended "a prompt movement to Sackett's Harbor or Grenadier Island, and an attack on Kingston, while the weather was favorable and the garrison weak."

4th. In a despatch of the 27th of September the General says—"at eight o'clock last evening, I received your interesting letter of the 22d; and shall employ its authorizations to the best possible effect." Yet so little conformed was his conduct to his promises, that nothing recommended by the Secretary was done, and everything ordered by him, was evaded. Instead of giving to the flotilla, employed in carrying the troops, the destination of Sackett's Harbor, or of Grenadier Island, as he had stated, he selected Henderson's bay—a place having no military relation to the pending expedition, nor containing any depot of food, clothing, arms, or ammunition. Again: instead of requiring the aid of the fleet in quickening and covering the movement, he volunteered an advice to the naval commander, "*to remain at the head of the lake, drive Yeo and the British fleet into some nook or corner, and there hold them in durance vile, until he had concentrated his force at Sackett's Harbor, attacked and carried Kingston and Prescott, and (deo favente) invested Montreal!*" An advice, which though obviously productive of delay and peril, was promptly adopted by the Commodore.² And lastly, when on the 4th of

¹ Appendix No. 9.

² Appendix No. 10.

October he arrived at Sackett's Harbor, instead of making a direct attack on Kingston his first object, he announced his intention of directing his operations on Montreal—a determination not suddenly abandoned.¹

Though the weather was now good, and continued to be so till the night of the 8th, causes of delay multiplied upon the General. "A covering force was now necessary to the movement, and the fleet had not yet returned to the harbor; the arrangements for the removal of Lewis's division, with the necessary supplies of clothing, were improper and defective, and called for amendment—and lastly, the division at Henderson's bay, as well as that at Sackett's Harbor, required supplies, reorganization, and an order of march and battle." Before one half of these conditions could be fulfilled, a sudden and unfavorable change took place in the weather. During the night of the 8th, it became wet, cold and stormy; and so continued till the 12th; when a change of still more importance was found in the condition of the enemy. De Rottenburg, instead of hastening (as Wilkinson supposed he would) to the aid of Proctor, despatched nearly the whole of his effective force to Kingston; which (with the exception of a detachment of two hundred men) arrived safely—preceded by Yeo, who refusing to be cabined and cribbed in Amherst bay, pushed boldly into the lake, and on the 7th, anchored safely off Kingston. But of all the changes which marked this important era, that wrought in the opinions and intentions

¹ Appendix No. 11.

of the General himself, was no doubt the most extraordinary and least to be expected. It will be remembered that on the 4th of October, when arriving at Sackett's Harbor, the General regarded *Montreal* as "the chief object of the campaign," and therefore declined an attack on Kingston; though decidedly recommended by everything in the state of the weather and condition of the enemy; yet now, on the 12th of that month, and under a total change of circumstances—the enemy's garrison increased to "four thousand combatants,"¹ his fleet got back to its covering position in the harbor; and the weather, such as made the navigation of the lake impracticable to scows, or other open boats; in a word, when every sober and intelligent man in the army had abandoned the project of attacking Kingston, the General became, ostensibly, a strenuous advocate of that measure; and accordingly on the 18th, made the following demands on the Secretary of War—1st. "That Hampton's division should be called from Chateaugay to Morrisville, on the *É. L.* Lawrence, and there united to the main army"—and 2d. "That *before he (Wilkinson) abandoned the attack on Kingston*, which by his instructions he was directed to make, it would be necessary to his justification, that the Secretary should, by the authority of the President, direct the operations of the army particularly against *Montreal.*"² The functionary to whom these demands were addressed, seeing in them only a new ruse to

¹ Wilkinson's letter of the 19th of October, to the Secretary of War.

² Appendix No. 12.

create delay, avoid responsibility, and, not improbably, to defeat the expedition, answered in a way that completely unmasked the General, and shewed that when compelled to act on the dictates of his own knowledge and judgement, he could see as clearly as others, that the object of attack he so strenuously advocated, was not that which either policy or duty recommended.¹ The movement on Montreal was accordingly pursued.

5th. It was not unforeseen, that when the troops were withdrawn from Fort George, that that post, Fort Niagara and the whole American frontier from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie, would be exposed to the attacks of such British force, as from any cause might be left on the Peninsula. To meet a contingency of this kind, General Wilkinson was directed "to put Fort George in a condition to resist *assault*; the only species of attack to be apprehended during the winter—to give to it an efficient garrison of six or eight hundred regular troops; to remove from the command of Fort Niagara, Captain N. Leonard, and to substitute in his stead, Captain G. Armistead of the 1st regiment of ar-

¹ To test the sincerity of the General's passion for attacking Kingston, and if found to be real, to give to the country and the army the benefits of the experiment, Brown and Swartwout requested Lewis (known to be entirely in Wilkinson's confidence) to suggest to that officer, whether "under the favorable change taken place in the weather, it would not be proper to avail themselves of their present position at French Creek, to cross into Canada and gain the position indicated by J. from which the town and batteries could be directly commanded?" To this proposition Lewis promptly answered, "that he would make no such proposal, knowing as he did, the General's settled determination to make *Montreal* his object of attack."

tillery ; to accept the service of a volunteer corps, tendered to the government by P. B. Porter and others, who 'pledged their lives, that if furnished with a few pieces of artillery and officers and men competent to manage them, they would before the season ended, capture, destroy or expel the whole of the enemy's force from the peninsula'—and lastly, to commit to General Moses Porter, the command of Fort George and the Niagara frontier."

It cannot but be thought extraordinary, that a soldier of high pretension and long service, should not have seen the bearing of these orders on the eventual security of the frontier ; or that seeing it, he should have neglected to give them execution. Yet such was the fact—Fort George, was deprived of its regular garrison ; Fort Niagara, continued under the command of Leonard ; the conditions upon which the volunteer corps offered its services, probably procrastinated or refused ; and General Moses Porter, taken from Fort George, and made to accompany the expedition. It is unnecessary to add, that had the preceding injunctions been obeyed, Fort George would not have been abandoned ; Fort Niagara neither sold nor surprised ; nor the whole line of settlements on the strait, plundered and burned.

6th. The testimony given by Mr. Thorne, on the trial of General Wilkinson, abundantly proves the following facts:—1st. That the General begun his expedition, without knowing whether he carried with his army of eight thousand men, subsistence sufficient for five days or for fifty. 2d. That his attention to

this important subject, was first awakened at Grenadier island, in consequence of the supposed effect of the storm on the provision boats. 3d. That sending for the contractor, he sought to learn from him the quantity of loss sustained, and whether any contracting agent would be found near Ogdensburgh, authorized to purchase beef and flour, as might be wanted; and 4th, that though informed, that the *loss was great*, and could not be supplied at Ogdensburgh, any quantity could be immediately furnished at Sackett's Harbor—an offer the General declined accepting, on pretence, "that means of transporting it could not be had."

7th. The reader has already seen in the General's Diary of the campaign, that "on the 7th of November, having passed all the preceding night in the open air, he was in consequence thereof much indisposed." The night thus referred to, was necessarily that preceding the 7th, which, as will be seen, was not passed wholly in the open air, but in part under the cover of Mr. Thorp's house, and in a way disgraceful to General Wilkinson as a man, and utterly inconsistent with his duty and character, as the leader of an army. For the details of this debauch, we refer the reader to No. 13, of the Appendix.

8th. It cannot have escaped notice, that hitherto the General had shown no great willingness to prosecute the objects prescribed to him by his orders. It was not, however, till the 8th of November, that an occasion presented, which in his opinion would justify an immediate abandonment of the enterprise. Informed early in the morning of that day, that not-

withstanding Chauncey's engagements to watch both channels, and prevent or punish any attempt made by the enemy to assail his rear, "he was now pursued by a strong detachment from Kingston, which had already passed Prescott," he hastily convened a council of war, to whom he submitted such an exposition of his own weakness, and of the enemy's strength, as, had it been credited, could not have failed to obtain the sanction of that body for an immediate withdrawal of the army from Canada. "Our provision supply," he said, "is now reduced to ten days' rations of bread, and twenty of meat, and our whole disposable force, including Hampton's division, will not exceed eleven thousand effectives—while that of the enemy, from information lately received and entirely confided in, will amount to somewhat more than *forty-seven thousand men*, apart from the corps now menacing our rear, the number of which is yet unknown. Under these circumstances, the following question is submitted to the council—Will it be advisable, on our part, to march rapidly to the attack of Montreal?" To the no small surprise of the General, the question was affirmatively answered by the whole council.

9th. Having thus shewn what the General did on this occasion, it may not be amiss to shew, what he ought to have done. The rules of war applying to a case of this kind, are few and clear; neither liable to be forgotten nor mistaken, by any one in the possession of his senses. "If on a march, an enemy hang on your rear, and so impede your movement, as may put to hazard the attainment of its object, it becomes

your duty to reconnoitre him carefully, and should his force be inferior, or only equal to your own, to turn upon and destroy him."¹ A second rule is, "never detach, when either intending to make an attack, or expecting to receive one." To these long established maxims, no respect was paid—everything enjoined by the one, or forbidden by the other, being either neglected from inattention, or omitted by design. No regular reconnoissance of the pursuing force, was either made or ordered;² and on the 10th, when no doubt remained of the enemy's intention to make an attack, Brown was detached with the most efficient corps of the army to the foot of the rapids; and Bissel, with a regiment, sent to an island on which no enemy was found; while to Boyd and twelve hundred men, was assigned the duty of beating back the enemy if he advanced, *unless in more force than was expected*; in which case, "the two corps, Brown's and Boyd's (now fifteen miles apart,) were to *co-operate and act with decision*." An order in all respects so

¹ Such would have been the fate of the British detachment at Chrystler's field, had Brown and Bissel's corps been added to Boyd's, with orders strictly *offensive*—not merely to beat back the enemy if he advanced, but to pursue, destroy, or capture him. Unskilfully fought as the battle was, (from want of consentaneous action in the several corps) another and general charge, made with the aid of Ulmer's regiment, (just got into position,) would probably have been decisive; and the more so, as Ripley had already turned the enemy's left flank.

² "The only attempt made to reconnoitre the enemy, was by General Lewis, who borrowed a spy-glass to look at them when in a wood; but no one advanced beyond our own line to examine them."
—Ripley's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, vol. ii.

extraordinary, and in its leading injunction, so impracticable, displays a state of mind on the part of the General, to be accounted for only on the supposition, that though given at daybreak, he had been already making a new experiment of the invigorating powers of alcohol. Nor will other parts of his conduct, on this occasion, lead to a different conclusion; for, when Boyd, after skirmishing with the enemy, sought an interview with the commanding General, for the purpose of reporting the occurrences of the day, and receiving such new orders as they might suggest, he found "the Prophet veiled," and an aid-de-camp at the door instructed to announce, "*that the chief of the army, was not in condition to receive visits, give orders, or even listen to a reporting officer, just returned from a field of battle!*"

10th. Receiving, soon after his arrival at Barnhartz, Hampton's insubordinate letter, virtually refusing the aid of his division in prosecuting the enterprise on Montreal, the first views and feelings of the General, were such as became a commanding officer having a due respect for himself and the interests of his profession. "*I shall,*" he said, "*coerce obedience to the order I have given—arrest Hampton, and direct Izzard to bring forward the division.*" Finding, however, on second thoughts, that this remedial process would put an end to the evil, and thus deprive him of a plausible pretext for terminating the campaign, it was promptly abandoned. Hampton was accord-

¹ Boyd's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, vol. ii.

ingly left undisturbed in the exercise of a command, he had so flagrantly abused—all notice of his misconduct was transferred to the highest authority of the government,¹ and a council of war resorted to for advice on two points:—"1st. Our force being now reduced, by General Hampton's refusal to join us with his division, to *six thousand men*, shall we continue our march on Montreal? And if not, what shall be the alternative?" The first of these questions was answered in the negative; and in reply to the second, an opinion was given, that the army be withdrawn from Canada, and cantoned for the winter, at French Mills; an advice promptly adopted by the General, and carried into execution on the 13th. Such was the end of a campaign, for which so much preparation had been made, and from which so much had been expected.²

¹ Wilkinson's letter of the 24th of November, 1813, to the Secretary of War.

² "The grounds on which this decision was taken were—want of bread, want of meat, want of Hampton's division, and a belief, that the enemy's force was equal, if not greater than our own. The opinion of the younger members of the council was, that with Brown as a leader, no character would be lost by going on to Montreal."—*General Swift's letter of the 17th of June, 1836, to General Armstrong.*

CHAPTER II.

Blockade of the coast—Predatory war on the shores and inlets of the Chesapeake—Attack on Craney island—Capture of Hampton—Descent on North Carolina—Bombardment of Lewiston—Creek war.

THOUGH it cannot be supposed that Great Britain was unapprised of the advantage to herself, or of the injury to us, that would have resulted from an early and active employment of her naval force, in obstructing the commerce and disquieting the agriculture of our Atlantic frontier; yet, so numerous and urgent were her European engagements, during the summer and autumn of 1812, that it was not till the 26th of December of that year, that she adopted this obvious policy;¹ nor until the 4th of February following, that any efficient blockading armament, appeared on the coast. On this day, two ships of the line, three frigates, and a few smaller vessels, entered the mouth of the Chesapeake, and anchored in Hampton Roads.

¹ On this day was issued a British order of council, declaring the bays of Delaware and Chesapeake, in a state of blockade. On the 20th of March following, the order was extended to the whole coast of the United States, excepting that of *Rhode Island, Massachusetts,* and *New Hampshire.*

The employment given to this armament, was at first strictly confined to the occlusion of the bay, and the capture of such armed vessels, as were found within it; but was soon after extended to objects of a different and much less legitimate character—the plunder and destruction of isolated dwellings, barns, stables, and mills. These sources of booty and subjects of mischief, being soon exhausted, the British commander now ascended the bay, and passing by Annapolis and Baltimore, where he would have found an enemy willing to meet him, he, with more of barbarity than could have been expected from the functionary of a nation, professedly fighting the battles of law, religion, and civilization, plundered and burned in succession, the villages of Frenchtown, Havre de Grace, Frederick, and Georgetown.

With the profits and disgrace of this war of brigandage, Cockburn returned to Hampton Roads; where, finding the fleet increased to seven ships of the line, and thirteen frigates, with an auxiliary corps of four thousand infantry, it was promptly determined to attack Norfolk. To do this successfully, and with the least possible risk, it was deemed necessary to begin the operation, by taking possession of Craney Island; which from its local position, at the mouth of Elizabeth river, furnished strong points for covering the town, against any movement made upon it by water. Under these views, the disposable force of the enemy, was divided into two corps—one of which, embarked in boats, and carried directly to its object, attempted to make good a descent on the northern side of the

island; while the other, landed on the main, and availing itself of a shoal, which, at low water, was fordable by infantry, forced its way to the western side. Though made with a considerable degree of steadiness, both attacks failed; with a loss to the enemy of three hundred men, by death, capture, and desertion.¹

While this unsuccessful experiment had the effect of preventing any new attempt on Norfolk, it probably hastened the brutal outrage, soon after committed on Hampton—an open village, presenting no military object, beyond that of a small militia detachment. To effect the reduction of a place thus inconsiderable, a strong naval demonstration, made on the front of the militia camp, and conducted by the Admiral in person, was thought necessary; while a column of two thousand men, led by Sir Sidney Beckwith, landed lower down the strait, turned the position, and captured the place. This victory, paltry as it was, cost the enemy two hundred men; and from the abuses which followed it, entailed upon the British arms, an infamy which cannot soon be forgotten.²

Finding in the Chesapeake no new object of safe attack, Cockburn with a part of the squadron, now

¹ The British force employed on this occasion, amounted to "two thousand five hundred men, that of their opponents to seven hundred and fifty of all arms."—See *General Taylor's official letter, and that of Colonel Bentley, commanding on the island.*

² Correspondence between Gen. Taylor and Sir Sidney Beckwith, on the subject of these outrages. In this, the latter substantially admits the truth of the charges made against the assailants—of *theft, robbery, rape, and murder*, and promises not to employ his infantry in any future land operation.

hastened to Ocracock, in North Carolina—where, and at Portsmouth, he again signalized himself by exploits, similar to those he had achieved in Virginia.¹ The only remaining occurrence of a similar kind, worthy of notice, was an attempt to burn Lewistown—a small fishing establishment near the mouth of the Delaware. Among other means, less objectionable, employed by the British commander, to obtain a supply of fresh provisions, “a demand was made on the inhabitants for twenty-five head of live stock,” accompanied by a menace, that “if not complied with, the town should be destroyed.” The demand being promptly and peremptorily rejected, the threatened attack followed; but failing to make any impression favorable to the assailants, on either the inhabitants or their dwellings, the bombardment was discontinued, and the launches and boats employed in executing it, recalled to the shipping.²

While this war of pillage and destruction was pursued on the coast, another of more formidable character, was fast maturing in the south. A portion of the Creek confederacy, seduced by British agents from their friendly connection with the United States, had

¹ “At both Ocracock and Portsmouth, there was much wanton, cruel, and savage destruction of property. Even women and children were stripped of their clothing.”—*T. Singleton's report to Gov. Hawkins.*

² “The town being seated on an eminence, sustained no injury; the rockets passing over, and the bombs falling short of it. Not a man of the town was killed, though 600 shot, (besides bombs, rockets, and grape,) were fired by the enemy.”—*Historical Register, vol. 2, p. 85.*

early in the summer of 1813, given such unequivocal evidence of meditated hostility, as made proper a prompt interposition of an armed force within the Indian limits. In prosecution of this policy, requisitions were made early in June, by the War Department, on the States of Georgia and Tennessee, for three thousand militia; who, reinforced by the third regiment of United States infantry, the Indian peace-party, and such volunteers as the Mississippi territory could furnish, would, it was believed, constitute a force, abundantly sufficient to control the hostile part of the nation.

Of the troops thus required, the Mississippi volunteers only were in service as early as the month of August; occupying a chain of stockaded ports, selected as points of defence for militia, and places of safety for women and children; when Fort Mims (the most southern of these) was, on the morning of the 30th, surprised and captured by a band of six hundred savages.¹ Reaching the fort without having been discovered, and finding the front gate open and unguarded, the assailants, led by Weatherhead, a distinguished chief, made a rush upon it *en masse*, and, after a long and bloody struggle, succeeded in establishing themselves within the stockade. This advantage gained by the enemy, what now remained of the garrison

¹ General Claiborne ascribes the inattention of Beasley, (the commander of the fort,) to information recently given by Col. Hawkins, (U. S. agent residing with the Creek nation,) "which," he says, "unfortunately tended to lessen our apprehensions, and to beget a belief of our almost perfect security."

threw themselves into houses, from which they made a vigorous defence, till, finding the roofs in flames, and no means to extinguish the fire, a retreat was attempted, which, as may be readily conjectured, terminated in a general massacre of the fugitives—men, women, and children.

However disastrous this occurrence may have been to the garrison, and the inhabitants of the neighborhood, who had sought protection in the fort, the general impression made by it on the southern frontier, was favorable to a successful issue of the war—exciting a zeal for prompt and vigorous measures, and finally embodying a description of men who, principally under the direction of Jackson and Floyd, terminated the contest in a single campaign.

The quota of troops required from Tennessee, and assigned to the special command of General Jackson, being augmented to two thousand five hundred men, that officer began his march for the Indian territory, on the 10th of October, 1813; and on the 22d, reached Thompson's creek. Finding himself in the neighborhood of hostile villages, the General lost no time in attacking and destroying them. On the 28th, Colonel Dyer, with two hundred cavalry, was detached on Littafushee, a village of secondary order, inhabited by twenty-nine savages, men, women, and children; all of whom were captured, and their cabins destroyed, without loss of blood to either party.

A second detachment, made on a larger scale, and for a more important purpose, was committed to Gen. Coffee, who, on the 3d of November, attacked and de-

stroyed Tallushatchee. Arrived within a mile and a half of the town, the troops took an order of battle, consisting of two lines, so prolonged on opposite sides of the object of attack, and so closed at the ends, as to place it within a loop of oblong form, from which escape, without discovery and fighting, was impracticable. Projects of this kind, for capturing or killing all the occupants of a camp or village, have been frequently made; but it rarely happens that manœuvres, having this object, so entirely succeed, as that employed on the present occasion. Of the three hundred Indians, male and female, inhabiting Tallushatchee, not one escaped. Two hundred men, refusing to give or to receive quarter, were killed; and one hundred women and children captured. The loss of the assailants amounted to five killed and forty-one wounded; several of the latter by arrows, but none mortally.

On the 7th of November, (three days after the preceding affair,) being informed that "one hundred and sixty families, of the peace or United States party, were closely invested by a force of one thousand *Red Sticks*, or British adherents, in Fort Taladega," Jackson hastened to their rescue; and arriving in the morning of the 9th, near the enemy's camp, adopted substantially the order of attack employed by Coffee, and with an effect scarcely less decisive than that of its predecessor; as, "in fifteen minutes after the action began," the enemy was routed, leaving on the field two hundred and ninety-nine killed, and having, as

was afterward ascertained, about the same number wounded.¹

Had the department of subsistence been as active and successful in its operations as the army, and thus enabled the General to follow up the blows he had so successfully given, there can be little doubt, but that another effort, similar in its character and issue to the last, would have terminated the war within the month of November. But, from causes not well explained, such was not the fact—and so precarious had his supplies become at the date of his last victory, as rendered necessary a prompt and retrograde march to Camp Strother.²

On reaching this post, he found, to his great disappointment, that no additional stores had been forwarded to it, during his absence; that much of what he had left behind him, when setting out for Fort Taladega, had been already consumed, and that his only remaining resource consisted in a scanty supply of poor beef, taken from the enemy, or purchased from the Cherokees. Nor was this, though of itself sufficiently alarming, his only cause of disquietude; for, not more to his surprise than to his sorrow, he found that a genuine *maladie du pays*, or militia home-fever,

¹ "The force of the enemy is represented by themselves to have been 1080; of whom 299 were left dead on the field, and no doubt many more were killed, who were not found. It is believed very few escaped without a wound."—*Jackson's letter to Gov. Blount.*

² A point selected near the site of his magazines, placing him in communication with both parts of Tennessee, the northwestern frontier of Georgia, and the Indian villages, forming his objects of attack

pervaded the camp, was rapidly breaking down all sense of subordination, and, unless firmly opposed, could not fail to produce a speedy and general desertion of the post. We need hardly remark, that this state of things, so menacing in all its aspects, was met by the General with his characteristic promptitude, decision, and energy; which, though they failed to extinguish the spirit from which the disorder had arisen, so qualified its operation, as left to him the means of maintaining his position, until a sufficient supply of food, and a new levy of troops, enabled him again to take the field.

While Jackson was thus occupied in combating the evils stated in the preceding paragraph, Major-General Cocke, commanding the second division of East Tennessee militia, projected an expedition against the enemy, occupying a position between the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, called the Hillabee towns. The direction of this movement was committed to Brigadier-General White, who, beginning his march on the 11th of November, from Fort Armstrong, at the head of a corps of militia cavalry and mounted riflemen, reached the neighborhood of his object in the night of the 17th, and immediately detached a strong party with orders "to surround the town and at daybreak to make an attack upon it." These orders were well executed, and so completely was the enemy surprised, that, of three hundred and sixteen warriors, sixty were killed, and two hundred and fifty-six made prisoners, without loss of any kind to the assailants.

Another affair, having a favorable issue, soon after occurred on the Georgia frontier. Informed, late in

November, that a large body of hostile Creeks had assembled at Autossee, a town on the southern side of the Tallapoosa river, General Floyd raised his camp on the Chatahoochee, and, with nine hundred militia and three or four hundred friendly Creeks, arrived, early in the morning of the 29th, before the town. The Indians being sufficiently apprized of his approach, the action soon began, and was well fought for three hours; when the enemy, losing at once their hopes and their courage, sought safety in flight, leaving behind them, two hundred men killed—among whom, were the Autossee and Tallahassee kings. The American loss on this occasion was seven killed and fifty-four wounded. After burning the houses¹ General Floyd, somewhat encumbered with wounded men, (and being himself of that number,) returned to his former position.

Soon after this affair, and probably with a view of shortening the distance to other points of attack, and of putting himself more directly in communication with Jackson, Floyd quitted his camp on the Chatahoochee, and established a new post farther to the west, to which he gave the name of Camp Defiance. This the enemy determined to carry by a night attack; and, accordingly, approaching it silently and in the dark, they drove in the sentinels, enveloped an out-lying picket, and made a rush in mass upon the front line, which was only saved from disorder and defeat, by the

¹ "The number of buildings burnt (some of a superior order, for the dwellings of savages, and filled with valuable articles) is supposed to be four hundred."—General Floyd's letter of the 4th of December, 1813, to General Pinckney.

vigorous resistance made by the artillerists and riflemen placed on its flanks. So soon however as the day broke, and there was light enough to ascertain the actual condition of the troops and the enemy, the General hastened to meet the attack with the charge of the bayonet ; and in a few minutes put the assailants completely to flight. A pursuit was now made as far as the Canabé swamp ; in which fifteen of the enemy were cut down by the cavalry and a few wounded men overtaken. The whole loss of the Indians on this occasion, did not exceed thirty—while it may be presumed, from the regrets expressed by the General, that his own was much greater.

Contemporaneously, or nearly so, with the preceding occurrences, General Claiborne, now reinforced by Colonel Russel and the 3d U. S. regiment, set out from Fort Stoddard, to attack Weatherford and the Alabama band ; who, quitting the villages they had hitherto occupied, had ascended the river and built a town on a point of land selected for defence ; and, as they believed, made impregnable to an enemy, “by the intervention of their prophets with the Great Spirit.” In prosecution of this object, the General began his march westward, on the 13th of December ; and, on the morning of the 22d, his leading column was promptly engaged with the enemy, whom it routed before those of his centre and left could be brought into action. A pursuit of the fugitives was now ordered and begun, but soon discontinued, “the road being found nearly impracticable, by swamps and ravines.” Short as the battle was, it sufficed for the escape of the women and

children; and was probably hazarded, merely with a view to this object. The loss of the enemy amounted to thirty warriors left dead on the field; while that of Claiborne was "one man killed and three wounded."

It was now the 16th of January, and Jackson still remained at Fort Strother. The newly raised volunteers, expected on the 10th, did not arrive till the 14th, and but amounted to eight hundred men; who, added to such of the old corps as had refused to abandon him, made his whole number, exclusive of friendly Indians, nine hundred and fifty. Though far short of the force counted upon and required, as necessary for a successful termination of the war, the General determined to resume offensive operations. To this course (in which some found evidence of impatience) he was compelled by motives alike numerous and urgent—such as the short time of service assigned to the new corps—the large portion of that which had already expired—the ill effects of inaction on troops just taken from their homes—the perils awaiting some of his posts, and lastly, the advantage of any diversion, made in favor of an important movement, then contemplated by General Floyd. Believing that to meet these and other demands of the case, something should be hazarded, he, on the 17th, began a march on Fort Taladega; where, being assured that an expedition against Fort Armstrong was in preparation, and that, for this purpose, nine hundred hostile Creeks were already collected in a bend of the Talapoosa, he marched directly on that object. In the evening of the 22d, coming on a large and well-

marked Indian trail, he no longer doubted that the enemy was near him, and, wishing to obtain some better information than he yet possessed of the neighboring ground and the enemy's position, he encamped for the night in a square; multiplying his sentinels and pickets, and sending out his spies—one of whom (a friendly Indian) returned with information, that "about three miles distant, there was a large encampment of the enemy; and that, from the whoopings and other noises made in it, and the removal of women and children, they were no doubt apprized of his approach; and would either retire, or make an attack before day-break"—a prediction entirely sustained by the event. At six in the morning the attack began on the left and rear of Jackson's position, and was vigorously kept up for thirty minutes—but as soon as the day broke, a charge led by Coffee put the assailants to flight; when a pursuit of two miles followed, in which they suffered severely. Coffee was now detached to seize and burn their encampment; but on reconnoitring and finding it strongly fortified, he thought it most prudent to return without making the attempt—a fortunate conclusion, for soon after his return, a brisk feint was made on the right of Jackson's camp, while a real attack, by the enemy's principal force, was directed on its left. After a few fires, followed by a vigorous charge of the bayonet, the enemy was a second time routed and pursued.

After burying the dead and taking care of the wounded the camp was fortified, the better to guard against another night attack, and carry on the preparations, necessary for a return to Fort Strother in the morning.

To this course the General was led by two considerations—the one, that the original intention of the movement, so far as it respected the safety of Fort Armstrong, and the diversion in favor of General Floyd, was already sufficiently accomplished; the other, that if, for the abovementioned purposes, it should be deemed proper to bring the enemy again to action, that object could be sooner and better attained, by a movement of retrograde character, (which to them might have the appearance of flight,) than by any attack made directly on their fortified camp. The army was accordingly put in motion in the morning of the 23d, and in the evening of that day reached Enochoptoko village. Some occurrences which took place during the night, tending to strengthen the General's opinion, "that he would soon be assailed," he was careful, before resuming his march on the 24th, to strengthen his front, flank, and rear guards; and so to alter his route, as enabled him to avoid a dangerous defile, which, had he pursued the path ordinarily travelled, he would have found in his way. About twelve o'clock, when a part of the army with the wounded, had crossed Enochoptoko creek and the artillery were on the point of entering it, an alarm was given from the rear—"which," says the General, "I heard without surprise and even with pleasure; believing that by wheeling my right and left columns, and recrossing the creek above and below the enemy, I should be able to turn their flanks and rear, and cut them off entirely. But, to my astonishment and mortification, I saw both columns precipitately give way. This shameful retreat was disastrous in the extreme.

It drew with it the greater part of the column of the centre, and produced a general consternation and confusion, not easily removed. To resist the enemy, there now but remained twenty-five of the rear guard, one company of the artillerists and Russel's company of Spies. They, however, realized and exceeded my highest expectations. Lieutenant Armstrong, who commanded the artillery in the absence of Captain Dederich, ordered his men to form and advance to the top of the hill; while he and a few others dragged up the six-pounder. Never was more bravery displayed than on this occasion. Amid the most galling fire from an enemy more than ten times their number, they ascended the hill and maintained their position; and when the gun was up, poured on the enemy several discharges of grape-shot, which, followed by a charge, quickly repulsed them. About this time, other parts of the army crossed the creek and entered into the chase. Captain Gordon of the Spies endeavored to turn the enemy's left and partly succeeded—while Colonels Carrol and Higgins, and Captains Elliot and Popkins, pursued them nearly two miles. The defeat was decisive; nor was the march of the army again disturbed."¹

In the several combats of this expedition, the savages lost in killed one hundred and eighty-nine warriors, found dead on the different fields of battle. The number of their wounded could not be ascertained, but, it may be fairly presumed, was much greater. Jackson's loss,

¹ Jackson's official report.

during the same period, was twenty killed and seventy-five wounded.

In estimating the value of this expedition the General says: "If I am not greatly mistaken, it will be found that no application I could have made of the force under my command, would have tended more to a speedy termination of the Creek war." In this opinion there was no error; for beside its effects on the morale of the enemy, it greatly increased the vigor and diligence of Governor Blount in the exercise of his authority; and at the same time awakened, in the militia of the state, a high degree of military ardor. The requisition for troops, made by the War Department in the preceding July and not hitherto fulfilled, was now promptly complied with, accompanied by another, of state authority; which, with the 39th U. S. regiment of infantry (now assigned to the command of Jackson) gave to him a total of five thousand combatants.

Having arranged a system of supply and assembled the troops, the General, on the 24th of March, began a movement on Tohopeka—an Indian town occupying the southern extremity of a narrow neck of land, formed by a curve of the Tallapoosa river; and fortified on its northern side by a wall, from six to eight feet high, made of the trunks of large trees, perforated with two rows of port holes, and having projecting angles, giving the advantage of cross fires; arriving, at ten o'clock, A. M., of the 7th of April, at the head of the bend, and finding after a short reconnoissance, that the fortified part of the encampment, extended across the isthmus from bank to bank, and that behind it, on the northern side of the

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river, lay a great number of canoes, evidently collected for the purpose of escape, (should flight become necessary,) Jackson's plan of attack was speedily formed. Detaching Coffee at the head of his elite, with orders to cross the river, occupy the southern bank of the bend, and make such demonstration on the rear of the Indian encampment as might be found practicable, he hastened to establish a battery on an eminence two hundred yards distant from the point of attack, on which he opened a brisk and well-directed cannonade. Finding, after an hour's experiment, that his cannon made little if any impression on the works; and being by this time assured, that Coffee had gained the position indicated by his orders, he directed that the breastwork should be stormed. The two leading corps assigned to the service were the 39th U. S. regiment commanded by Colonel Williams, and a body of militia under the direction of Colonel Bunch. The conduct of both corps was eminently gallant. Their movement, made under a shower of balls, was unflinching, and the breastwork soon reached, and quickly surmounted; when the Indian line, thus forced in front, was compelled to fly.

To the production of this result, Coffee's exertions were not wanting. Selecting, during the cannonade, a few expert swimmers to bring over a number of canoes which the enemy had left unguarded, he was enabled to detach a part of his force; who, promptly crossing the river, set fire to the village, and, in the moment of the storm, boldly advanced on the rear of the enemy; and thus essentially contributed to his

discomfiture. Still, the battle was not yet won ; availing themselves of the trees, logs, and brushwood, which covered much of the encampment, the savages continued the fight with great obstinacy ; and when driven from these, rallied again on the approach of night, under the high and projecting banks of the river. Of their dead, five hundred and fifty-seven were found on the field of battle.¹ “The general belief was, that not more than twenty, of the thousand warriors who fought on that day, escaped wounds or death ; and of women and children, two hundred and fifty were taken. Jackson’s loss was one hundred and six wounded, and twenty-five killed.” By this battle, the Creek war was essentially ended—and soon after followed by a treaty of peace, prescribed by the government.

¹ Jackson’s official report.

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CHAPTER III.

Project of a winter campaign.—Causes of its abandonment.—General Brown instructed to attack Kingston.—March of this officer to the west.—General Wilkinson's enterprise on La Cole Mills.—Holmes's invasion of Upper Canada.—Mitchell's defence of Oswego.—Appling's attack and capture of British boats, seamen, and marines, at Sandy Creek.—Expedition for the recapture of Michilimackinac.

SUSPECTING, early in October, from the lateness of the season, the inclemency of the weather, and the continued indisposition of the commanding General, that the campaign, then in progress, would terminate as it did—"with the disgrace of doing nothing, but without any material diminution of physical power"—the Secretary of War, then at Sackett's Harbor, hastened to direct Major-General Hampton to employ a brigade of militia attached to his command, in constructing as many huts as would be sufficient to cover an army of ten thousand men during the winter; at such places, within the limits of Canada, and not remote from our own boundary, as would best fulfil the intention of a cantonment, "chosen alike for purposes of offence and defence."

The advantages expected from the adoption of this measure were, 1st. The avoidance on our part, of any-

thing having the color of flight or defeat. 2d. The accomodation to the army of a speedy covering from the inclemency of the weather. 3d. The security of the frontier, now become the principal site of our magazines. 4th. An exemption from the espionage of the enemy, and a deliverance from the mischievous interference of our own magistrates, in the police of the camp; and 5th. The decided advantage, "of holding in a state of concentration, a corps of ten thousand combatants, prepared, the moment that snow and ice had sufficiently covered the roads and bridged the river and lake, to move rapidly in sleighs, on such point of the enemy's line of defence, as circumstances should make proper." These suggestions were well received and entirely approved by the President, and would have become the basis of a winter campaign in 1814, but for the blunders of McClure, the crimes of Leonard, and the disobedience of Wilkinson—the combined effects of which, as already stated, had so covered the western district of New York with misfortune and dismay, as, in the opinion of the President, made proper "a suspension of any operation on our part, not strictly defensive until the spring." In conformity to this opinion, Brown was detached from French Mills to Sackett's Harbor, for the better security of the fleet; Scott was designated for the command of a corps of demonstration and manœuvre on the Niagara; and Wilkinson, with the mass of the army, ordered to take post at Plattsburgh—a point which, in the event of a peace in Europe, was believed to be most likely to attract the enemy's notice in the spring.

No change was made in these dispositions till the latter end of February; when information was received, that, "from an ill-judged distribution made of the British regular force in Canada, Kingston, with the fleet and public stores, was much exposed to capture or destruction; the whole effective force of the garrison not exceeding twelve hundred men, and destitute of all prospect of increase till the month of June, when it was expected reinforcements would arrive from Europe." This information, coming from a source in all respects entitled to credit—presenting, as it did, an object of great interest to the United States, and detailing circumstances peculiarly favorable to a prompt and easy acquisition of it, could not be disregarded. An order was accordingly issued on the 28th of February, directing Major-General Brown "to strike at Kingston, with his whole disposable force, as speedily as possible; to put into exercise all proper means for inducing a belief, in friends and foes, that the recapture of Fort Niagara was the object of the expedition; and lastly, (the better to conceal his purpose,) that he should give to *the first steps of the movement, a direction on that post.*"¹ Unfortunately, circumstances had already occurred to prevent a compliance with this order. In the opinion of the military, as well as of the naval commander at Sackett's Harbor, the force assigned to the service (four thousand men) was incompetent; and that had this been otherwise, the doubtful condition of the ice on the lake, would, of itself, be

¹ Appendix No. 14.

sufficient to forbid the experiment. This opinion being decisive with the President, no new or additional order was given—when (to the surprise of all having any acquaintance with the subject) it was found, that the two commanders, by some extraordinary mental process, had arrived at the same conclusion—that the *main action* (an attack on Kingston) being impracticable, the *ruse* (intended merely to mask it) might do as well, and should be substituted for it—a belief, under which a column of two thousand men was actually put in motion for the Niagara.

Soon after the date of this transaction, Wilkinson, who during the winter had amused himself in projecting enterprises on the enemy's posts,¹ becoming impatient of farther inaction, and desirous of showing what he was able to do, if left to his own direction, began a march at the head of three thousand men on La Cole Mill—occupied by the enemy as an out-post, and ordinarily garrisoned by two companies of the line and a few Canadian militia. Driving before him such pickets and patrols as he found in his way, he, at three o'clock, P. M., of the 30th, reached his object of attack—when, finding that the vigilance of the garrison had secured it against surprise, and that the character of its commander² left no hope from a demand of surrender, he resorted to investment and assault. But to the latter, a breach in the wall was indispensable, as neither window, door, nor other aperture, was found on that side of the building which had been selected

¹ Appendix No. 15.

² Major Hancock.

for attack. Two twelve-pounders, and one 5½-inch mortar were accordingly, placed in battery; and such disposition made of the infantry, as, in the opinion of the General, would most effectually cover the cannon, prevent the escape of the garrison, and intercept any reinforcement sent to its aid from any neighboring post.¹ These measures taken, the battering experiment began, at the short distance of two hundred and fifty yards from its object; but though resolutely continued for two hours, not a stone of the house was dislodged by it; when an order was at last wisely given—"to withdraw the guns, collect the dead and wounded, and under cover of the night, return to Odle-town."

Another expedition, differing little from that of Wilkinson in date, and still less in the abortive character of its issue, was instituted by Colonel Butler, then commanding officer at Detroit. Having, in the last week of February, sufficiently digested his plan of operation, it but remained to designate the troops and the leader, to whom its execution should be committed. A few United States artillerists, two small detachments from the 24th and 28th regiments of infantry, one company of rangers, and a troop of militia dragoons, amounting to one hundred and eighty combatants, were accordingly detailed for the service, and placed under the direction of Captain Holmes, of the 24th; who soon after began his movement, with orders—"to enter Canada, march on Fort Talbot, and attack and destroy

¹ This arrangement must have been faulty. "The garrison was reinforced from time to time to the amount of 200 men."—*Chittie's War in the Canadas*,

such other military establishments of the enemy, as might fall in his way."

The first incidents of the march were not flattering. On reaching Point au Plat, the road between that place and Round O was found "so much encumbered by fallen timber and brushwood, and so intersected by swamps, as rendered the passage of artillery quite impracticable." At this point, therefore, Holmes was compelled to abandon his cannon, and with them, all prospect of reducing Fort Talbot, unless this could be effected by surprise. But of this last hope, he was soon deprived—for, on reaching Round O, he found that his advanced guard had already fallen in with a party of Canadian militia, who had no doubt returned directly to the fort, with the news of another invasion. Under these circumstances, Holmes immediately changed the direction of his march, and pressed vigorously forward to the attack of Delaware—a military position taken by the enemy on the Thames—which, as was supposed, might yet be unapprized of his approach. When arrived within fifteen miles of his object, he was informed by a person, not unfriendly to the United States, that "the fact of his approach was already known to Captain Stewart, the commandant of the post, who, to meet it, had collected a considerable force; which, if he (Holmes) pursued his march on the Delaware road, he would, in all probability, soon encounter."

Though far from intending to balk the enemy's purpose, by avoiding a meeting, Holmes saw the impropriety of risking one on ground of which he knew nothing; as must have been the case, had he adhered

to the road on which he had been marching. His determination was therefore promptly and wisely taken, to fall back to Twenty-Mile creek, where, if he found a position at all accommodated to his arms and numbers, he would await the attack, and try the prowess of his enemy. In pursuance of this intention, he began his retrograde movement, leaving behind him a part of the rangers to cover his rear, and retard, as far as might be possible, the progress of the British detachment. By this arrangement, he had barely gained time to reach the creek, and select a position on its western bank, when the covering party, left in his rear, was rapidly driven in by the head of the enemy's column.

What remained of the day, was well employed by the American commander. An order of encampment and battle, of square formation, was quickly adopted, and a portion of the troops assigned to the defence of its several fronts; while the weaker points of the position were hastily strengthened, by logs piled on each other and faced with brushwood. No material occurrence happening during the night, a few small parties of the enemy were seen at daybreak, on the opposite bank of the creek; who, after a short time, suddenly disappeared—a circumstance exciting in Holmes a suspicion, that this display of feebleness made part of a *ruse* intended to draw him into a pursuit. To test the correctness of this conjecture, a small reconnoitring party was sent to examine the ground the enemy had occupied during the night, and ascertain the road by which he had retreated. This service was soon and

carefully performed, and report made that "judging from his trail and his fires, the number of the enemy did not exceed sixty or seventy men; and from the articles of baggage left in his camp and on the road, it was fair to infer, that his retreat had been made with great precipitation."

On receiving this information, Holmes at once renounced his suspicion of a *ruse*, believed he had been deceived with regard to the strength of the British detachment, felt great mortification at having retrograded before so small a party, and determined to pursue it promptly and rapidly. An hour's march was however sufficient, to put an end to these feelings and opinions; as within that short period, he found the enemy in order of battle, judiciously posted, and patiently waiting the success of his stratagem. It will be readily imagined, that Holmes's great anxiety now was, to regain the position he had left; and in doing so, to dupe his adversary into a determination to follow and to fight him, wherever he might be found. Nor did this project fail: Captain Badson, the British commandant, seeing in the movement marks only of flight, and believing this to be the effect of terror, and a settled design on the part of his adversary to avoid a battle, followed the retreating corps rapidly, and on reaching the creek made dispositions for immediately attacking it. Throwing forward his militia and Indians on the northern and western fronts of the camp, he put himself at the head of his regular force, and in column of sections, ascended the eastern bank steadily and gallantly, till within fifteen or twenty paces of its summit; when,

from the destructive fire poured upon it by the detachments of the 24th and 28th, the column broke into squads, and took refuge behind trees and underwood; whence they kept up a faint and irregular fire, till night furnished them with a covering for a general retreat.

Such was the end of the combat and, we may add, of the expedition; which, though effecting no object for which it was projected, furnished evidence in its executive details, of useful talent and increasing knowledge. Of the project itself, it may be enough to say—that, having a worthless object and inadequate means, it ought not to have been adopted. For of what importance to the United States would have been the capture or destruction of a block-house, in the heart of the enemy's country, more than one hundred miles distant from our own frontier; and which, if held, would have been difficult to sustain, and if destroyed, easily reinstated?

These occurrences on the Thames were soon followed by two defences made on the southern shore of Lake Ontario; which, as well in plan as execution, were highly creditable to the national arms. Informed, on the 25th of April, that the enemy's whole fleet lay moored off Kingston, "with all sails bent and top-gallant yards across," it was not unwisely conjectured, that the object of the movement which these circumstances indicated, was the capture or destruction of a quantity of naval stores, which had been deposited at the falls of Oswego. To meet a contingency of this kind, so formidable to our naval prospects, General

Brown, then accidentally at Sackett's Harbor, immediately detached four companies of heavy, and one of light artillery serving as infantry, under the command of Colonel Mitchell, with orders "to occupy and defend the old fort at the mouth of the river, (if attacked by the fleet or otherwise,) so long as would be consistent with the more important duty of covering the naval stores collected at the falls." In obedience to these orders, Mitchell began his march, and on the 30th of April arrived at Oswego.

Finding the fort in no condition for defence; with a stockade much broken and decayed, and five rusty iron guns, (two of which had lost their trunnions, and all without sufficient carriages,) the colonel had barely time to supply some of these defects; when, on the morning of the 5th of May, the British fleet, consisting of four ships, three brigs, and a number of gun and other boats, appeared off the harbor. At one o'clock, P. M., the larger vessels took a position for battering the fort, and soon after, opened upon it a heavy fire; while fifteen boats, crowded with infantry, moved slowly to the shore. When arrived within the range of Mitchell's shot, a fire upon them was commenced, which in a few minutes compelled them to withdraw. A second attempt, made in the same way, was not more successful; when ships, boats, and troops, retired in mass, and stood out of the harbor, for better anchorage. At daybreak of the 6th, they were again seen bearing up under easy sail, when the Wolfe and two other ships, anchored directly in front of the fort; and, for three hours in succession, poured upon it a incessant shower

of balls, grape, and canister; under cover of which, the debarking boats reached the shore and landed the troops. Colonel Mitchell, sensible that the fort was no longer tenable with his feeble force, and that any farther attempt to defend it would jeopard the naval depot at the falls, determined, in the spirit of his orders, to retire upon that point, and avail himself of the defiles it presented. Nor was this determination executed with less coolness and courage, than it was formed—every foot of ground being well contested with the head of the British column, for half an hour; after which, no farther annoyance was given to the retreat. In the morning of the 7th, having collected the small booty afforded by the post, and burnt the barracks, the fleet and army of the enemy abandoned the enterprise, and returned to Kingston.¹

The second defence alluded to, was the achievement of a small detachment of the 1st U. S. rifle regiment, (not exceeding in number one hundred and thirty-two men,) commanded by Major Appling, and serving as the escort of thirteen boats, laden with naval stores, while on their passage from Oswego to Sackett's Harbor. After a night of hard labor, the boats and their escort arrived at the mouth of Sandy creek; and were about ascending that stream, when they were discovered and pursued by two gun-boats and five barges,

¹ British force—seven sail of armed vessels and a few gun-boats, 6 companies of regular infantry, 1 company of rocket-men—1 battalion of marines, with detachments of artillerymen, sappers and miners. Loss, by the enemy's own statement, 90 men: that of Mitchell's corps—69.

detached from the British fleet (then blockading Sackett's Harbor) expressly for the purpose of watching and intercepting them. To take from the chase all possibility of escape, the pursuing force was divided—part proceeding by water, and part by land. When arrived within view of their object, a brisk fire, from the gun-boats, opened upon it. Appling, in the meantime, was not idle—anticipating the mode of the enemy's attack, he took a covered position, until they had nearly approached him; when, rising from his ambush, he met the pursuers with a fire so destructive, that, in ten minutes, the whole British party, boats, barges, marines, and seamen, fell into his hands, without the loss of a single man of his party.¹

An expedition having for its objects the seizure and occupancy of a new post, said to be established by the enemy at Matchadash, and the recapture of Michilimackinac, was organized early in April; but from a discrepancy in the opinions of the cabinet, on the policy of the measure,¹ its actual prosecution did not begin till the 3d of July. On that day, a detachment composed of regular troops and militia, under the command of Colonel Croghan, was embarked on board of the fleet; which soon after sailed from Detroit for Matchadash. Meeting, however, with many unexpected impediments, "arising from shoals, sunken

¹ The loss of the enemy in this affair was, 1 midshipman and 14 seamen and marines killed, 26 wounded, and 345 captured. Among the latter, were Captains Popham and Spilsburg, four lieutenants, and two midshipmen.

² Appendix, No. 16.

rocks, dangerous islands, perpetual fogs, and bad pilotage," this first object of the enterprise was abandoned as unattainable; and that, presented by the trading establishment at St. Joseph's, substituted in its stead. Arriving at this post on the 20th, and finding only a deserted block-house, and all public property removed to St. Mary's, a party made up of soldiers and seamen, commanded by Captain Holmes of the army, and Lieutenant Turner of the navy, was despatched thither, with orders "to capture the place, and destroy such stores, as could not conveniently be brought away." This service being soon and successfully performed, the fleet sailed for Michilimackinac, and on the 26th, anchored off that island.

After a short reconnoissance, and a few experiments, three discoveries, altogether unlooked for, were made: 1st, that, from the great elevation of the fort, its walls could not be battered by the guns of the shipping; 2d, that, from the steepness of the ascent, any attempt to carry the fort by storm would probably fail; and 3d, that, should this mode of attack succeed, it would be useless, "inasmuch as every foot of its interior was commanded by guns, placed on higher ground." These facts leaving no hope of success, but from an attack of the upper battery, the troops were landed on the 4th of August, and conducted to the verge of an old field; indicated by the inhabitants as the position which would best fulfil the intention of the movement—when, to Croghan's surprise, he found himself anticipated by the enemy; and in a few minutes assailed in front, from a redan mounting four pieces of artillery; and

in flank, by one or more Indian attacks, made from the surrounding woods. Succeeding, at last, in repulsing these, and in driving the enemy from the cleared ground, it was soon discovered, that "the position contended for, was not such as was at all proper, for a camp of either siege or investment," being of narrow surface, skirted in its whole circumference by woods, intersected by deep ravines, and furnishing only a difficult and perilous communication with the fleet—Croghan, at once and wisely, withdrew to the lake shore, and re-embarked the troops. Our loss on this occasion was not great, numerically considered; but became deeply interesting, by the fall of Captain Holmes—a young man of high promise, universally respected and regretted.

Having thus failed in attaining the leading objects of the expedition, the farther operations of the armament were directed on a trading establishment, near the mouth of the Nautauwasaga; a river that, in connexion with Lake Simcoe, furnishes the most convenient, if not the only practicable communication between York and the more western British posts. Arriving at the mouth of the river on the 13th of August, and being informed that the schooner Nancy (laden with clothing and subsistence for the garrison of Michilimackinac) had been carried two miles up the stream, Captain Sinclair, after debarking the troops, placed himself within battering distance of the schooner; but "finding his sight often obscured, and his shot much intercepted by sand-hills and trees," he hastened to establish a land-battery—a shell from which, ex-

ploding within the block-house, set fire to the magazine and schooner, and destroyed both.

The distance from Nautauwasaga to York being short, and the road between the two not easily obstructed, it was thought dangerous to leave a garrison at the former, during the winter. The mass of the armament, naval and military, was accordingly withdrawn to Detroit—leaving behind it the Tygress and Scorpion, with orders “to blockade the mouth of the river, so long as the navigation of the lake rendered that measure practicable.” Unfortunately, the commanders of these vessels were either less attentive to their duty, or the enemy’s force much underrated—as the first named of the two, was speedily taken, and, in a day or two after, became the means of capturing the other.

REMARKS. It rarely happens that, in even ill-judged military projects, nothing worthy of approbation can be found: yet such was the case, in the last labor of General Wilkinson—object, time, means, and their employment—all were wrong.

1st. The capture or destruction of an outpost, which, from local position, gave no power of obstructing the approach of the enemy upon us, nor of facilitating any movement on our part upon him, was evidently too unimportant to justify the risk of life and character for the attainment of it; and the more so, as the object was attainable, without risk of any kind, by a little manœuvring. For had the General, availing himself of the ice-bound condition of the river, moved a fortnight earlier, and made a vigorous demonstration on the Isle aux Noix,

while accessible on all points to attack, its commander would no doubt, in conformity to military rules and usages, have recalled his outposts to the defence of his principal position; in which case, a single company would have been competent to the capture or destruction of La Cole Mill.

2d. A vernal thaw of three days in succession—breaking up roads, and rendering them impracticable to heavy artillery, and inconvenient to infantry—was not less objectionable than the object aimed at; and was, of itself, sufficiently important to have caused a suspension of the expedition.

3d. The guns, with which the enterprise was hazarded, were incompetent to breach stone walls—a fact abundantly established by the war of the revolution, which the General should not have forgotten; and which, if he remembered, should have governed his conduct.

4th. It is no small reproach to an officer, that he cannot be made wiser by the experience of others; but how greatly is the reproach aggravated, when he continues to be ignorant, in despite of his own? In the present case, a whole hour's useless firing was not sufficient to show him the inadequacy of his battery; nor was it till after the expiration of a second hour, as uselessly and injuriously employed as the first, that an order was given to withdraw the guns, and retire to Odletown.

5th. How extraordinary that it should not have occurred to the General, that a few *hot shot*, applied to a *wooden roof*, would be more likely to bring an

enemy to terms, than ten times the number of *cold ones*, directed on a *stone wall*? Yet at no time previous to the march of the army, did this idea present itself to his mind; and hence it was, that, in the preparations made for the attack, furnaces for heating shot were entirely forgotten.

6th. Was it to be expected, that a veteran of forty years' service, should not, previously to beginning his movement, have taken measures for reconnoitring the object of his intended attack? And the more so, as this preliminary duty had been not merely suggested, but expressly enjoined, by the council of war, to whom he had submitted his project.¹ Had this obvious and stipulated service been carefully performed, one of two consequences would have followed—an immediate abandonment of the enterprise; or such a knowledge acquired of the mill, its approaches and dependancies, as could not fail to suggest a different and more successful mode of operating against it. In either case, many lives would have been saved, and an army of more than *three thousand* gallant men, spared the discredit of having been foiled by a paltry outpost.

7th. The reader will have perceived from the preceding details, that the project for recapturing Michilimackinac, and breaking up a new establishment said

¹ By Macomb's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, we find that the project had been submitted to a council of war, who gave it their sanction, "*provided that, previously to the movement, the avenues to the mill should be carefully reconnoitred;*" a condition either entirely disregarded, or carelessly executed, by the General; as the same testimony shows that even the route leading to the mill was unknown to the officer at the head of the column.

to have been made by the enemy at Matchadash, was alike unsuccessful and injudicious; unsuccessful, inasmuch as it failed to accomplish either part of the plan; and injudicious, from the subordinate character of its objects, and the inadequacy of its means. It cannot, however, be denied, that before the declaration of war, and so long after its commencement, as the enemy possessed a decided ascendancy on the western lakes, Michilimackinac had, from local position, a value not unimportant to the United States—that of *restraining Indian hostility, by supplying Indian wants*. But neither can it be forgotten, that this value was much lessened, if not entirely lost, by Perry's victory and Proctor's defeat; two events which, besides restoring to us the possession of Detroit, expelling the enemy from Malden, and wresting from him the command of the lakes, virtually terminated the Indian war on that frontier; and thus reduced Michilimackinac to the worthless condition of an isolated post, having no influence, direct or indirect, on the issue of the war. But again: had this been otherwise, and the acquisition of the points designated for attack been important, the means employed fell short of their purpose; as may be fairly inferred from the facts, that Matchadash could not be four.¹ from a want of competent pilotage; that Fort Michilimackinac, from its unexpected elevation, was unassailable by either the guns of the shipping, or the bayonets of the infantry;² and lastly, that Nautauwasaga, from its proximity to York,

¹ Croghan's official report.

² Idem.

was considered too difficult to hold.¹ Had Croghan therefore been left with his two battalions, as originally intended, to make part of Brown's division, they would have been usefully employed; while Sinclair, with the naval part of the armament, would have captured Fort William, and returned laden with furs, if not with laurels.²

¹ Plan of campaign.

² Sinclair's report of the 30th of August.

CHAPTER IV.

Campaign on the Niagara.—Means employed to sustain the movement.—Retreat from Canada.—Army placed in winter quarters.—Prevost's march on Plattsburgh.—Battle on Lake Champlain.—Defeat and capture of the British fleet.—Prevost's retreat to Canada.

THOUGH a general plan of operation for the northern army had been settled early in June¹ two causes prevented its being acted upon in extenso—the one, a total failure in getting together by militia calls and volunteer overtures, a force deemed competent to a campaign of demonstration and manœuvre, on the peninsula;² the other, an apprehension that the fleet (which had been long inactive) would not yet be found in condition to sustain projects, requiring from it a vigorous co-operation with the army.

Fortunately, Brown's movement from Sackett's Harbor to the west, though as we have seen a cause of both surprise and regret at the time of its occurrence,

¹ Appendix No. 17.

² The object of this was, by manœuvring on his peninsular posts to make necessary detachments from Kingston and Montreal, for their preservation; and thus expose to attack and capture one or both of these vital points.

did much to remove the former of these impediments ; while assurances from Chauncey, that he would " sail with his whole force, on or before the 1st of July,"¹ so far abated the latter, as justified a march of experiment on the line of the Niagara. General Brown was accordingly instructed " to cross the river, capture Fort Erie, march on Chippewa, risk a combat, menace Fort George, and *if assured of the ascendancy and co-operation of the fleet*, to seize and fortify Burlington Heights, &c.

Acting on these suggestions and dividing the scanty means given him for transportation between the two brigades, the commanding General, on the 2d of July, issued an order, that these corps should cross the strait in the night ; and on reaching the Canada shore, take such position (the one above and the other below Fort Erie) as would most effectually prevent the escape of the garrison. So much of this order as applied to Scott's brigade, was well and promptly executed—that officer having occupied the ground assigned to him before midnight. Ripley's movement was made more slowly, and not without some degree of reluctance and even remonstrance ;² nor was it till six or seven o'clock in the morning, that the second brigade was seen on

¹ " Chauncey writes with confidence of acting on or before the 1st of July. Brown and Izzard ought to receive the stimulus of this information."—*President's note of June, —th., to the Secretary of War.* Why stimulate Brown and Izzard, if the fleet was destined to pursue objects exclusively its own ? Or in other words, if a direct co-operation of both arms had not been the basis of the general plan of campaign !

² Appendix No. 18.

the Canada side of the river. Means, notwithstanding, were found to complete the intended investment and begin the erection of batteries, when the British commandant, with scarcely a show of resistance, deemed it prudent to surrender himself, his garrison, and his fortress, at discretion.¹

The fort being placed in the custody of a small detachment, and the prisoners disposed of, General Scott was ordered to move early on the 4th, with the first brigade, Towson's company of artillery, and Harris's troop of dragoons, in the direction of Chippewa, for the purpose of securing the bridge over the creek of that name, before the enemy had time to fortify or destroy it. After a short march in the prescribed direction, the enemy's elite was found posted at different points on the road, but without seriously annoying the movement, till the head of the column had reached the plain beyond Street's creek, when a charge of some vivacity, made by the 19th British dragoons, was gallantly repelled by a single company of United States infantry—thus furnishing a new proof of the decided superiority of the musket and bayonet over the sabre.²

It being now late in the day, the second brigade not yet arrived, and the enemy found strongly posted in defence of the bridge, the brigadier took a well selected position for the night; where, about eleven o'clock, P. M.,

¹ "The captured garrison consisted of 1 major, 5 subalterns, and 120 rank and file."

² The infantry was commanded by Captain Crocker. "I have never seen anything more gallant in partisan war, than was the conduct of this officer and his company."—*General Scott's report of the 15th July, 1814.*

he was joined by the commanding General and the remainder of the troops. The hostile armies being now but about one mile and a half apart, their pickets were found, soon after daybreak, briskly engaged in skirmishing—a mode of warfare little adapted to Brown's views, and one he was desirous of terminating in a way which should prevent his adversary from making a second experiment of it. To this end, while he directed his out-lying guards to feign a flight, and thus draw those of the enemy into a pursuit, he detached Brigadier Porter, of the New York militia, with a light corps, "to march rapidly under cover of an adjoining wood, and throw himself between the British skirmishing party and their main body." In executing this order, Porter fell in with an outpost, or patrol of the enemy, which, after a combat of short duration, he routed, and was actively pursuing, when, on debouching from the wood, he unexpectedly found himself in the presence of a heavy British column. We need scarcely add, that his retreat was necessarily sudden and rapid, and not discontinued till he reached the American camp.¹

Though the intended manœuvre thus failed to produce the effect expected from it, it fortunately became the cause of another, of a character much more important—that of drawing the British General and army from their fortified camp. Alarmed by the firing

¹ "By this time, General Porter's command had given way, and fled in every direction, notwithstanding his personal gallantry and great exertion to stay their flight."—*General Brown's report of the 7th July, 1814.*

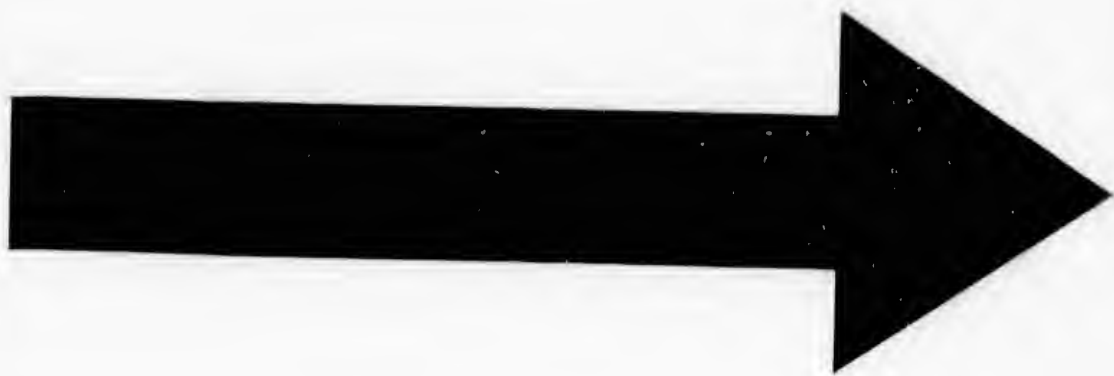
on his right for the safety of his out-lying party, and suspecting that Brown, while amusing him with a *petite guerre* in his front, really meditated an attack on his flank, Rial hastened to assemble his whole disposable force, and take a position on the plain, which would better enable him to sustain his outposts, and hold in check any formidable movement attempted by his adversary. The execution of this purpose did not escape the notice of the American General, who quickly seized the occasion it offered for bringing his enemy to battle on open ground, where, it was justly concluded, he would be more easily beaten, than if posted behind his entrenchments. Scott was accordingly ordered to cross the bridge in his front, and, with his brigade and Towson's artillery, attack Rial's left—while Ripley, with the second brigade and Hindman's artillery, should assail his right and rear.

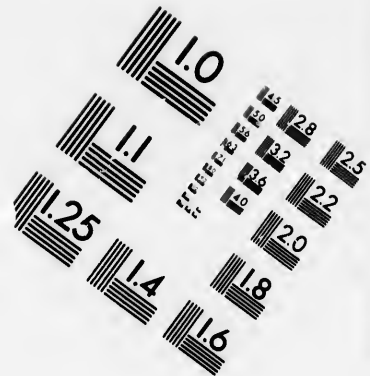
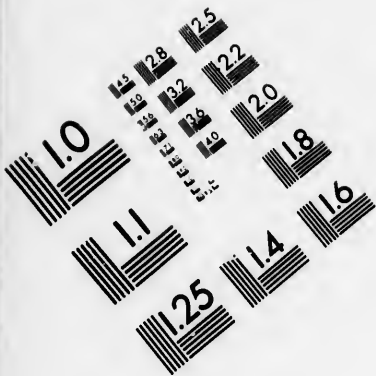
The former of these corps being already under arms, in the exercise of its customary drill, was soon in motion; when its commander, suspecting from the detour necessary to Ripley's movement, that the two attacks could not be made simultaneously, and inferring, from the extended front of the enemy, that the first brigade would be greatly outflanked, promptly ordered Major Jesup, commanding the 25th regiment, to throw himself forward, and give such employment to Rial's right, as would prevent it from disturbing the attack about to be made on his left. This order was quickly executed, and the 25th placed at the short distance of one hundred yards from the British elite; which had, in the meantime, been careful to cover its front with a log

fence. The action soon after commenced in parallel order, and was maintained with much steadiness on both sides; when Jesup, perceiving from the fire of his covered enemy in front, and his great liability to a flank attack, from a body of Indians and Canadian militia collected on his left, that the position he had taken would not long be tenable, gallantly determined to try the effect of the bayonet. A charge was accordingly ordered, and executed with its usual success: as the enemy, declining to receive it, abandoned the position and fled in disorder.

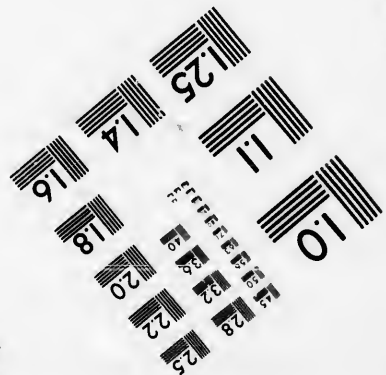
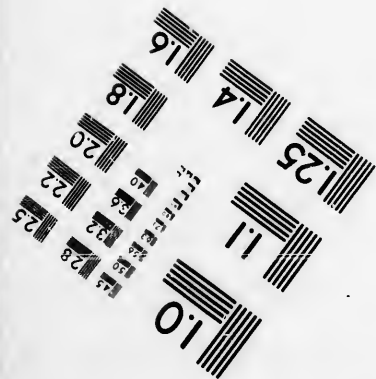
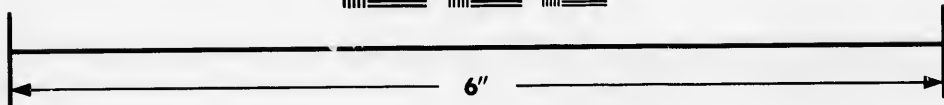
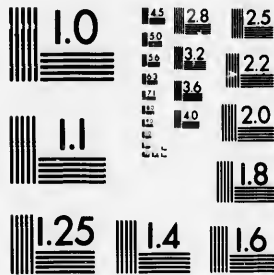
The major being now in condition to take part in the main action, (yet warmly contested,) hastened to place his regiment across the uncovered flank of what remained of Rial's line; and, by an oblique fire on both its front and rear, was soon enabled to put another portion of it to flight. It was at the moment of this occurrence, that the commanding General arrived on the field, bringing with him assurances of speedy support from the second brigade—a circumstance not even now unwelcome, but of greatly diminished interest to the gallant men of the first, inasmuch as a flank movement, then making by the 9th, under the direction of Major McNeil, combined with Scott's pressure in front, was sufficient to terminate the battle, and compel the enemy to withdraw behind his entrenchments.

The wounded being removed, and the dead buried, the whole of the 6th was employed in reconnoitring the adjacent country, and in ascertaining the practicability of attacking, or of turning, the right flank of Rial's position. The result of this reconnoissance was





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the discovery of a road formerly opened, but now dis-used, leading from Street's creek to the junction of Lyon's creek with the Chippewa—which, in the opinion of Majors McCrea and Wood, could, in a short time, and with a small degree of labor, be made sufficient for either purpose. A fatigue party was accordingly detailed, and the road made practicable to wagons and artillery, in the course of the day.

Early on the 8th, the second brigade and Porter's corps, with two companies of artillery, were ordered to march by this new route, cross the Chippewa, and attack the right of the enemy's position; while Scott, with the first brigade and what remained of the artillery, should hold in check its left. Ripley, anticipating much difficulty in the service assigned to him, was somewhat tardy in executing it; when the commanding General, becoming impatient of delay, hastened to the head of the column, and took on himself the direction of the movement.¹ Arrangements were now made for the construction of a bridge over the creek, and sites chosen for batteries, which would entirely command the passage and opposite bank; when the British General, alarmed at the rapid progress of an operation, menacing at once his camp and his communications, destroyed his heavy artillery, abandoned his entrenchments, retreated rapidly on Queenstown, and, after throwing a part of his force into Fort George, took post with the remainder on Twenty-Mile creek.

There being no longer any impediment from the en-

¹ Gen. Jesup's MSS. memoir of the campaign.

emy in marching to the head of Lake Ontario, where, according to the plan of campaign, it was expected Chauncey and the fleet would be found on the 15th of July, (unless previously crippled or beaten,) Brown hastened to the vicinity of Fort George; as well to ascertain the number, location, and character, of the new and exterior defences given to that fortress, as to avail himself promptly of naval co-operation, should the fleet have succeeded in fulfilling the views of the government. Having, on the 22d, sufficiently informed himself in relation to the former, and being entirely disappointed with regard to the latter, he, on that day, began a retrograde movement to Chippewa;¹ where, about mid-day of the 25th, he received information that "Drummond, with reinforcements drawn from York, Burlington, and Kingston, had arrived in the night of the 24th at Fort George; that four sail of the British fleet were then in the harbor, and that a number of boats, filled with troops and probably destined to Schlosser, for the capture or destruction of the military stores collected at that post, were fast approaching Lewistown."²

Intelligence like this, stating a movement on the part of the enemy, so probable in itself, so favorable to him, so menacing to us, and so entirely out of Brown's power to interrupt directly, could not fail to disquiet that officer—who, notwithstanding, lost no time in

¹ A measure made indispensable from a want of means to draw supplies from the Genesee, (as intended,) by the absence of the fleet.

² His information was given by General Swift, of the New York militia, who, for purposes of observation, had been sent to Lewistown

adopting the only measure of counteraction left him—that of a rapid march on the enemy's posts, in the hope that to secure these, he would promptly recall the detachment sent, as was conjectured, against Schlosser.

It was in executing this measure, that Scott, to whom the service was assigned, after a short march of two miles, discovered a party of British infantry near the great falls, which fell back slowly on his approach. On reaching Wilson's inn, the brigadier was farther informed, that "Rial lay directly in his front, and was but separated from him by a narrow wood, intending (as was reported) to attack Brown's camp at daybreak the ensuing morning." A messenger being despatched to headquarters with this information, Scott, from the urgency of the case which had put him in motion, and the spirit of the orders given him, concluded that it was his duty to attack the enemy immediately, without waiting the arrival of the second brigade; and, accordingly, after detaching Major Jesup with the 25th regiment to cover his right, he pushed vigorously forward through the wood, in his front, with the 9th, 10th, and 22d regiments, supported by Towson's artillery; and was soon engaged in a conflict, equally obstinate and sanguinary, which continued for an hour with little, if any remission, and no decided advantage on either side.

During this interesting period, Jesup was not unemployed. Finding a road leading to the enemy's position, which they had either not seen or neglected to occupy, he lost no time in availing himself of it; and, in a few minutes, was able to place himself on the left

flank of the British line, composed altogether of Canadian volunteers and militia, whom he immediately routed. In the pursuit which followed, several prisoners were made, by whom the major was informed, that "Drummond was fast advancing from Queenstown with a strong reinforcement, and could not now be far distant." Under this new circumstance, Jesup boldly determined to seize the road, and hold Drummond in check, till the brigades of Ripley and Porter could be brought into action; nor had he been long in his new position, when Major-General Rial, with a large suite, fell into his hands. It being now dark, the firing in his front greatly abated, himself entirely uninformed of the position and views of the commanding General, and much encumbered with prisoners, he pressed cautiously forward, and in a short time was able to place himself on the right of Ripley's brigade.

During the early part of these occurrences, General Brown, apprized by the weight and continuity of the firing in his front, that the first brigade had encountered a force much more formidable than that of an ordinary picket or patrol, gave orders that the second, with Hindman's artillery and Porter's volunteers, should immediately move to its support. After which, setting out promptly himself, he joined General Scott; and finding, on his arrival, that the ranks of this officer had been greatly thinned by the preceding action, and that such part of the corps as had escaped wounds and death was much exhausted by fatigue, he left it for the moment where he found it, and hastened forward with Majors McCrea and Wood to reconnoitre the enemy,

and select ground for the interposition of the advancing corps. In performing this service the attention of all was speedily attracted by the site given to the British artillery; which, from its greater elevation and other circumstances, gave it a complete command of the field of battle, and drew from the senior engineer¹ a decided opinion, that "to gain the victory, the first thing to be done was to storm the British battery." The commanding General, entirely coinciding in the opinion, hastened to meet the advancing corps, and on doing so, directed Colonel Miller to put himself at the head of the 21st regiment, and make the charge.² We need scarcely add, that the order was executed with the characteristic alacrity and boldness of the veteran to whom it was given.

Still, however decisive the appearance of the achievement at first view, it was soon discovered that, in fact, it was but the signal for renewing the sanguinary conflict already noticed. Stimulated to new efforts by the arrival of large and successive reinforcements, several bold and vigorous attempts were made by Drummond to recover the guns and the ground he had lost; but in neither of these could he succeed—all were repulsed by the well-directed fire and steady charges of the American line;³ which, after the first

¹ Major McCrea. ² Appendix No. 19, Miller's letter to Brown.

³ After Miller's capture of the enemy's cannon, Scott, and the remains of his brigade and Porter's volunteers, were brought into line for their defence—the former on the right, the latter on the left. During the remainder of the contest, two charges of gallant character were made on the enemy's left flank by Scott; in the last of

or second repulse of the enemy, had been increased by the shattered remains of Scott's brigade and Porter's volunteers: when, at last, the enemy, deprived as well of the example as the direction of their gallant leader,¹ and losing all hope of effecting their object by any new effort of their now diminished force, withdrew from the field; leaving behind them, their dead, their wounded, and the nine pieces of artillery, for the recovery of which, they had dared so much and bled so freely.

Nor, though gladdened by a victory over a force, numerically much superior to their own, was the condition of the United States army, in other respects, as eligible as could have been desired. It was now midnight—the moon had been long obscured—all was darkness—much of their morning strength lay killed or wounded on the plain—an hour had passed without any attempt on the part of the enemy to renew the contest—all believed that the struggle was at an end, and the proud feeling which had hitherto sustained the assailants, was fast subsiding into mere corporeal sensations—a desire of rest, inseparable from over-action, and a tormenting thirst, which could only be assuaged by a change of place. To refresh these gallant and nearly exhausted men, became, therefore, a primary and important duty; which the commanding General, who (though severely wounded) still kept the field, hastened to discharge. An order was accordingly issued, devolving the command on Brigadier Ripley, and au-

which, he received the two wounds which compelled him to leave the field.

¹ General Drummond, the British commander-in-chief.

thorizing "a speedy return of the army to its camp, with such of the killed and wounded as could be collected, and (if possible) with the cannon captured from the enemy." What of this order was practicable, was executed. The army was promptly withdrawn, and a part of the killed and wounded brought off, but, from *a want of horses, harness, and drag-ropes*, the captured guns were left behind.¹

When, on the arrival of the troops at Chippewa, the lastmentioned fact was reported to General Brown, he immediately directed Ripley to refresh the men, assemble the whole force that the camp could furnish, occupy at daybreak the position he had left, bury the dead, and bring with him the captured guns. From some cause not well explained, the movement thus ordered did not begin till after sunrise,² and was soon discontinued, in consequence of information received by the brigadier, that "the enemy was already in possession of the heights and the cannon."³ After a short halt, the division returned to Chippewa, and were now actively employed in converting the works recently thrown up by the enemy, into defences against him—when a report was circulated by a nameless volunteer, that "Drummond, at the head of a heavy British column, was fast approaching the American camp." Unfortunately, this report, though coming, as we have

¹ Colonel Jones's sketch of the campaign. ² *Idem*.

³ From a statement made by Major Hindman, commanding the artillery of the division, it would appear that the enemy (probably receiving another reinforcement) repossessed himself of the guns and the position, soon after Ripley left them.

seen, without any sufficient authority, and wholly unfounded in truth, was taken for granted; the camp hastily raised, a strong position abandoned, and a retreat, of very equivocal character, made to the ferry opposite Black Rock.¹ From this point, it was General Ripley's intention to have immediately crossed the strait, and placed the division within the limits of the United States; but finding his purpose strongly opposed by McCrea and Wood, whom he consulted on the subject, he hastened to Buffalo, in the hope of obtaining General Brown's approbation of the measure. In this, he signally failed; the proposition, so far from being favorably received, was severely rebuked, and written orders promptly issued, that "the division should remain at Fort Erie; and if attacked, defend that point strenuously—that the engineers, McCrea and Wood, should immediately employ themselves in repairing the old, and making such new defences as would be practicable; and lastly, that Brigadier-General Gaines should, without delay, repair to Fort Erie, and take command of the division and post."²

The forward movement ascribed to Drummond on the 27th of July, and which, as we have seen, caused Ripley's hasty and ill-judged retreat from Chippewa, was not made till the 3d of August. Arriving on that day in the neighborhood of Fort Erie, and having ascertained that his adversary's camp was sufficiently

¹ General Jesup's memoir of the campaign.

² General Brown's memoir of the campaign. The appointment of Gaines was a consequence of the wounds received by Generals Brown and Scott.

secured against a coup de main, he found himself compelled to resort to the slower processes of investment and siege. For this disappointment, however, he was not a little consoled by information, that Brown's magazines, formerly established at Schlosser, had been recently transferred to Buffalo; where they would be found without defence, excepting such as might be expected from the militia of the town. Not to lose a moment in availing himself of a circumstance so favorable to his views, he immediately despatched Colonel Tucker of the 41st regiment, and a corps of twelve hundred combatants, with orders "to ascend the Niagara, land in the night on its southern bank, and, at daybreak of the 4th, strike at the depot."

Fortunately, General Brown anticipating a contingency of this kind, had, on the 2d, withdrawn Major Morgan, and a battalion of riflemen, from Fort Erie to Black Rock, with orders to "watch all water movements made by the enemy up the Niagara; and should any take place in force, having a direction indicating an attack on the public stores, he should instantly abandon his post, and take such new position between the enemy and the town, as, in his judgement, would best enable him to defend the latter." In the discharge of this duty, Morgan was his own sentinel, and descrying, on the 3d, twenty-three boats ascending the river, filled with British troops, he had no longer a doubt, that Buffalo, and the public stores, were their objects; and accordingly, quitting Black Rock, hastened to select a new position, conformed to the orders he had received. Such was soon found on the western

bank of Conajocta creek; where he had barely time to break down the bridge over which he had passed, and put into line a number of logs found on the bank, when, at four o'clock in the morning, he was apprized by his pickets, that the enemy was fast advancing upon him.

Finding the creek unfordable, and the bridge demolished, Tucker's first attempt was to re-establish the latter, under the fire of a strong advance guard, thrown forward on the right and left of his pioneer party; but soon discovering that the experiment was a losing one, the project was abandoned, and both guard and pioneers drawn back to a position in the rear; whence the combat was continued at long shot for nearly an hour. This pause, as it may be called, in the action (for little execution was done by it on either side) gave Tucker time to recollect, that a post he was unable to carry by direct attack, might notwithstanding be successfully turned. A flank movement, with this view, and in considerable force, was accordingly made by his left, and a ford unexpectedly found, but so covered by the fire of sixty rifles, which Morgan had wisely detached for the purpose, that the head of the column speedily recoiled, and soon after fell back on the main body. Having thus failed in both attempts to cross the creek, the British commander was readily brought to the conclusion, that, to avoid greater evils, it became his duty to retreat to his boats, and repass the river as speedily as possible.

In a second enterprise, not dissimilar in object from the preceding, Drummond was more successful. Ap-

prized that three small vessels, making part of the Erie fleet, and employed in covering the communication between the fort and its magazines, now lay at anchor in the mouth of the lake, he, in the night of the 12th, despatched Captain Dobbs of the navy, with a number of boats strongly manned, to attack and carry them. The assailants being mistaken for provision boats, coming from Buffalo to the fort, were permitted to drift on the hawsers of the Ohio and Somers, cut their cables, mount their decks, capture their crews, and carry off the vessels.¹ The Porcupine, by an accident not detailed by either party, escaped capture.

It was now the 12th of August; Drummond's preparatory measures, as well defensive as offensive, being finished, his trenches opened, his batteries established, and his covering camp fortified, he, in the morning of the 13th, began his attack on the fort by a heavy cannonade and bombardment. This was continued throughout the day, renewed in the morning, and kept up till seven o'clock in the evening of the 14th, but without having produced any important alteration in the condition of either the garrison or the works.

General Gaines, now in command of the division, reasoning from the character of the attack, the calculations probably made by the enemy of its efficiency,

¹ Notwithstanding the number of muskets and pistols which were fired, and the bustle inseparable from enterprises of this kind, neither the fort nor the Porcupine attempted to fire, as we drifted by them; nor did we receive a shot, until we passed Black Rock, though they might have destroyed us with ease.—*Licut. Conklin's report of the 16th August, 1814.*

and the state of the weather, which had become dark and rainy, concluded that an assault would be made during the night; and hastened accordingly to make such disposition of his comparatively small force, as would best enable him to repel it. To the ordinary precaution of doubling his night-guard, corps of infantry were assigned to the support of the several batteries; while the overplus was held in reserve, for such occasional service as might become necessary.

About two o'clock in the morning, a heavy British column was found approaching Towson's battery, (forming the northwestern angle of the work,) when a few well-directed discharges, and a shower of musketballs from the 25th regiment of infantry, compelled it to fall back. A second attempt, made on the same point, was equally unsuccessful, and induced its leader to change his plan, enter the lake, and turn the battery and camp on their western flank; but here again the moveable part of the defence, the 25th under Wood, and the 21st and 23d under Ripley, met the attack, and repulsed it speedily and decisively. Contemporaneously with the preceding occurrences, the enemy's central column was found pressing forward on the line of entrenchment which connected the batteries of Towson and Williams; but, though making some vigorous efforts, they were promptly checked by the fire of Biddle's and Fanning's artillery, sustained by that of the 1st rifle regiment, and Porter's volunteers. While such were the failures of two of the enemy's assaulting columns, the third, conducted with better fortune, or more skill, (after several repulses in

which it suffered greatly,) got at last possession of the exterior bastion of the old fort. To regain this, several gallant efforts were made by the sustaining corps, but without success; when an explosion of a quantity of gunpowder, in an adjoining apartment, expelled what it did not kill of the occupants, completely reinstated our authority, and virtually terminated the combat; the enemy leaving on the field, two hundred and twenty men killed, one hundred and seventy-four wounded, and one hundred and eighty-six made prisoners, including twenty-one officers.

Though thus signally defeated in his attempt to carry Fort Erie by storm, the British commander, adhering to his purpose of reducing it, was now busily employed in opening new trenches, and establishing a powerful additional battery. General Brown, to whom these facts were reported, seeing in the pertinacity of his adversary, and the course he pursued, that a second assault, with increased means, might soon be expected, and having little if any hope left that the reinforcements ordered by the government,¹ would reach him in time to obviate the peril of such a contingency, gal-

¹ "I thank you most heartily for what you have done for our relief; but what I hear of Gen. Izzard's *habits, character, and intentions*, is so unsatisfactory, that I hope nothing from him. McCrea, who is a good judge of generals, puts him at the very bottom of the list, and Colonel Snelling, his most intimate and confidential friend, warns us against placing any confidence in his support; knowing his aversion to the service given him, and his uniform intention not to perform it. We must, therefore, if saved, do the business ourselves." —General Brown's letter to the Secretary of War of 31st August, 1814.

lantly determined to share it with his comrades. Returning accordingly to Fort Erie, though not yet recovered from his wounds, he, on the 2d of September, resumed the command of the division; and after much careful inquiry into the topographical relations subsisting between Drummond's covering camp, and his advanced posts, came to the conclusion, that, though greatly inferior in numerical force, it was still possible, by a sudden and vigorous effort, to become his own deliverer.

In conformity to these views, the whole disposable force of the division was assembled at mid-day of the 18th, and being formed into two columns of attack, that of the left (composed of Porter's volunteers, Gibson's riflemen, and the remains of the 1st and 23d regiments of United States infantry) was marched by a road cut through the woods, on the right flank of the enemy; while that of the right, commanded by Brigadier-General Miller, (made up of the remains of the 9th, 11th, 17th, and 19th United States regiments of infantry, sustained by the 21st,) was pushed forward into a ravine forming the western front of the enemy's position; with orders to force his entrenchments, between batteries Nos. 2 and 3. These orders were promptly and ably executed, and, in a period of time unexpectedly short, the three batteries of the enemy, his two block-houses, and the whole of his entrenchments, were captured or destroyed.

In producing this splendid result, the column led by Porter, Wood, and Gibson, had its full share. After turning the enemy's right, it carried, by storm, a strong

block-house, in the rear of battery No. 3; destroyed in the latter, three twenty-four-pounders, and their carriages, blew up the magazine, and then hastened to co-operate with Miller, in reducing battery No. 2. "It was thus," says General Brown, "that in a close action, not exceeding an hour, one thousand troops of the line, and an equal number of New York militia, blasted the hopes of the enemy, destroyed the fruits of fifty days' labor, and diminished his effective force one thousand men—circumstances, producing, on the part of Drummond, an immediate abandonment of the siege, and a speedy retreat to Chippewa.

An attack so bold in its conception, so successfully executed, and so decisive in its effects, could not be made without loss; amounting in the aggregate to five hundred and eleven men, including commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates. Of the first of these classes, we had to lament the early death of the gallant Wood, and the intrepid Gibson—two men, whose skill, courage, and patriotism, would have done honor to any service, or to any station.

Apprized, about the middle of July, of the arrival of two British regiments at Montreal, destined, as was reported, "to reinforce the garrison of Kingston, and sustain the war on the peninsula," the government hastened to adopt measures, which should best enable it to meet such a contingency. Orders were accordingly given to General Izzard, then commanding at Plattsburgh, "to march a column of four thousand men, as expeditiously as possible to Sackett's Harbor; from which point, if no reinforcement had already reached

Kingston, he should, in concert with the fleet, make an attack on that post. But, on the other hand, should he find himself anticipated by Prevost, in relation to Kingston, or forbidden by anything in the condition of our own fleet from making the attack, he should, in either of these cases, avail himself of the shipping, run up to the head of the lake, put himself in communication with the division of the left, and throw his whole force on Drummond's rear."¹

It was certainly little to be expected, that a General, who, on the 19th of July, under apprehensions for the safety of Brown's division, had spontaneously suggested the propriety of a march, on his part, to the St. Lawrence, and a demonstration on the rear of Kingston,² should, on the 11th of August, when the causes for alarm were both multiplied and increased, have shown any hesitation in executing an order, requiring only a prompt and vigorous movement, to have given not merely an eventual security to his gallant comrade, but a decisive and triumphant issue to the campaign in the north. Such was, however, unfortunately, the fact. Finding, in the plan prescribed to him, an extension of his own, substituting, for a mere *demonstration on the rear of Kingston*, an *attack on its front*, in co-operation with the fleet, the General at once discovered, that neither his own plan nor that of the

¹ Appendix, No. 20.

² "I look with uneasiness to the westward. Should any accident occur in that quarter, ought I not to move to the St. Lawrence, and threaten the rear of Kingston."—*General Izzard's letter of the 19th July to the Secretary of War.*

government was practicable; and that any attempt to execute either, would be necessarily followed by disappointment and disgrace, with the no small aggravation, that "everything he left behind him (excepting two redoubts on Cumberland Head) would, in three days after his departure, be in the possession of the enemy."¹ Under these and other forebodings of evil, he was careful to announce to the War Department, his total disavowal of all responsibility for whatever might happen; but his willingness, at the same time, to execute the orders he had received, "*as well as he knew how.*"

Beginning his movement accordingly on the 29th of August, and having in his choice two routes to Sackett's Harbor—one of which required a march of ten days, and the other a march of twenty, he made no scruple of preferring the latter;² though, by doing so, he necessarily put much to hazard by giving time to Prevost to reinforce his western posts. Nor was this the only measure he adopted, having a similar tendency. "From a desire," he said, "to bring in his column fresh and ready for immediate service," he limited its daily march to fifteen miles; an indulgence altogether unnecessary, and never granted, when there is anything urgent in the character of the service to be performed. But even this was not enough to satisfy Mr. Izzard's conservative theory; a halt of four days was made at the south end of Lake George; professedly,

¹ Appendix, No. 21.

² *Twenty miles* formed Cæsar's *justum iter dies*; and if the case was urgent, considerably more.

for the purpose of refreshing troops, not a man of whom was either sick or weary.¹ And again: when arriving at Sackett's Harbor on the 16th, though finding that Kingston had not been reinforced, and that our fleet had a temporary ascendancy on the lake,² not a single measure was taken for availing himself of these advantages, and attacking, as ordered to do, that important post. For this omission, a sympathy for Brown and his division was made the pretext. "The perils," he said, "of this heroic band are now so multiplied and menacing, as make it my first and most important duty, to leave Kingston untouched, embark my troops on board the fleet, run up to the head of the lake, land on the northern side of the Niagara, and throw myself on the rear of Drummond." This decision, though thus decidedly announced, was short-lived. A storm of wind and rain occurring, which prevented the fleet from sailing, the General now besought advice how he should proceed: whether by a land march over bad roads in wet weather, or, by waiting the cessation of the storm, avail himself of a passage by water. Strange as it may appear, he preferred the former, and in a letter of the 18th announced this intention to the government. Finding, however, that the choice he had made, was much censured by the army, and even denounced by a part of his staff,³ as a new ruse to

¹ Appendix, No. 22.

² Such was the well-known condition of the fleet, when Izzard arrived at Sackett's Harbor.

³ Statement of Major O'Conner, Assistant Adjutant-General of the division.

avoid a battle with Drummond, as he had already evaded an attack on Kingston, his resolution was shaken, his march suspended, and a correspondence opened with the naval commander on the old question, "by what route he should move." In this attempt to obtain from that officer a sanction for his own opinion, he signally failed; no answer was vouchsafed to the question, and merely a notice given of the time and place, at which the troops would be received on board of the fleet, and "carried to any point on Lake Ontario, he might think proper to indicate."

Though sensibly rebuked by the manner in which his inquiry had been treated, he felt himself in no small degree consoled by two circumstances—the latitude given him in choosing a landing-place; and the limitation put by the commodore on the number of troops the fleet could conveniently carry—when, forgetting alike the orders of the government, the promises made to Brown, and the assurances given to the quartermaster-general the evening preceding, he at once and peremptorily declared for the mouth of the Genesee! At this place, he found himself with three thousand men early in the morning of the 22d, but, as might have been readily foreseen, entirely destitute of the means of transportation. It was not, therefore, till the 24th, he resumed his movement, when, adhering to his purpose of "bringing in his corps fresh and ready for action," he directed his march, not on Buffalo, but on Batavia—where an unexpected solace for all past doubts, labors, and terrors, awaited him, "in a full assurance that, on the 17th of the month, Brown had, by

a skilful and intrepid attack made upon Drummond, become his own deliverer."

In an interview with this officer on the 26th, though professing a willingness to discharge his remaining duty, he restricted its objects to a siege of Fort Niagara; and even hazarded an opinion, that this fort retaken, the campaign might, with propriety, terminate. To this proposition, in both its parts, Brown refused his assent—justly remarking, that, as a military post, Niagara was not worth holding by either belligerent; and that its garrison, now composed wholly of invalids and convalescents, formed no object worthy of pursuit; and again: that, as he understood the orders, under which the division of the right had marched, they prescribed three objects, "an attack on Kingston, which has been omitted; the relief of the division of the left, which had been accomplished; and, lastly, the *attack and capture of Drummond's army*—involving that of all the British posts on the peninsula."—"This," he added, "remains to be done, and may be accomplished, with scarcely a doubt of success, if, for the purpose, a proper direction be given to the two divisions united." It was not, however, till after the stimulus of a second conversation with Brown, that Izzard could be prevailed upon even to cross the Niagara; when, on receiving a full exposition of the proposed project of attack, and perceiving, after a short reconnoissance of Drummond's position, the probability of its success, he for a moment adopted the measure, and even detached Brown to direct some labor, preliminary to the movement; when, availing himself of information just re-

ceived, that "four of the enemy's ships were now at the mouth of the river—that the navigation of the lake had been abandoned to Yeo, and that Chauncey had been driven for shelter, under the batteries of Sackett's Harbor,"—he at once relapsed into his former creed, and adopting the Hudibrastic strategy of *preserving the army for the next campaign*, ordered "a retreat across the St. Lawrence, and winter quarters to be taken for the troops,"—thus literally fulfilling his own prediction, that the expedition would terminate in disappointment and disgrace.

While Izzard was making these extraordinary displays of military skill and ardor, an expedition was instituted in the west, having for objects the security and quiet of the Michigan territory during the approaching winter, an attack on Burlington Heights, and an eventual junction with Brown's division on the Niagara. The force assigned to the service was composed of mounted gunmen, furnished by Kentucky and Ohio, one company of United States rangers, and seventy friendly Indians, making in the aggregate, seven hundred combatants. Though failing in its principal object, the movement, from the activity and judgement with which it was conducted, may not be unworthy of a short notice.

Beginning his march on the 22d of October, General McArthur (the better to conceal his ulterior views) gave to his first steps a northwestern direction; and entering the enemy's territory, near the mouth of the river St. Clair, he traversed the intermediate country, between that point and Oxford, without exciting any

visible alarm on the part of the inhabitants. At Burford, which he reached the day following, he was apprized that the expedition and its object were not unknown to the Canadian authorities, who had already assembled a body of militia and Indians, on the road leading from Dover to Burlington. Finding in this information a new motive for quickening his movement, he pressed rapidly forward to Grand river; where, to his great mortification, he found that stream increased to a torrent, and on its opposite bank, a body of militia and Indians, prepared to dispute the passage. Thus forbidden to advance, and having no motives to remain where he was, he quickly resolved to give a new direction to his march, strike at a body of militia assembled at Malcomb's mills, and put himself on a route, by which he might, as circumstances should direct, effect a junction with Brown at Fort Erie, or secure to his party an uninterrupted retreat to Detroit. In prosecution of these views, he moved rapidly to the mills, where the Canadian militia, increased to five hundred effectives, were strongly posted behind a creek of difficult passage. Arrangements were now promptly made for a double and consentaneous attack on their front and rear—which, but for an Indian yell prematurely given, would, in all probability, have entirely succeeded, and enabled him to kill or capture nearly the whole party. This drawback notwithstanding, the enemy, after a short but sharp conflict, was routed, with the loss of eighteen killed, nine wounded, and one hundred and eleven captured. “In this excursion, the enemy's resources were essentially impaired by the destruction

of five mills, and much forage and provisions, prepared for the use of his army on the peninsula, and for carrying on, during the winter, any hostile attempt made in the direction of Detroit."

Another circumstance in the story, not less creditable to the General is, that the whole of this long and perilous march through an enemy's country, was accomplished in twenty-six days, and with the loss only of one man.

The reader will not have forgotten the calamity and ruin to which everything at Plattsburgh and its neighborhood, was doomed by Izzard, "within three days after his departure from it." Fortunately, the prophetic powers of the General were not less imaginary, than his military talents; and, instead of the painful duty of chronicling new evidence of national discomfiture and disgrace, we have now the more pleasing occupation of recording a successful defence made of Plattsburgh, and the capture and destruction of a second British fleet.

Relieved by the fall of Napoleon, from the long-continued and exhausting pressure of her European engagements, Great Britain, during the winter of 1813-'14, found, at her disposition, a vast military force; inured to war, well-instructed in its duties, abundantly supplied, and ably commanded. Of this force, a large portion was promptly transferred to America, for the purpose of retaliating aggressions made by the United States on her Canadian territory—of recovering what of this had been lost during the war—and of giving to the whole, a decided protection against future inju-

ry. To these orders of general character, were added others of more specific requirements—"prohibiting distant and hazardous marches into the interior; limiting the immediate employment of the armament to the capture and destruction of armed vessels and naval depots; and lastly, to the seizure and occupation of some strategic point on Lake Champlain, which should materially tend to the security of Lower Canada."¹

In conformity to these orders, the reinforcements assigned to Prevost, consisted of four brigades, which, with the exception of two regiments sent to Drummond, were assembled about the last of August, on the American frontier, for the purpose "of attacking Plattsburgh, capturing the United States fleet on Lake Champlain, and destroying a naval depot established at Vergennes, in concert with a fleet now preparing, and nearly ready for service." Beginning the movement accordingly in September, the British commander was able, on the 6th, to place himself before Plattsburgh, without much of either actual loss or disturbance, in his march thither. Finding, after a short reconnoissance, the American defences to consist only of three redoubts and two block-houses, and assured of Izzard's movement to the west with a large detachment, his first determination was to cross the river, ascend the heights, and assail the redoubts in the rear. But being soon after apprized that one of his columns was much fatigued and required rest, and being also assured by the British naval commander, that "he would, at daybreak

¹ Life and services of Sir George Prevost.

of the 10th, be entirely prepared to enter the lake and attack the American fleet, with a certainty of beating it," this first intention was changed, and an order given to erect batteries and bring forward heavy ordnance to bombard the American redoubts, and otherwise cover the intended assault.

This service was satisfactorily performed between the 6th and the 11th; when, at seven o'clock, A. M., of the latter, the British ships were seen turning Cumberland Head, and bearing down in order of battle on the American squadron, which now lay at anchor opposite the town, and somewhat beyond gun-shot distance from it. At ten minutes after eight o'clock, the two fleets, nearly matched in men and guns,¹ began the engagement—the *Confiance* anchoring, at two cables' length from the *Saratoga*, and the *Linnet* and *Chub*, at a distance somewhat less from the *Eagle*, while the vessels of smaller size, arranged themselves opposite to each other. The wind being light, and the water smooth, the guns of both fleets were well directed, and a destructive fire continued for two hours in succession, when McDonough (finding nearly all his starboard guns dismantled) dropped a stern anchor, cut his bower cable, and winding the ship, was then enabled to bring an entire broadside on his adversary. The commander of the *Confiance* attempted a similar manœuvre, but without success; and unable to sustain the conflict

¹ The British brought into action sixteen vessels, mounting 115 guns, with crews, amounting to 1,000 men. The American force amounted to thirteen vessels, mounting 102 guns, with 850 men.—*Cooper's Naval History*, vol. 2, pp. 428—30.

longer, in a few minutes surrendered his ship, an example soon followed by the rest of the squadron, with the exception of the galleys, which had sometime before began a rapid retreat. An order was now given by McDonough for their pursuit, but his own and other vessels being reported "in a sinking condition," the order was recalled, and the chase discontinued.

During the occurrence of the preceding events, the British General, who began his bombardment of the American redoubts as soon as the fleets were engaged, made several efforts to cross the river, ascend the height, and assail the works on its summit; but failing in all—repulsed from the ford by the troops of the line, and from the upper bridge, by the militia—the fire from his batteries silenced by that of the redoubts, and the British flag lowered to the stars and stripes of the union, Prevost came at once to the conclusion that the principal object of the enterprise being lost, a longer continuance of the contest for the town, would be a wanton sacrifice of human life, forbidden alike by his own feelings, and by the spirit of the orders under which he was acting. In this humane view of the case, the troops were promptly recalled from their advanced positions, and ordered to prepare for a *speedy* retreat to Canada—an order so literally executed by the Wellington elite, that, as General Macomb informs us, they had actually completed eight miles of their retrograde march before their flight was either discovered or suspected by the American army or its outposts.

REMARKS. 1st. The selection made of Schlosser, as a military depot, was ill-judged; and the defenceless

condition in which it was left, when the campaign began, was an error of no small magnitude; for had Drummond availed himself of it, his adversary's career must have stopped at Fort Erie, with the additional discredit of a hasty and compulsory retreat from Canada. Fortunately, the British General was ignorant of facts he ought to have known, or knowing them, failed to put a just estimate on their value, and, accordingly, instead of pushing forward his detachment on Schlosser, he gave to it the comparatively useless destination of Fort Niagara. Among the rules of war applicable to the selection of sites for magazines, the maxims of Frederick furnish two, having a direct bearing on the present case, namely, "Never place your depot between yourself and your enemy;" and again, "When manœuvring on his position, whether for purposes of demonstration or attack, never do so in a way that will enable him to strike at your magazines, or otherwise embarrass your communication with them."

2d. When, on his arrival at Chippewa, General Brown found himself insulted by a picket war, three orders instead of two ought to have been given: one to Porter, to throw himself in the rear of the British pickets; a second to Ripley, to follow in Porter's steps, and at such distance as would at all times enable him to sustain the movement; and a third to Scott, to cross the bridge, watch Rial, and, should the march of this officer indicate an intention of withdrawing or supporting his pickets, in either case to attack him promptly and vigorously. These orders, if well executed, would

have prevented the retreat of Porter's militia, and have brought into the field the second brigade, at such time and place as would have enabled it to attack Rial's right, while Scott was intrepidly assailing his left; circumstances which, if we consider what actually occurred, will fairly justify the inference that, had the force of both brigades been concentrated on Rial's line, the *first* battle of the campaign would have been the *last*; securing to the arms of the United States a decided and permanent ascendancy on the strait.

3d. When the engineers reported, that, with a small degree of labor, the division could be so placed as would enable it either to turn or to attack the enemy's intrenched camp, the General should have immediately adopted the first of these alternatives, and seizing some strategic point commanding the communication between Rial's position and his base, compelled that General to forego the advantages of his redoubts and intrenchments, and risk a battle on ground chosen by his enemy. The time lost, in preparing for a double attack on the British camp, deprived us of this advantage, and enabled Rial, by a prompt abandonment of his post, to save his army, reinforce the garrison at Fort George, and take a new and safer position at Twenty-Mile creek.

4th. Finding, on his arrival at Queenstown, that the facts stated in relation to Rial's movement were sufficiently ascertained, General Brown's first intention was to follow up the blows already given, and thus compel the enemy to risk another conflict, or, to avoid this, to recur to a third and hasty retreat. This inten-

tion was, however, soon and fortunately yielded to considerations which should never be overlooked by a commanding General. Such, in the present case, were: the high degree of improbability that a march, however carefully conducted, could be made through an enemy's country without discovery; the certainty, that, if discovered, the British General would immediately shelter himself behind the intrenchments of Fort George, or the heights of Burlington; and the doubtful policy of any measure that would drive him to either of these places; inasmuch as the effect would be to strengthen points which (if our fleet should ever be ready to take part in the campaign) would form our most prominent objects of attack.

5th. When, on the 25th, General Brown found his depot jeopardated, and himself not in condition to sustain it directly, the expedient he adopted was no doubt proper, presenting, as it did, a probability, that, finding the war carried home to his own posts, Drummond would, for their defence, recall the detachment made on Buffalo. But to this order ought to have been added another, directing Ripley and Porter to follow and sustain Scott, with all the force that could be spared from the camp. As the affair was managed, the battle of Bridgewater, like that of Chippewa, was fought by *detachments*, and had, of course, the doubtful issue which generally characterizes such combats. "An army," says Napoleon, "fought by divisions, brigades, or regiments, in succession, must fail, if opposed by an enemy who understands his business. How often are great battles retrieved and won by the arrival of even

small reinforcements? When, therefore, you either expect an attack or intend to make one, *assemble your whole force, and employ it simultaneously*, remembering, that the great secret of obtaining a victory, is *in concentrating the greater power, moral and physical, on the lesser.*" Frederick's maxim on the subject, is equally clear and authoritative: "When acting offensively, never make a detachment." An ancient rule of the art was, that he who divides his force will be beaten. "Cette regle est si bien constatée, que tous les Generaux qui y ont manqué, s'ent sont presque toujours trouvés mal." If such views had governed in the affair of Bridgewater, would the trophies won on that occasion have been lost? or would the question be yet unsettled, to which of the two armies the victory belonged?

6th. When, after the battle, it was discovered, that the nine pieces of ordnance, captured from the enemy, could not be removed with the troops, General Ripley, then commanding officer, should have immediately given orders for *disabling* them (breaking down their carriages and knocking off their trunnions). Had this been done, beside settling the question who had won the battle, it would have greatly paralyzed the subsequent movements of the enemy, and entirely prevented the hasty and ill-judged abandonment of the strong position at Chippewa, made on a vague report, that "Drummond was rapidly approaching, and would soon attack the American camp." Again: when a report is made of the actual or intended approach of an enemy for the purpose of attack, our first duty is to ascertain

the truth or falsehood of the report, and govern ourselves accordingly ; since, without taking this precaution, we may yield to a ruse, which a short and active reconnoissance would have immediately defeated. From inattention to this common-sense rule, a retreat to Erie was not only ordered and executed, but made with a haste and disorder, tending greatly to demoralize the troops, and by no means calculated to increase their confidence in the General's qualifications for commanding an army. The subsequent events of the campaign at Fort Erie, give no room for criticism. Gaines's defence of that post, was skilful and brave ; and Brown's sortie, as well in plan as in execution and effect, the most brilliant coup de main of the war.

7th. Though the general tendency to error, in the measures pursued by General Izzard, may have been sufficiently indicated in the preceding narrative, still, as there were circumstances in the conduct of that officer yet unnoticed, and which, for the purposes of history, ought not to be concealed, we hasten to offer a brief detail of them ; and the more readily, as, in our opinion, the development will leave no doubt on the questions not unfrequently asked, whether, during the campaign of 1814, the General fulfilled his promise of "doing as well as he knew how ;" or whether, throughout the whole of it, it had not been his constant endeavor, to defeat every project prescribed to him by the war department.

Suspecting, early in May, that the naval means given to Captain McDonough, for obtaining an ascendancy on Lake Champlain, would be found incompetent to

their object, the Secretary of War, on the 25th of that month, directed General Izzard "to seize *Rouse's Point*, and plant upon it a heavy battery; which, with the aid of McDonough's fleet, would put us at ease with regard to our magazines, enable us to concentrate our force, and, with the exception of the men necessary to manage the battery, render the whole of it disposable." On the — of June, this order was renewed in the following words: "A post on Lake Champlain, adapted to the purposes of co-operating with and covering our fleet on that lake, and of excluding therefrom the enemy's flotilla, will be immediately selected, established, and garrisoned." Again, on the 30th of June, the Secretary adds: "I send enclosed a letter, from Captain McDonough to the Secretary of the Navy, suggesting an addition to the fleet, or, as a substitute therefor, the erection of a *battery on the Narrows*; which, in addition to his own means, will shut the enemy out of the lake. If it be determined, as I think it will, that no augmentation be made to the fleet, the alternative of *fortifying will necessarily be imposed upon us*; and, possibly, to an extent beyond any of our past calculations. I suggest this last idea, that your requisitions on the ordnance department, may be commensurate with the wants of the service." And lastly, on July the 2d, the General is thus instructed: "I yesterday saw the Secretary of the Navy, and received from him an explicit declaration, that he would not add to the naval means on Lake Champlain, as suggested by Captain McDonough, in his letters of the 8th and

11th ultimo. We are therefore driven, by *necessity*, to fortify on the Narrows."

To these multiplied expressions of the Executive will, no answer directly declaring an intention of either obeying, or disobeying, the injunctions they contained, was received from the General, till about the middle of July, when a letter dated on the 12th of that month, announcing at once his opinions and determination on the subject, was received by the war department. In this, he says: "Rouse's Point has been long an object of my attention. It is admirably situated for the establishment of a heavy battery, which would command the passage of the lake at its narrowest part; but *there is not room for defensive works in its rear, and its immediate vicinity to the enemy's principal post, at La Cole, (now surrounded by intrenchments,) would make its occupation very hazardous.* The question next lay between *Point aux Roches and Cumberland Head.* I have decided in favor of the latter."

It cannot fail to astonish any intelligent man acquainted with the topography of Lake Champlain, and the relative condition of the belligerent armies, at the date of these orders, that General Izzard should have hesitated a single moment in occupying Rouse's Point; a strategic position which, by his own unqualified acknowledgment, was "admirably situated for a heavy battery, giving a complete command of the Narrows of Lake Champlain," and thus enabling him to exclude the British fleet entirely from the lower and wider part of the lake. Nor would the inquirer be less astonished, on finding that *Cumberland Head*, the site which

the General had selected, instead of Rouse's Point, possessed no similar advantage; but, on the contrary, left open a passage for the enemy, which could neither be wholly closed nor even partially obstructed, and which, of course, made necessary a hard-fought naval battle, to secure to McDonough the ascendancy indispensable to the safety of our magazines and movements during the campaign.

In justification of conduct so extraordinary, the General hazarded two reasons, not less censurable than the conduct itself; the one, notoriously founded in *fiction*, and the other, in *fright*. What higher evidence can be required that there was no want of room in the rear of Rouse's Point for defensive works, as alleged by the General, than the well-known fact, that this very point was subsequently selected by the government, as the site of a great national fortress, and was only abandoned, because found to be a mile or two north of our territorial boundary? Again, who, excepting the General himself, of the six thousand men composing the division of the right, ever believed there was anything arising from either the vicinity or character of La Cole mill and its intrenchments, to make hazardous the occupation of Rouse's Point? The very suggestion is a libel upon a corps, among the most gallant and efficient in the war.

The cause of this ill-judged and insubordinate conduct on the part of the General, continued to be problematical till about the middle of August, when the secret was accidentally revealed, that the General had been able, through the patronage of the Secretary of

State, to obtain the President's approbation of what he had done, or omitted to do, in relation to the selection of a site for a fortification, which should have the effect of excluding the enemy's fleet from Lake Champlain, or, in other words, for entirely disregarding the repeated and urgent orders given on that subject by the Secretary of War. Of this authorization, we need not point out the errors, as regarded the influence it would probably have on the future conduct of the person to whom it was given, or on that of others who might become acquainted with it; it may not, however, be useless to remark, that the secrecy with which it was made and exercised was probably its worst effect, inasmuch as it prevented the correction of the evil, until it became incurable. What would have been the effect of a prompt and full declaration of it, on the General's credit, for either local knowledge or professional judgment, will be sufficiently seen in the contents of the following letters, written by two distinguished officers of the U. S. engineer corps.

General Swift to General Armstrong, 5th of August, 1838:—

“ In my opinion, with the force under the command of General Izzard, a *position* in the vicinity of *Rouse's Point*, could have been occupied, so as to control the enemy's fleet in passing through the Narrows, more effectually, than from any other position. La Cole mill formed no sufficient objection to the occupancy of Rouse's Point. A battery on Cumberland Head could not have prevented the passage of an enemy's fleet into

Lake Champlain, unless by some error on the part of the naval commander."

Colonel Totten to General Armstrong, 8th of August, 1838 :—

"There was ground enough in the rear of Rouse's Point for small works, and for such as would, with an adequate garrison, defend the position against great enterprises, and even a siege. Having no faith in the power of any works on Cumberland Head, capable of impeding or materially injuring a passing squadron, I felt bound in conscience to state my views to the General, but though my opposition was earnest, it was in vain. I do not now see, and never have supposed, that there was anything in the vicinity of La Cole mill, or in the character of its garrison, to render the occupation of Rouse's Point hazardous to our army.

CHAPTER V.

Predatory warfare on the Chesapeake and Potomac resumed.—Defensive means employed by the United States.—Arrival of Vice-Admiral Cochrane with a large armament, naval and military, in Lynnhaven bay.—Movements on the Patuxent.—Battle of Bladensburg.—Defeat of Winder.—Capitol and other buildings burnt.—Fort Washington abandoned.—Capitulation of Alexandria.—Events in the east.

FINDING nothing in the plunder acquired on the coast of North Carolina either rich or rare, Cockburn speedily returned to Chesapeake bay; where, resuming his predatory system, he visited, in succession, Nonsing ferry, Matchedoc, Wicomico, St. Clement, Coon river, Marlborough, and St. Mary's—carrying off all the tobacco, grain, flour, household furniture, negroes, and bay or river craft, he could find; after which, the better to illustrate his labors, he set fire to the houses of such of the inhabitants as showed any disposition to defend their property.¹

Selecting, soon after, the shores of the Patuxent, as a new theatre for similar exploits, he pushed forward his gun-boats and barges into that river; when, somewhat to his surprise, and still more to his disappoint-

¹ Cockburn's official reports from the 1st of June to the 15th of August, both days included.—*Historical Register*, p. 123, vol. 4.

ment, he found himself opposed by a bold and practical seaman, who, recently placed in the command of a small flotilla of armed vessels, had already handled roughly a portion of his small craft, and, on more than one occasion, set at defiance even the brigs and frigates of his Britannic majesty.¹ Audacity like this, so affrontful to the British flag, and so little favorable to the rear-admiral's pecuniary views, could neither be overlooked nor pardoned; and hence it was, that, on Cochrane's arrival in the Chesapeake, the punishment of Barney, and the destruction of his flotilla, became the first object of the campaign.²

After detaching two small squadrons for purposes of demonstration, one in the direction of Baltimore, and another in that of Fort Washington, what remained of the armament, naval and military, ascended the Patuxent as high as Benedict, where the seamen and marines assigned to the water attack, were placed in boats, barges, and schooners; while the army, debarked on the southern bank of the river, began a covering march, *pari passu* with the ascending vessels. From causes, indicated alike by professional precaution, the extreme heat of the weather, and the debilitated state of the troops,³ the progress made by the assailants was uncommonly slow; nor was it till the evening of the 21st

¹ Barney's reports from the 1st to the 26th of June, 1814.—*Historical Register*. p. 117, vol. 4.

² British campaigns at Washington, &c., p. 99.

³ "During this short march of six miles, a greater number of soldiers dropped out of the ranks, and fell behind from fatigue, than I recollect to have seen in any march in the peninsula, of thrice its duration."—*Idem*, p. 102.

of August, that the army reached Nottingham. Informed here, that their object of attack had taken a position higher up the river, and now lay at anchor off Pig's Point, the chase was renewed in the morning of the 22d; when it was soon after discovered, that the flotilla, abandoned by Barney and his seamen, was now enveloped in flames.¹

Cockburn, finding his first and great object, thus quickly and cheaply obtained, lost no time in visiting Ross, and suggesting to him the adoption of another. The argument employed to obtain the General's concurrence, was substantially as follows:—"Our antagonist, from deficiency of force, or want of confidence in what he has, having hitherto shown no disposition to obstruct our views, and having at last blown up his flotilla, which, if well fought, might have cost us many lives—may we not fairly conclude, that his defence of Washington will not be more vigorous? And if so, has not the condition on which we are permitted to attack that town arisen? It is true that Washington presents no object strictly military—a navy-yard comparatively empty, and a small and poor population—but we must not forget that inconsiderable in this view as it may be, it is the metropolis of the nation, and that names, as well in war as in peace, do much. By capturing it, we shall give no small *éclât* to our arms abroad; and to ourselves, a more solid gratification, if the government, to save the city, be disposed to make a liberal donation of their money."²

¹ Appendix, No. 23.

² Statement made by Dr. Thornton, of the reasoning which in-

It can scarcely be supposed, that a dashing Irish General, who had acquired his morals as well as his tactics, in the Spanish war, would hesitate in adopting a project, addressed alike to his pride and his poverty. The arrangement was accordingly soon made; leaving behind a naval officer, and a party of seamen, to ship tobacco and other plunder at and near Marlborough, Ross and Cockburn, at the head of a column of three thousand five hundred combatants,¹ unencumbered with baggage, and carrying with them only two 3-pounders, dragged by seamen, and three days' provision on their backs, began a march in the evening of the 22d on Washington.

At this stage of our story, it becomes proper that we should no longer be silent with regard to the means of defence, prescribed by the President for the safety of the city and district. Officially informed on the 26th of June, of the pacification in Europe, and aware of the great disposable force, this event would give to Great Britain, in prosecuting her contest with the United States, the heads of departments, and the Attorney General, were convened on the 1st of July, for purposes of consultation; when it was decided—

1st. That ten or twelve thousand draughts, from the militia of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, should be held in reserve in their respective States, ready to march at a moment's warning.

duced an attack on Washington, as declared to him by the naval commander.

¹ Dr. Catlett's estimate of the number of the British army.—*See Appendix, No. 24.*

2d. That not less than two, nor more than three thousand of the afore-mentioned draughts, should be assembled for immediate service, at some central point between the Potomac and Baltimore. And,

3d. That the militia of the district of Columbia, forming two brigades, the 36th United States regiment of infantry, one battalion of the 38th, two companies of the 10th, one company of the 12th, two troops of regular dragoons, two companies of fencibles, and one hundred marines—making an aggregate of three thousand combatants—should constitute a corps at all times disposable, under the direction of the commanding General.

Nor will it appear from the report made by the congressional Committee of Inquiry, that any time was lost in giving effect to these measures, so far as their execution depended on the War Department. "On the 2d of July," says the report, "the tenth military district was constituted, and the command given to General Winder. On the 4th, a requisition on the States for 93,500 men was issued; on the 14th, the Governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia, acknowledged the receipt of the requisition, and promised promptitude. On the 10th, the Governor of Maryland was served with a copy of the requisition, and took measures to comply with it. On the 12th, Gen. Winder was authorized, in case of either *menaced* or *actual invasion*, to call into service the whole of the Maryland quota (6,000 men); and, on the 18th, 5,000 from Pennsylvania, and 2,000 from Virginia; making an aggregate (the regular infantry and cavalry, marines,

flotilla men, and district militia included) of *sixteen thousand six hundred men*. Such was the measure of defence designated for military district No. 10, and such the measures taken by the War Department for assembling it, up to the 18th of July," twenty-six days before the enemy's approach to the capitol.¹

It is not, however, to be dissembled, that much of this force, from causes to be hereafter stated, was not found on the field of battle. As early as the 13th of August, the General having doubts whether the draughts made on Maryland for half her quota, would not be nearly a total failure, the Secretary of War, to supply the deficiency, adopted the expedient of accepting, as part of the six thousand men required from that State, such corps of militia, as were already organized and in service under State authority; which, with a number of volunteers, brought out by the exigence, had the effect of giving, in rank and file, on the 24th of August, six thousand three hundred and twenty-six combatants.²

Of this force about one half was, on that day, stationed in or near Bladensburgh, to guard the approach by that route to the city; while the other moiety occupied a position on the southern end of the Eastern branch bridge; on the supposition, that "the enemy's first attack would be made on Fort Washington, in conjunction with Gordon's squadron, then ascending

¹ Report of the Committee of Inquiry, p. 38.

² Pages 35 and 36, Report of the Committee of Inquiry. The deduction made by the committee for detachments left at the Eastern branch bridge is much over-rated.

the Potomac." This ill-founded opinion was fortunately corrected, about 10 o'clock of the 24th, furnishing, however, barely time to unite the two brigades, when the head of the British column was seen fast approaching the village.¹

Ross's decision was soon taken; finding little in the appearance of his enemy to inspire respect, and bred up in a school in which audacity was generally found to be wisdom, he at once made a rush at the head of his elite, not exceeding fifteen hundred combatants;² crossed the bridge which his adversary had forgotten to destroy or obstruct; threw out a few sharpshooters and rocket-men on his flanks; directed his column of attack on the American batteries; and, in a period of time almost incredibly short, succeeded in putting to rout the whole of Winder's first line; after which, all further contest on our part being thought hopeless, a general retreat was ordered.

No immediate pursuit was either made or intended by Ross—the effect of two causes—his hopes from negotiation, as already suggested, and the exhaustion and absence of a large part of his army.³ Two hours were accordingly given for the arrival of the absent, and the refreshment of all; when the march was resumed, and continued till within a mile and a half of the capitol. At this point, being sufficiently assured of Winder's retreat to Georgetown, orders were issued

¹ Winder's report.

² Cockburn's official report of the action.

³ For the condition of the British army, before arriving at Bladensburg, see Appendix, No. 25.

for bivouacking the troops for the night; while the two commanders, naval and military, accompanied by a small escort, not exceeding two hundred men, entered the city, visited the public buildings, set a price on their ransom, and detached an agent to open a negotiation with some competent American authority, on the subject.¹ The return of the messenger with a rejection of the terms, became the signal for destruction; when every national building, excepting the postoffice, was speedily consumed. The greater part of the 25th was employed in carrying out this policy at the navy-yard, Greenleaf's point, and the Potomac bridge; after which, a retreat, under many precautions, was begun in the night, and, with the exception of a few pauses, continued till the 27th, when the troops arrived at Nottingham. The 28th being employed in removing the wounded, the artillery, and the plunder, and the 29th in resuming their former position at Benedict; they were soon after embarked and carried to the shipping.

It has been already stated, that, when Ross and Cockburn began their expedition on Barney's flotilla, two naval demonstrations were deemed necessary—one in the direction of Baltimore, the other in that of Washington—for the obvious purpose of preventing any part of the force assembled at either place from aiding in the defence of Barney. Sir Peter Parker, to whom the command of the vessels ascending the Ches-

¹ The only American having any connexion with this negotiation, was Dr. Thornton, as the facts were reported to us. Of the proposition itself, the President spoke with becoming contempt.

apeake had been given, being informed, while lying off Waltham farm, that a body of militia had assembled in the neighbourhood, he hastily determined to carry the camp by a night attack, and, with this view, debarked about two hundred men in the evening of the 29th of August. The movement, though made with much circumspection, could not entirely escape the vigilance of the American commander, whose patrols soon discovered and speedily reported the landing of the party, and the direction given to their march. Instead, therefore, of finding, as he had expected, the militia either scattered or asleep, Sir Peter found them carefully imbodyed, strongly posted, and wide awake. After a moment's pause, the attack was directed on the centre of the American line, but, failing to make any serious impression upon it, was soon extended to the flanks, when, the firing becoming general, two effects were produced—an exhaustion, nearly total, of ammunition on the part of the militia; and on that of the seamen, the loss of their gallant leader—circumstances inducing a retreat, nearly simultaneous, of both parties.¹

Captain Gordon, who commanded the Potomac squadron, was more fortunate. Beginning his movement on the 17th, under orders “to ascend the river as high as Fort Washington, and try upon it the *experiment* of a bombardment,” he, on the 27th, reached the

¹ “The enemy's loss, 1 midshipman and 8 seamen and marines left dead on the field; 9 wounded, six of whom died in a few hours. Sir Peter Parker mortally wounded, died before he reached the barges. Not one of our men was killed, and but three wounded. Want of ammunition alone saved the enemy from capture or destruction.”—*Colonel Reed's Report.*

neighborhood of that post, when, after discharging a single shell, doing no injury to either the fort or its garrison, the latter was found to be rapidly retreating. Thus promptly anticipated in the accomplishment of his object, the captain brought up his squadron in front of Alexandria, where, on the 29th, he prescribed the only terms on which the city could be saved from plunder and destruction.¹

It will not be thought extraordinary, that, in choosing between total and partial ruin, there should be little if any hesitation on the part of a defenceless town, the male population of which did not then exceed one hundred combatants. Gordon's terms, though hard and humiliating, were accordingly speedily accepted, and would no doubt have been rigidly enforced, had not the discretion of that officer, getting the better of his rapacity, admonished him of the danger of continuing longer in a position, necessarily exposing his retreat to many physical embarrassments, to which might soon be added others of a more menacing character—hot shot on his flanks, and fire-ships on his rear. Under these views of the case, the British commander ameliorated his conditions, and contenting himself with such booty as could be most promptly transported, began his retreat on the 3d of September, and, though actually encountering much of the danger he had anticipated,² was able on the 9th, by a combination of skill, diligence, and good fortune, to anchor securely his whole

¹ Gordon's Terms. See Appendix No. 26.

² Reports of Commodore Porter, Perry, and Rodgers. *His Register*, pp. 165—176, vol 4.

squadron, with twenty-one prize-vessels laden with booty.

The speedy and successful issue of the attacks made on Washington and Alexandria, could not fail to suggest a similar enterprise on Baltimore, and the less so, as the approaching stormy season made an immediate prosecution of any more important object unsafe for both fleet and army. This new project was therefore promptly adopted, and means taken to give it a speedy and successful execution. On the 10th, a large portion of the fleet, carrying with it the army, now increased to six thousand combatants, began its movement up the Chesapeake, and on the 11th, presented itself off the mouth of the Potomac. Early on the 12th, the troops were landed at North Point, while the frigates and bomb-ketches ascended the river and took such positions as would best enable them to sustain the intended attack on the city.

Ross, who knew well the value of moments in the discharge of military duty, lost no time in seeking his enemy, and approaching his object. Meeting, after a rapid march in the morning of the 12th, an advanced party of the city militia, he hastened to put it to flight, when a skirmish ensued, which, though of small importance in other respects, was marked by a circumstance, having a powerful influence on the character and issue of the expedition. It will readily occur to the reader, that, in making this statement, we allude to the death of the British commander, who, in the constant habit of leading his attacks, and thus giving to his columns the impulse of his own chivalrous excite-

ment, had, on this occasion, driven from a covering of sedge and underwood, a few militia riflemen, one of whom firing upon him, inflicted a wound which in a few minutes terminated his life and his labors.

The command of the army, now devolving on Col. Brooke, of the 44th British regiment, the march was resumed, and a battle fought, of one hour and twenty minutes' continuance, much to the credit of General Stricker and his militia, if we take into consideration the relative strength of the combatants—which, in point of number, was as *six* to *three* in favor of the enemy. Stricker's retreat being undisturbed by Brooke, was made in good order to a position one mile and a half from the city; where the brigade bivouacked for the night.

During the occurrence of these events, Vice-Admiral Cochrane, who had taken on himself the direction of the naval attack, was busily employed in testing the capacity of bombs and rockets, in reducing forts and batteries. Ascending, as already stated, the Patapsco, with a fleet of frigates, rocket and bomb-ketches, and anchoring these at the prudent distance of two miles from the guns of his enemy, he began a bombardment on Fort McHenry, which lasted twenty-five hours. During this attack, he threw fifteen hundred shells; four hundred of which exploded within the walls of the fort; but without making any unfavorable impression on either the strength of the work, or the spirit of the garrison;¹ a fact which, added to that of the fate

¹ The defence of the fort was under the immediate direction of

of Ross, soon brought the Admiral to the conclusion, that "the *demonstration*," as he called it, "had been carried sufficiently far," and that his Britannic Majesty's interests would be best promoted by withdrawing both fleet and army, and descending the bay to their former station.¹

Brooke, who, after his combat of the preceding day, had cautiously followed in the track of Stricker, had now gained a position, which gave him a distinct view of Chincapin Hill, and a chain of redoubts and intrenchments, abundantly supplied with cannon, and bristling with bayonets;² which had no tendency to lessen his respect for the opinion of the Vice-Admiral—to which he promptly subscribed; and availing himself accordingly of a dark night, and a heavy rain, began and accomplished a retreat of twelve miles to the neighborhood of North Point; where the army was again taken on board the shipping. This movement not having been discovered by the besieged, till after daylight, no pursuit of the enemy could be successfully made.

While the preceding events took place in the south, others not wholly unworthy of notice, occurred in the east. In despite of the coquetry which had hitherto

the late gallant Colonel George Armistead of the U. S. corps of artillery.

¹ Cochrane's official report.

² The veteran who had superseded Gen. Winder, in the command of the district, knew well the value of defensive works, and was careful to supply them. It will not be forgotten, that the distinguished officer to whom we allude, was the late General S. Smith, of Baltimore.

existed between British authorities and our eastern Magi,¹ fleets were assigned, early in the spring, for blockading the ports of New York, New London, and Boston; and for inflicting on smaller seacoast establishments such chastisement, as, in the opinion of the commanding naval officer, might be deemed advisable. In the exercise of this discretionary authority, two launches, and four barges, strongly manned and armed, entered the river Connecticut, on the 7th of April, and ascending as high as Petty Paugh point, destroyed four ships, as many brigs, and nine smaller vessels. Visits of similar character were soon after made to Wareham and Scituate, in Massachusetts; where several vessels were burnt, and other outrages committed.

Admonished by these repeated acts of hostility, directed on small trading towns wholly unprepared for defence, the inhabitants of Stonington wisely determined to construct a battery, equip it with ordnance and ammunition, and place in it a few volunteers, on whose fidelity and courage, they could entirely rely. This measure, though obviously one merely of precaution, was not regarded as such, by the senior naval officer on the station. Affecting to see in it, not only intentions of ordinary hostility, but projects the most malignant and barbarous² in relation to the squadron he commanded, Sir T. Hardy hastened to present himself and a number of armed vessels, in front of the town; making three demands upon it: 1st, that the

¹ See Sherbrook's proclamations.

² Torpedo attacks.

family of Mr. Stewart¹ be speedily removed on board of the shipping; 2d, that the fort be immediately dismantled; and, 3d, that no torpedo be either made, kept, or used by the inhabitants;" to which was added a menace, "that if not complied with, the town should be destroyed." After due consideration, (in concert with Brigadier-General Cushing of the United States army, commanding the district,) the following determination was manfully taken—that "No. 1 of the demands, be referred for decision to the national government; and that Nos. 2 and 3, be peremptorily rejected—inasmuch as to dismantle a fort, or to limit ourselves in the use of weapons, on the mandate of an enemy, would be degrading to the American character, and unwise, as regards our peculiar interests."²

It will be readily supposed, that, on receiving an answer so entirely unexpected, Sir Thomas would not be slow in trying the effect of his professional persuaders—balls, shells, and rockets, in reconciling the population of a small trading village, to the terms he had offered. Positions, proper for the purpose, were accordingly given to the ships, when a cannonade and bombardment, accompanied by showers of rockets, opened on the town and battery, and continued without remission for several hours of the 9th and 10th; when finding the attack hopeless, and some of his vessels not uninjured, the British commander weighed his anchors, spread his sails, and withdrew from the harbor. "Such," says General Cushing, "was the issue of a conflict

¹ A British consul whose family resided at Stonington.

² See Gen. Cushing's letter to the Secretary of War.

between a land battery, fighting only *three* guns, and a number of armed vessels, fighting more than *one hundred!* What a lesson of encouragement to us, and of discouragement to the enemy."¹

The time had however arrived, when operations of this kind were to give place to others of more ambitious character; when, in a word, a war of conquest was to be substituted, for one of pillage and destruction. In pursuance of this new system, a fleet and army were put at the disposal of General Sir J. Sherbrooke and Admiral Griffith, with orders "to overrun and subjugate all that part of Massachusetts Bay lying on the eastern side of Penobscot river." Nor will the wisdom of this selection be questioned, when we add, that the entire purpose of the campaign was accomplished, with little if any loss, within the short term of a few weeks; Eastport, Castine, and Machias, falling in succession, without resistance. Encouraged by these successes to enter the interior and complete the conquest, the British commander was preparing to do so, when General Brewster (acting under state authority) made a formal surrender of the whole territory, to the arms and dominion of his Britannic majesty!²

¹ Gen. Cushing's second letter to the Secretary of War of the 10th of August, 1814. See also his public letter of the same date.

² "I beg leave to congratulate you on this important accession of territory, which has been wrested from the enemy. It embraces one hundred miles of seacoast, and includes that intermediate tract of country separating the province of New Brunswick from Lower Canada. We have taken twenty-six pieces of ordnance, &c., and I have the pleasure to add, that this service has been effected without the loss of a man, on our part."—*A Pilkington's official report*

REMARKS. The error of first occurrence in this campaign, belongs exclusively to the administration; and will be found, in the selection made of a commanding General, not on the ground of distinguished professional service or knowledge, but simply on a presumption, that, "being a native of Maryland, and a relative of the governor, Brigadier Winder would be useful in mitigating the opposition to the war, and in giving an increased efficiency to national measures, within the limits of the state;"—an opinion which, though somewhat plausible, was wholly unsustained by the event.¹

2d. The first duty assigned to this officer, under his new appointment, was to select a central point between the Potomac and Baltimore, for the rendezvous and encampment of two or three thousand militia draughts, to be called into immediate service. It was not, however, till the 16th of July, that anything having relation to this object was received from him; and what he then offered, was of so undecided a character, as, in his own opinion, made necessary another and careful examination.² Of this new labor and its result, no re-

to Lieutenant-General Sir John Sherbroke, dated 14th of September, 1814, *Machias*.

¹ The person recommended by the Secretary of War for this appointment, was Brigadier-General Moses Porter, then at Norfolk, whose whole life may be said to have been military. Entering the army of the revolution a boy, he had, by uniform good conduct, risen through every rank, from that of a private to the command of a brigade. No objection to General Winder, excepting a *want of military experience*, either was, or could be made; his patriotism and courage had been already tested, and were generally acknowledged.

² Winder's official report.

port was made till the 23d; when, somewhat to the surprise of the cabinet, *Bladensburgh* was announced as the site, chosen for a *central* camp between *Baltimore* and the *Potomac*!

3d. In the next experiment made of the General's executive powers, they were not found to be more successful in *procuring militia*, than they had been in selecting a *place*, proper for its rendezvous and encampment. On the 12th of July, he had been authorized to call from Maryland the whole of her quota, (6,000 men,) and on the 16th he reported, that "the governor and council had taken the necessary steps for immediately complying with the requisition." On the 20th, he says: "I have seized a moment to visit Annapolis, and arrange the calling of the Maryland militia; this will be immediately complied with by the governor." On the 23d, he adds: "The governor has issued orders for calling three thousand militia to form the camp at Bladensburgh," yet, on the 13th of August, he discovers that the governor's call would prove nearly abortive; as, instead of giving three thousand men, "it would not bring together more than *three hundred*."¹

What, it may be asked, under a failure so menacing, on the part of Maryland, was the obvious duty of the General? Unquestionably to call, without losing a moment, on the states of Pennsylvania and Virginia, for their several quotas. Such, however, was not the course adopted. No demand for troops was made on the former, till the 18th of August; and then, instead of calling for *five thousand men*, the requisition was

¹ Winder's letter of the 13th of August.

limited to *five hundred*. The call on Virginia was not more prompt, being also deferred till the 18th; when, like that on Pennsylvania, it failed "from a want of *notice seasonably given*."

4th. Nor was the General's conduct different in relation to corps actually under arms and awaiting his orders. Stansbury's brigade, though called from Baltimore on the 20th, was halted for two days on the road, from an apprehension that, "if permitted to come on, he would arrive too soon." Sterret's detachment, called also on the 20th, was ordered to halt at Snowden's till otherwise directed. Hood's regiment, taken into service about the middle of August, was left at Annapolis till the 23d, from a belief that that city formed the enemy's point of attack.¹ When on the 22d a retreat was ordered, for the purpose of assembling his whole force, unfortunately the motive for making it was forgotten, the General neither joining Stansbury at Bladensburgh, nor suffering Stansbury to join him at the Eastern-branch bridge; thus directly exposing both corps to be beaten in succession. Young's brigade, withdrawn by the General's order, from the covering position it held in the rear of Fort Washington, was, on the 24th, ordered to cross the Potomac; whence it followed that its service was lost at both points—at Bladensburgh in the battle, and at Fort Washington, when Gordon's squadron appeared before it.² Minor's regiment arriving late on the 23d at Washington, was stationed by the General on Capitol Hill early on the

¹ Stansbury's Report.

² Young's Report, No. 27 of the Appendix.

24th, with orders "there to await his farther direction," which being altogether omitted, had, as in the case of Young's brigade, the effect of keeping it some miles distant from the army and the action. Again: though, in the morning of the 24th, expecting every moment an attack at the Eastern-branch bridge, the General gravely proposed detaching from his effective force, Barney's corps of six or eight hundred men, to Greenleaf's point and the navy-yard—places remote from each other, and having no direct bearing on the defence of the city; and where, had his proposal been approved, they must have fallen uselessly, and the battle at Bladensburgh been deprived of the only circumstance in it, creditable to the arms and consolatory to the pride of the nation. Nor was this all; for though assured, at 10 o'clock, A. M., of the 24th, that Ross was marching directly on Bladensburgh with his whole force, and that Stansbury's brigade, unless speedily reinforced, would be utterly unable to withstand the approaching attack, it was not till 11 o'clock that any order was given to Smith's corps to sustain it;¹ and to render still more striking the indecision, Barney, and his seamen and marines, were left behind at the special request of the General, to explode a few barrels of gunpowder, placed under the Eastern-branch bridge, should Ross's movement on Bladensburgh turn out to be a ruse.²

Having thus detailed such acts of the General as directly tended to lessen his means of defending the city, we now proceed to show the use made of those

¹ Smith's Report to the Committee of Inquiry.

² *Idem.*

he had, when, at 12 o'clock, he determined to risk a field fight with his adversary. And, in performing this duty, the better to avoid injustice to all concerned, we shall make the principal actors in the scene, the expositors of the story.

“The two brigades,” says the commanding General, “being united about 12 o'clock, of the 24th, the enemy was seen rapidly descending from Lownd's hill into the village; when an order was given to the advanced artillery to open a fire upon him, which occasioned the head of the column to leave the street, and to creep down under the cover of houses and trees in loose order, so as not to expose themselves to risk from our shot. It was, therefore, only occasionally that an object presented, at which our artillery could fire. In this sort of suspension, the enemy began to throw his rockets, and his light troops to accumulate down in the lower parts of the town and near the bridge, but principally covered from view by the houses. Their light troops, however, soon began to issue out, and press across the creek, which was fordable, and, in most places, lined with bushes and trees, which were sufficient to conceal the movements of light troops, who act in the manner of theirs, singly. Our advanced riflemen now began to fire, and continued it for half a dozen rounds, when I observed them to run back to the skirts of the orchard on the left, where they became invisible—the boughs of the orchard-trees concealing their original position, as also that of the artillery, from view. A retreat of twenty or thirty yards from their original position toward the left, brought them in view on the edge of the

orchard, where they halted, and seemed about returning to their position, but in a few minutes entirely broke, and retired to the left of Stansbury's line. I immediately ordered the 5th Baltimore regiment to advance and sustain the artillery. They promptly commenced this movement; but the rockets which had, for the first three or four, passed very high above the heads of the line, now received a more horizontal direction, and passed very close above the heads of Shutz's and Ragan's regiments, composing the centre and left of Stansbury's line—when a universal flight of these two regiments was the consequence. This leaving the right of the 5th wholly unsupported, I ordered it to halt, rode swiftly across the field, toward those who had so shamefully fled, and exerted my voice to the utmost, to arrest them. They halted, began to collect, and seemed to be returning to their places. An ill-founded reliance, that their officers would succeed in rallying them, when I had thus succeeded in stopping the greatest part of them, induced me immediately to return to the 5th, the situation of which was likely to become very critical, and that position gave me the best command of view. To my astonishment and mortification, however, when I had regained my position, I found the whole of these regiments, except a few of Ragan's, not more than forty, rallied by himself, and as many perhaps of Shutz's, rallied I learn by Captain Showers, and an officer whose name I do not recollect, were flying in the utmost precipitation and disorder.

“The advanced artillery had immediately followed the riflemen, and retired by the left of the 5th. I di-

rected them to take post on a rising ground, which I pointed out in the rear. The 5th, and the artillery on its left, still remained, and I hoped that their fire, notwithstanding the obstruction of the boughs of the orchard, which, being below, covered the enemy, would have been enabled to scour the approach, and prevent his advance. The enemy's light troops, by single men, showed themselves on the lower edge of the left of the orchard, and received the fire of the 5th, and the artillery, which made them draw back. The cover to them was, however, so complete, that they were enabled to advance *singly*, and take positions, from which their fire annoyed the 5th considerably, without either that regiment, or the artillery, being able to return the fire with any probability of effect. In this situation, I had actually given an order to the 5th, and artillery, to retire up the hill toward a wood, more to the left, and a little in the rear, for the purpose of drawing them farther from the orchard, and out of reach of the enemy's fire, while he was sheltered by the orchard. An aversion, however, to retire, before the necessity became stronger, and the hope that the enemy would issue in a body from the left of the orchard, and enable us to act upon him on terms of equality, and the fear that a movement of retreat might, in raw troops, produce some confusion and lose us this chance, induced me instantly to countermand this order, and direct the artillery to fire into a *wooden barn*, on the lower end of the orchard, behind which I supposed the enemy might be sheltered, in considerable numbers. The fire of the enemy now began, however, to annoy the 5th still

more, in wounding several of them; and a strong column of the enemy having passed up the road, on the right of the 5th, and beginning to deploy into the field to take them in flank, I directed the artillery to retire to the hill to which I had directed the Baltimore artillery to proceed and halt, and ordered the 5th regiment also to retire. This corps, which had heretofore acted so firmly, evinced the usual incapacity of raw troops to make orderly movements in the face of the enemy, and their retreat, in a very few moments, became a flight of absolute and total disorder."

Stansbury's narrative presents nearly the same results, but with the addition of a circumstance which Winder altogether omits, though materially affecting the progress and issue of the combat. "After," he says, "giving an order of battle to the first line, on returning from a short visit to the artillery, I found that *Ragan's and Shutz's regiments had been moved from the place where I had stationed them, to a hill upward of five hundred yards in the rear of the artillery and riflemen*; where, uncovered by the trees of the orchard, their situation and numbers were clearly seen by the enemy, and the flanks of the artillery and riflemen made liable to be turned. Again—while conversing with General Winder, the *5th regiment was taken out of the orchard, marched up to the hill, and, as before observed, the whole at so great a distance from the artillery and riflemen, that they had to contend with the whole British force. Whose plan this was, I know not; it was not mine, nor did it meet with my approbation.*"

Major Pinckney's estimate of this new order of battle, was not more favorable than Stansbury's. "The 5th regiment," he says, "which had been removed from a position where it might have contrived to repulse the enemy, in his attempts to leave the bridge, had now, to the great discouragement of my companies, and of the artillery, been made to retire to a hill, several hundred yards in the rear. The two companies of General Stansbury's brigade, acting as riflemen, had changed their position, so that I no longer perceived them. The residue of the brigade had been moved from the left, and made to take ground (invisible to us by reason of the intervening orchard) on the right of the 5th regiment, with its own right resting on the main road, and disclosed to the enemy."

It is only in the following report, that we are made acquainted with this busy and blundering tactician, whom Stansbury does not know, and whom Pinckney will not name. "*The 5th regiment,*" says Sterret, "*was formed under the direction of Colonel Monroe, on the left, and in line with General Stansbury's brigade.*" "I ought also to notice, that *the first line formed on the battle ground, was changed, under the direction of Colonel Monroe.*" In addition to this information, Colonel Sterret adds: "The action commenced about one o'clock, by an attack on the redoubt, where the riflemen and artillery were placed. These soon retired, and the 5th covered their retreat, and kept up a lively fire, and supported their place in line with firmness, until the enemy had gained both flanks, when *the order to retreat was given, by General Winder*

himself. The imposing front of the enemy was never disconcerted by the fire of the artillery or the riflemen, and the brigade of General Stansbury was seen to fly, as soon as the action became serious. *No second line or reserve appeared to advance or support us*, and we were outflanked and defeated, in as short a time as such an operation could well be performed."

The last statement we offer, is that made by Commodore Barney, who says:—"After receiving orders to withdraw my guns and men from the Eastern-branch bridge, we proceeded immediately to Bladensburgh, to join the army. The day was hot, and my men much crippled by the severe marches made for some days before. I preceded the men, and when I arrived at the line which separates the district from Maryland, the battle began. I sent an officer back to hurry up the men, who came on at a trot. We now took our position on the rising ground, put the pieces in battery, posted the marines and seamen, acting as infantry, on my right to support the pieces, and thus waited the approach of the enemy. During this period, the engagement continued; the enemy advancing, and our army retreating before them, apparently, in much disorder. At length, the enemy made his appearance on the main road in force, and in front of my battery, and on seeing us, made a halt. I reserved our fire. In a few minutes, he again advanced, when I ordered an 18-pounder to be fired, which completely cleared the road. Shortly after, a second and a third attempt were made to come forward, when all were destroyed. They then crossed over into an open field, and at-

tempted to turn our right flank, where they were met by the fire of three 12-pounders, the marines under Captain Miller, and the men acting as infantry, and again were totally cut up. By this time, not a vestige of our army remained, excepting a body of five or six hundred posted on a height, from whom I expected much support from their fine situation. The enemy from this period never appeared in force in front of us. They pushed forward their sharpshooters, one of whom shot my horse, who fell dead under me, between two of my guns. The enemy thus kept in check by our fire for more than an hour, now began to outflank us on the right. Our guns were therefore turned that way, when they pushed two or three hundred men up the hill, toward the corps stationed as abovementioned, which, to my great mortification, made no resistance; giving a fire or two, and then retreating. In this situation, we had the whole army of the enemy to contend with; our ammunition was expended, and, unfortunately, the drivers of my ammunition-wagons had gone off in the general panic. At this time, I received a severe wound in my thigh; Captain Miller was also wounded, Sailing-Master Warner killed, and Sailing-Master Martin wounded; but, to the honor of my officers and men, as fast as their companions and messmates fell at the guns, they were instantly replaced from the infantry."

Before concluding this article, a brief detail of the rules of war applying to the case, may not be useless.

1. In *defensive* war, when local and other circumstances forbid fortification, the true resource of the

weaker power, will be found in a speedy adoption and strict observance of partisan principles—*constant vigilance* and *unremitting activity*. “By these,” says a high authority, “much may be done. The former will sufficiently secure against danger; and the latter, by multiplying small attacks, made by day and by night, on the camp-guards, detachments, and communications of an enemy, will greatly retard his progress, diminish his strength, and, not improbably, exhaust his patience.”

Of this important rule, the first injunction only was remembered. Care sufficient was taken to avoid danger; but of the multiplied attacks directed by the second, nothing was seen during the five days of campaign which preceded the 24th of August—whence it followed, that the strength, progress, and patience, of the enemy, underwent neither change nor disturbance till that day.

2. “Pitched battles generally decide the fate of a campaign, and not unfrequently, that of a war; whence it follows as a rule, that conflicts of this kind should never be hazarded by an army hastily collected, and wholly unpractised in war, when contending with another, highly disciplined, well equipped, ably commanded, and nearly, if not entirely, equal to itself in numerical force.”

This rule, imperative as it is, was disregarded—a fact the more extraordinary, as the General well knew the high military character of the enemy, and even believed his numerical force to be equal, if not superior, to his own; while of the American army he declared, that

“not two men of the whole, knew anything of military service.”¹

3. “The first duty of a General determined to risk a field-fight, and having the choice of ground on which to do it, is to select a position adapted to the arms, number, and character, of the troops at his disposal; and thus qualify himself for the high additional duty of giving to the whole a corresponding order of battle.”

This rule, like its predecessors, escaped the General's notice. He was compelled, as we have seen, to fight a battle on ground unfit for the purpose, and on dispositions made of his troops, by men wholly ignorant of war, either as an art or a science.

4. “In orders of battle of two lines, the second takes the character, and performs the duties of a reserve.” It cannot but be thought extraordinary, that a rule so obvious, should have been either unknown or disregarded by men wearing the badge, and exercising the authority of generals; yet such was the fact—Winder, in his excitement, overlooked it, and Smith and his brigade showed no inclination to perform the duty.

¹ Winder's letter to the Committee of Inquiry. At page 158, of the report to Congress of this committee, we find the following description given by the General of the army he commanded: “A mass of men suddenly assembled, without organization or discipline, or officers of any the least knowledge of service, excepting Major Peters; or if any, unknown to me.” Yet to officers thus described—to Stansbury and Smith—he assigns the duty of choosing his position, and to Mr. Monroe, that of forming his order of battle!

5. "When retreat becomes necessary, the orders for making it should always be accompanied with a short and well-defined designation of a point for reunion. It is only by a strict observance of this rule, that the evils arising from a total dispersion of force, can be avoided." It cannot be forgotten, that in the present case, the omission to give out a rallying point, produced a dispersion of force, which formed the only plausible reason, for refusing to occupy and defend the capitol.¹

6. "If, in a retreat, a beaten army find on its route a defensible position—such as villages and strong isolated buildings often furnish—it should be promptly seized, and strenuously defended." Military history offers many instances in which armies beaten in the field, have, by acting on this rule, become eventually the victors. Our own chronicles present a distinguished case of this kind, in the gallant and successful defence made of Chew's house, by Colonel Musgrave and six hundred British infantry, in the campaign of 1777, when assailed by a large portion of the American army, commanded by General Washington in person. If the two cases be examined in their several relations—the greater force of Winder than that of Musgrave for defence; the smaller force of Ross than that of Washington for attack; and the decided superiority of the capitol to Chew's house for position—the conclusion is irresistible, that, had Winder followed this example and defended the capitol, the result would

¹ Appendix, No. 29.

have been as fortunate in the one case, as it was discreditable in the other—the city would have escaped outrage, the capitol destruction, the army censure, and the nation disgrace.¹

¹ Appendix, No. 29.

CHAPTER VI.

British plan of campaign for 1814.—Armament sent from Bermuda to Pensacola.—Unsuccessful attack of the enemy on Fort Bowyer.—Jackson's march on Pensacola.—Arrival of the British fleet and army.—Capture of the American gunboats.—Descent made from Lake Borgue.—Battles of the 26th and 28th December, and of the 1st and 8th of January.—Retreat of the British.—Preliminaries of peace.

THOUGH in the mode of conducting the war on the part of Great Britain, during the campaigns of 1812-'13, there had been many instances of barbarism,¹ still no system of this kind had been avowed by any accredited agent of that country, till the summer of 1814, when Vice-Admiral Cochrane officially announced that, "*under the new and imperative character of his orders, it became his duty to destroy and lay waste all towns and districts of the United States, found accessible to the attack of British armaments.*"² In pursuance of this plan, so little to be expected from a power pretending to a high degree of moral feeling, and even assuming the proud and responsible character of defender of the Christian faith, the summer months were assigned to devastations in the *north*, and those of au-

¹ River Raisin, Niagara frontier, Havre-de-Grace, Frenchtown, and Hampton.

² Cochrane's official letter to Mr. Monroe, August, 1814.

tumn and winter, to the pillage and destruction of the *south*. Of the objects presented by the latter, the emporium of westerr. commerce could not be overlooked; and the less so, as her wealth was known to be redundant; her means of defence few and feeble; and her population, made up of different names, races, and colors, believed to be discordant with each other, and not well affected to the government.

With these views, New Orleans was selected for plunder and destruction, and a veteran army of fifteen thousand combatants, sustained by a fleet of fifty ships, including transports, assigned to the service.¹ Still, it could not but be known, even to a cabinet as little acquainted as that of Great Britain with American topography,² that, unless means could be found for keeping at home the bold and skilful riflemen of Kentucky and Tennessee, the issue of the experiment would be doubtful, if not desperate.

To this end, therefore, an auxiliary measure, that of renewing the Indian war on the southern frontier of the union, was adopted; in pursuance of which four armed vessels, and a detachment of regular artillerists, were despatched, during the summer, to Pensacola; whither, they were soon after followed by Colonel Nichols, bringing with him instructions "to assemble and organize fugitive Indians, runaway negroes, French

¹ Latour's memoirs of the war in East Florida and Louisiana, p. 136.

² No had specimen of this will be found in Napier's Peninsular War. Question put by the British minister to Admiral Warren, in 1812: "Will it not be practicable to ascend the St. Lawrence, in light frigates, as far as Lake Ontario?"

pirates, and all such inhabitants of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Kentucky, as having witnessed the folly, and felt the oppression of the American government, should be willing to accept the overtures, and receive the protection of his Britannic majesty."¹ In the discharge of this service, Nichols was both active and ardent, but decidedly unsuccessful. Of black and red allies, the number obtained, did not exceed eight hundred men; of the French pirates, no one would confide in the proposed "guarantee of a British officer;" and, of American citizens, not a man was found, foolish or base enough to join the British standard. Though thus defeated in the more prominent objects of his mission, Nichols was soon furnished with another; probably, on the suggestion, and certainly, with the approbation and support, of the Spanish governor—that of capturing Fort Bowyer, a small redoubt, located on a point of land commanding the passage from the gulf into the bay of Mobile.² The attack thus suggested, was not less acceptable to the naval, than to the military commander, neither of whom had the smallest apprehension, "that four British ships, carrying ninety-two guns, and a land force, somewhat exceeding seven hundred combatants, could possibly fail in reducing a small work, mounting only twenty short carronades, and defended by little more than one hundred men, unprovided alike with furnaces to heat shot, or casements to cover themselves from rockets and shells."³ Acting on this

¹ Nichols's manifestoes. See Eaton's or Martin's Louisiana. ² Idem.

³ British force, *four* armed vessels, 590 men, and 90 guns, (32 pound carronades.) Nichols's corps, 130 marines, and 600 Indians

belief, the expedition was soon prepared, and, on the 12th of September, sailed from Pensacola. The 13th and 14th having been employed in debarking the land force and establishing a mortar-battery in the rear of the fort, it was not till the 15th that the armed vessels took their positions within musket-shot of its front—when a vigorous conflict ensued; which, with few pauses and little abatement, lasted for three hours in succession. At the end of this time, the cable of the *Hermes* being shot away, the ship became unmanageable, and, drifting with the current, grounded on a sand-bank; where, her preservation becoming hopeless, she was soon after set on fire, and abandoned by her commander and crew. The *Caron*, a vessel of equal size and equipment with the *Hermes*, was less unfortunate, being able, though much injured, to get to sea, whither she was speedily followed by the *Sophia* and *Anaconda*, leaving behind them Nichols and his motley followers, to effect, as they might, their escape by land.

A termination so unexpected, to an enterprise from which much was hoped, and nothing feared, called forth a full display of Spanish sympathy. All pretence to neutrality in the war, was now abandoned; the public stores were thrown open for the supply of the fugitives; Nichols, the British leader, was installed an inmate of the governor's family, and the town and fort

and negroes. Enemy's loss in the action, 1 ship burnt, 232 men killed and wounded. Garrison of Fort Bowyer, 120 combatants, officers included, 20 pieces of cannon, several of which were on coast carriages and in batteries, hastily thrown up, and leaving the gunners uncovered from the knee upward. Loss in killed, 8.

virtually committed to his custody ; while on the flag-staff of the latter were seen entwined the colors of England and Spain.¹

These, and other facts of similar character, were speedily reported to Jackson, who, finding in them abundant proof of Spanish subserviency to British interests, and strong presumptive evidence, that the force acting under Nichols, was but the precursor of a larger British armament, promptly determined to possess himself of Pensacola, "peaceably if he could, forcibly if he must." Hastening, accordingly, to Fort Montgomery on the Alabama, where he had assembled an army of four thousand men, he began his march on the 2d of November, and on the 6th encamped within two miles of his object. From this point he immediately despatched a message and flag to the Spanish governor, announcing his movement, his motives for making it, and the means he possessed for effecting his purpose. Major Piere, the person charged with this communication; was permitted to reach the outskirts of the town without interruption or notice ; but, on attempting to enter it, though coming singly, and displaying a flag, he was fired upon from the fort, and compelled to withdraw.

It may be readily inferred, from what is known of Jackson's constitutional temperament, that the report made of this occurrence, had no tendency either to shake his purpose, or greatly to abate his excitement. Yet, remembering that his intended movement had not received the sanction of the government, though fre-

¹ See Latour's Memoirs.

quently requested,¹ he felt himself impelled, before resorting to force, to make a second and friendly overture. Availing himself, accordingly, of a Spanish soldier, found within the limits of the camp, he addressed a note to Governor Manriquez, stating the manner in which his former messenger had been received, and requiring a speedy explanation of it. This communication was safely made and promptly answered, by an unqualified disavowal, on the part of the governor, of all participation in the act complained of; and a direct assurance that, on the repetition of the experiment, his messenger and flag should be received with all proper respect. Though giving little credit to this promise, yet unwilling to reject any proposition having in it even a show of friendship, Jackson again despatched Major Piere, with a solemn declaration, that "coming without any intention of making war on Spain, and limiting himself to measures strictly defensive against British hostility, he but requested to be made the occupant of the town and forts, to be held for Spain, until that power should find herself in condition to assert and maintain the neutrality she professed."

¹ Jackson's first notice of Nichols's arrival with armed vessels and Indian supplies in East Florida, and suggesting an attack on Pensacola, was dated in July. The information thus given, was not accredited by the President, who, in a note to the Secretary of War, says, "his belief on this subject will soon be corrected." The qualified permission, given in the Secretary's letter of the 18th July, for making the proposed attack, though carried to the postoffice for transmission to the General, was intercepted and kept back till after the decisive action of the 8th January, which could not have been done, but with the privity, or by the order of the President.

These terms being speedily rejected, the army resumed its march on the town, and carrying by storm a battery, and one or two fortified houses at the head of the street, became, in a few minutes, masters of the place. At this critical moment, Manriquez, the Spanish governor, was seen mingling in the crowd, imploring Jackson's mercy, and tendering an immediate surrender, on the terms so recently prescribed by that officer. Having no desire to inflict any unnecessary punishment on the place or its inhabitants, the American commander ordered an immediate cessation of hostilities, withdrew a large portion of his force to the camp he had left in the morning, and assigned a small detachment as the future garrison of the fort, when, in a paroxysm of folly and phrensy, de Soto, the Spanish commander, refused to open the gates. This interruption was, fortunately, shortlived; apprized that measures were taken to batter the fort, the Spaniard soon recovered his senses, gave up his keys, and permitted the garrison to take quiet possession of St. Michael. Events of this character could not be indifferent to Nichols and Piercy, the two agents charged with his Britannic Majesty's interest at Pensacola. Seeing no security but in a speedy flight, the former availed himself of the squadron commanded by the latter, and embarking his allies, red and black, carried the savages to the forests of Appalachicola, and the four hundred slaves, whom he had allured to his standard by a promise of freedom, to a West India market.¹

¹ Latour's Memoir.

Jackson's object being thus speedily accomplished, he had now time to estimate the value of the acquisition he had made; and soon discovering, that, if it was wise to make the movement while threatened with the renewal of an Indian war, it would not be less so (now that danger was at an end), to withdraw his troops promptly, and carry back his force to the defence of points likely to be soon attacked by a more powerful enemy. Under these new views, after reinstating Manriquez in his former authority, he began his retrograde movement, and, on the 1st of December, established his headquarters in New Orleans.

On the 5th of that month, only four days after the General's arrival at his post, the British armament destined to the attack of New Orleans, appeared off the harbor of Pensacola. During their stay at this point, its commanders were careful to make themselves acquainted with the topography of the coast, and finding that of the different avenues of approach to their object, those through Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain were the shortest and safest, they, on the 10th, anchored near Cat and Ship islands; where they made another, and not unimportant discovery, that, before either of these routes could be made available to their present purpose, an American flotilla, part of which was then in view, must be either captured or destroyed. To this end, forty-three barges, strongly manned, and carrying each a carronade in its bow, were made ready; and, on the 13th, got sight of their enemy, consisting of five gunboats, which, in conformity to the orders given them, were endeavoring to gain a

position under the guns of Fort Coquille. The wind, hitherto favorable to this intention, having entirely failed, and the current running strongly against them, they, on the 14th, found themselves compelled, though greatly overmatched, to take the chances of a battle; and accordingly took a position off the western end of Malheureux island. The barges, in the meantime, though retarded by the causes which had obstructed the progress of the American flotilla, found a remedy in their oars, and in the great power to use them, resulting from the crowd of seamen they severally carried. It was not, however, till noon, that they were able to come to close action; when a sharp conflict, sustained for an hour and a half, followed—terminating, as might have been expected, in the entire capture of the United States gunboats.¹

Having thus got rid of the only enemy capable of disturbing their future movements on the lake, the British army was speedily withdrawn from the shipping, and transferred to Pea island; where a party of Spanish fishermen awaited their coming, with information, that “the whole force assigned to Gen. Jackson’s command did not exceed five thousand men—that, of this number, not more than sixteen hundred were in or near the city—that the population in general was, if not opposed to the war, either lukewarm or desponding—that, though orders had been given for obstructing

¹ “Our loss in killed and wounded, in this unequal contest, has been trifling, compared to that of the enemy, which amounts to nearly 400 men.”—*Lieut. Jones’s report to Commodore Patterson, 12th March, 1815.*

and guarding the different inlets from the lake to the town, no attention had yet been paid to that of Bienvenu ; and, lastly, that a vigorous movement of five or six hours made from this point, would carry the army to the centre of the city, and decide the fate of the campaign." Information of so much promise, could not fail to be acceptable, yet, coming as it did from men confessedly unprincipled, and not less willing to sell their country than their fish, it was deemed unsafe to act upon it, till the facts it assumed had been tested by other persons, on whose good faith and intelligence more reliance could be placed. The service thus required was well and quickly performed by Captain Spencer of the navy, and Lieutenant Peddie of the army—the latter of whom, in the garb and under the guidance of a Spanish fisherman, examined the route from the lake to the river, slaked his thirst at the stream of the latter, and, in the night of the 20th, returned to the army with a report, that "the statement made by the Spaniards was essentially correct, in what related to the inlet and route from Bienvenu to the Mississippi."

The question hitherto doubtful—where the descent should be made—being now settled, the first brigade of Keane's division, amounting to two thousand four hundred combatants, was placed in boats, and despatched to the Fishermen's village ; whence, without obstruction or annoyance of any kind, it continued its movement to the western bank of the river, and, at half after 11 o'clock, A. M., of the 22d, took a position on Villery's canal.

It was at this point (but nine miles distant from New Orleans) that a part of Jackson's staff, on their way to Le Beuf, discovered this unlooked-for approach of the enemy; and, as may readily be supposed, were not slow in reporting the fact to their chief. The information, though entirely unexpected, furnished a new illustration of the characteristic promptitude of the American General. Leaving the brigades of Carroll and Claiborne, to guard the approaches to the city in his rear, he hastened to concentrate what remained of his disposable force, and determined to test the spirit and discipline of his adversary, by a night attack, made on his front and flanks. In pursuance of this decision, the troops (not exceeding fifteen hundred men) formed in two columns, were placed within stroke of the enemy—while the United States armed schooner Carolina, under the direction of Commodore Patterson, fell quietly down the river, till opposite the centre of the British encampment; when, dropping an anchor, and presenting a broadside, she, at half after 7, P. M., opened upon it a heavy and well-directed fire; producing, as in other cases of unexpected attack, a dispersion of corps and disorder of movement, which, had there been light enough to have profited by the circumstance, would have given to Jackson a decided advantage. Such, however, not being the fact, the attack made by the army in support of this first and favorable impression, took at once the character of a skirmish fought blindfold—displaying, in many cases, high degrees of individual courage, but a total absence of either concentrated strength or manœuvring skill.

The ordinary darkness of the hour (10, P. M.) being much increased by a fog, the American General became doubtful, whether a continuance of the attack would be prudent. And, under this impression, ordered a retreat, and took a position, for what remained of the night, in front of his enemy, determined to renew the action in the morning. Though bravely taken, this decision was soon and wisely yielded to second and sounder thoughts—suggested alike by the military skill and veteran habits of his enemy—the small number and undisciplined condition of his own force—and, lastly, by the strategic character of the position he occupied—a narrow plain, flanked on the right by the Mississippi; on the left by a cypress swamp, and covered in front, throughout its whole extent, by a canal, furnishing both trench and parapet, and requiring only a small degree of labor to make it impregnable to either the physical force or technical skill of his adversary. Instead, therefore, of marching at daybreak on the enemy, and putting everything to hazard by a field-fight with a veteran army, which, during the night had been reinforced by two thousand four hundred combatants, he wisely directed his energy and perseverance to the new and strictly defensive system, which he had now adopted.

While Jackson was thus employed, his antagonist, forgetting that the first duty of a belligerent making a war of offence is, “to find and fight his enemy, or, if this be impracticable, to interrupt his labors and destroy his defences,” permitted the whole of the 24th to escape, without aiming at any purpose more impor-

tant than that of dislodging or destroying the small armed vessel, which had so seriously disturbed the order of his bivouac during the night of the 23d. To this end, therefore, a number of heavy pieces of ordnance, cannon, mortars, and howitzers, were brought from the fleet, and, on the 27th, placed in battery on the bank of the river; by a second discharge from which, the schooner was set on fire, and speedily abandoned.

All obstacles to a forward movement having been thus removed, the whole military force given to the expedition collected, and Packenham, the new commander-in-chief, arrived, it was now determined to go on, test the strength of Jackson's intrenchments, and the skill and spirit with which an army, essentially militia, could be brought to defend them. Under these views, what remained of the day was given to such reconnoissance of the American defences as was practicable; and the night to the construction of batteries to be employed on the morrow. At daybreak of the 28th, the whole British army was accordingly seen advancing in two columns—that of the right, along the woody margin of the cypress swamp; and that of the left, along the public road near the bank of the river—each preceded by skirmishers in open order, forming a line nearly continuous from column to column.

It was not till after a march of four miles, that this imposing array, occasionally discharging showers of rockets, came within view of the intrenchments it was destined to attack. These, though not finished, were found to be formidable—a high and solid parapet, well

supplied with cannon, bristling with muskets and rifles, and covered by a deep exterior ditch, filled with water, presented a front difficult of approach; while its flanks, well redoubted and covered, left to the assailant a choice only between a speedy abandonment of his purpose, or the risk inseparable from a direct assault. Pakenham's measures were promptly accommodated to this state of things; the meditated assault was given up, the infantry withdrawn, and the artillery brought forward—when a cannonade of several hours' duration, and considerable vivacity, followed—leaving no doubt on the part of the British, that “in the use of this arm, their enemy was not less formidable than themselves, and that the sooner their great effort was made, the more likely it would be to succeed.” The form to be given to this was, however, less clear; was it to be expected, that manœuvring on so narrow a front, Jackson could be induced to forego the advantages of his intrenchments, and risk a field-fight on open ground? Was there more reason to believe that, if tenacious of his position, this could be successfully turned on either flank? And, lastly, would it be advisable to assail his front, unless his batteries could be silenced, and his parapet breached? These questions being all decided in the negative, another expedient was suggested, and immediately adopted—that of no longer considering the American intrenchment a field-work, but a regular fortification; and employing against it the means ordinarily used in a siege.¹ The 28th, 29th, and 30th of December, were accordingly given to the accumulation of arms and

¹British Campaign in America.

ammunition for the purpose ; and the night of the 31st, to the erection of batteries at the short distance of three hundred yards from the American line. To this end, half of the army was put on extra duty, with spades and shovels ; while the remainder, formed in small columns of attack, protected the laborers. At daybreak of the 1st of January, three batteries were finished, mounted, and ready for service ; but the morning being hazy, it was not till 8 o'clock, that the cannonade became active and general. In this operation, the enemy put forth his whole strength from 8 to 10 o'clock ; from 10 to 12, his fire slackened, and at 2 o'clock, may be said to have entirely ceased ; terminating, like that of the 28th, in an abandonment of his battery and guns. In this trial of skill, the palm was evidently with the American artillerists ; the enemy's works being much injured, and several of his guns disabled or dismounted, while those of Jackson, with a few exceptions, had escaped injury, and his parapets at no point so breached, as made an assault practicable.

From this second discomfiture, the enemy retired "not only baffled and disappointed, but disheartened and discontented ;" when, to reinstate his self-confidence and good humor, a reinforcement of sixteen hundred men, brought by General Lambert, and two thousand seamen, furnished by the fleet, was added to his numbers, giving an aggregate of eight thousand combatants for field operations. Under this new stimulus, a third project of attack, having in it more of strategic character than either of its predecessors, was discussed

and adopted, including, beside a vigorous assault to be made on Jackson's left, and another on his right, the surprise or storm of a battery on the western bank of the river, covering and commanding the American line. For the execution of this last and highly important part of the plan, a preliminary labor of formidable character was indispensable—that of cutting a ditch from the lake to the camp, for the passage of such number of boats as would be necessary to transport, at a single trip, the whole of the detachment destined to act on the western side of the river. This service was promptly assigned to the army; and by its incessant labor, day and night, from the 1st to the 6th, was, on the evening of the latter, reported as “finished.” Orders were accordingly issued for making the intended assault at daybreak of the 8th, assigning to General Gibbs, the storm of Jackson's left flank; to General Keane, the attack on his right; to General Lambert, the command of the reserve, and to Colonel Thornton, of the 85th regiment, the detached operation

Packenham's columns were accordingly early in motion, and, at the first dawn of the morning, the signal for general attack was given; but receiving no response from Thornton, the movement was from time to time suspended, until at last despairing of the western part of the plan, the assault on Jackson's left was ordered. But here it was the fate of the British commander to meet a new and serious cause of mortification. Entirely convinced by what he had seen and heard of Jackson's defences, that, without fascines to fill up trenches, and

scaling-ladders to mount parapets, any attempt to carry the position by storm would probably fail, he had, in preparing for this new effort, been careful to provide an abundant supply of both articles; and, to render more certain their transportation to points where they might be wanted, they were specially committed to the charge of Colonel Mullens, of the 44th regiment, who, from negligence or terror, failed to bring with him a single ladder or fascine. In the feverish state of Packenham's mind, he saw but one remedy for the evil—that of coercing obedience. The delinquent was accordingly sent back to fulfil the original order; but, as in other cases where duty is prescribed as a punishment, and executed under reproaches for the past, and menaces for the future, this was badly performed. The regiment was slow in returning, and when it did arrive, finding that it could not reach its place in the column, but under the fire of the enemy, it disencumbered itself of all extra burdens, and threw down both fascines and ladders, where they were not wanted, and could not readily be found—an event, having no tendency to restore the composure of the British commander, who, hastening to the 44th, and finding its colonel absent, placed himself at its head, and instantly ordered a charge. The 21st and 4th regiments being already great sufferers, and in some degree of confusion, the 93d was pushed forward, and soon reached the ditch; but to scale the parapet without ladders was impossible. A few bold and active men, by mounting on the shoulders of others, made their way into the work, but were immediately killed or wounded, while such as

stood without, exposed to a constant fire of muskets and rifles, were cut down by companies. Nor was the demonstration on Jackson's right more successful than the assault made on his left. By much daring effort, Colonel Ranney was able to carry an unfinished bastion on the river road, somewhat detached from the head of the intrenchment, but, being promptly met by a fire from Beal's riflemen, the attack soon ended in the death of its gallant leader, and the capture or expulsion of such of his followers as had entered the bastion.

Amid perils so multiplied and direct, it cannot be supposed, that officers of the highest staff could escape injury. Soon after the assault began, General Packenham received a slight wound in the knee, by a musket-ball which killed his horse—when, soon after, mounting another, a second ball, more fatally directed, brought him lifeless to the ground. On seeking his successor, (Major-General Gibbs,) he also was found mortally wounded; nor was Major-General Keane, the third of that rank in the army, though still living, in condition to assume the command; his wounds being such, as made necessary his immediate removal from the field of battle—a circumstance of diminished interest, from the fact, that “at that moment authority and obedience were both extinct. No one was disposed to issue an order, nor, had any been issued, would it have been obeyed.” In a word, all now was confusion and dismay—*Sauve qui peut*, became the general cry;—nor was the route to be restrained till after the fugitives had reached their encampment.

While the enemy's main attack had this disastrous issue, that made by the detached corps, under the direction of Thornton, had the most complete success. In conformity to the general orders of the 7th of January, this officer, with the fourteen hundred men assigned to his command, reached the bank of the river early in the evening of that day, when, to his surprise, he found no boats prepared to receive him, nor was it till near midnight, that a number, barely sufficient to transport one third of his detachment, was placed at his disposition. Believing, that to wait for an additional supply of boats, would entirely defeat the arrangements, so far as regarded the attack assigned to him, he determined to proceed with those which had been furnished, and make such use of his small force as circumstances should direct. He, accordingly, pressed vigorously forward—drove in an outpost which he found on his route, and soon after was able to present the head of his column before the American battery. A charge, promptly made by a few seamen, and well sustained by a part of the 85th regiment, led by himself, completely succeeded—giving him full and quiet possession of the work, and eighteen pieces of ordnance. While preparing to give to these a new direction, a message from General Lambert, apprizing him of what had occurred on the eastern bank of the river, and directing, on his part, a speedy return to the British camp, was received and promptly complied with.

Contemporaneously with this battle, an attempt was made (by a small squadron of British ships stationed off the mouths of the Mississippi for the purpose of

blockade) to ascend the river. On the 9th of January, when opposite to Fort St. Philip, they opened upon it a heavy fire of shot and shells, which, with few and short pauses, was continued for nine days and nights; when, failing to make any impression favorable to themselves, on either the fort or the garrison, they withdrew to their former position.

With these occurrences, the campaign on the Mississippi essentially ended, leaving to the American General the prosecution of a *petite guerre*, kept up on the outposts of the enemy, and to the British commander the higher duty of extricating himself and his army from a perilous position—an exploit, achieved without either loss or interruption, by a well-executed march made in the night of the 18th, from Villery's canal to the shore of Lake Borgne. At this point, Lambert's communications with the fleet were speedily reinstated; and on the 27th the army was transferred to Isle Dauphin, where, to console it for the late unsuccessful pursuit of "beauty and booty," a promise was made of the speedy capture of Mobile. In pursuing this object, it was soon perceived, that Fort Bowyer, the key of the position should be first secured, when a careful reconnoissance was made of that post, and a determination taken, "not to attack it on the side next the gulf," which might be capable of defence, but by a regular siege on the land side, where it was wholly and obviously indefensible. In conformity to these views, a siege in all its formality was instituted on the 8th of February—on the 10th, the batteries were carried within thirty yards of the ditch—on the

11th a surrender was agreed upon, and on the 12th an evacuation made of the post; events which, on the 13th, were followed by intelligence "that the war between the United States and Great Britain had been terminated by a treaty of peace, concluded at Ghent, in the month of December."

REMARKS.—The preceding details of the campaign of 1814-'15, in the south, will not be found uninteresting to the military reader, as well by the evidences of wisdom and knowledge which, in some cases, they furnish, as by the blunders and ignorance they exhibit in others. To give to the cases alluded to somewhat more of development than they received in the text, we subjoin the following commentary:—

1st. So long as there was reason to believe, that Nichols would succeed in rekindling an Indian war on our southern frontier, Pensacola, which he occupied as a place of rendezvous, supply, and instruction, for his allies, became an object of justifiable attack on our part, as well on principles of international law, as on those of military service; and, of course, entirely authorized the applications made by Jackson, for permission to capture that post. It must not, however, be dissembled, that, before the General began his march from Fort Montgomery, the circumstances of the case had undergone nearly a total change—Nichols having altogether failed in getting together a force competent to the object.⁴ Under this view of the subject, the General's attack and capture of the town, on the 7th of

¹ His Indian and negro force did not exceed 600 or 700 men.—*Col. Jansen's letters to the Secretary of War, &c.*

November, 1814, was, to say the least of it, decidedly ill-judged, involving at once an offence to a neutral power, and a palpable misapplication of both time and force, as regarded the defence of New Orleans.

2d. An error of similar character with the preceding, will be found in the fact, that, after the arrival of the British armament, the garrison of Fort Bowyer was not only continued, but increased; though, from its locality, wholly unable to aid in any important purpose of the campaign. Nor was this the whole extent of the evil, for, by the disposition made of this gallant corps, it was not only subjected to present inaction, but ultimately, as we have seen, to the perils of a siege, and the humiliation of a surrender.

3d. Among the few defences found at New Orleans, when the enemy arrived on the coast, were five or six gun-boats; well fitted for guarding the avenues, of which an enterprising enemy would avail himself, in passing from Lake Borgne to the bank of the Mississippi. But, from this important duty, the boats in question were withdrawn, and detached to the head of the lake, as a squadron of *reconnoissance*—a service more likely to be well-performed by unarmed, than by armed vessels.¹

4th. After losing the boats, it was certainly to be expected, that substitutes, possessing habits of vigi-

¹ Jackson, in a letter to the War Department, 16th and 17th of September, 1814, says:—"I beg leave to remark to the Secretary of the Navy, through you, that had three of the gun-boats, as I had ordered, been at Fort Bowyer, two if not all four of the enemies' vessels, would have fallen into our hands."

lance, if not powers of resistance, would have been found to replace them; and thus have kept the commander-in-chief informed of any important circumstance, connected with the enemy's movements, coming within their cognizance. Instead, however, of giving to this subject the attention it required, the mouth of Bayou Catalin, or Fishermen's village, was wholly neglected till the evening of the 21st of December; and the guard then given to it, but consisted of six militia men and two negroes; all of whom were found asleep, in a fisherman's hut, when the debarkation of the British army began.

5th. When, on the 1st of December, the commanding General arrived at New Orleans, his attention was properly directed to the safety of his outposts, the increase of his army, and an ample supply of munitions of war; but, by some ill-founded prejudice, all means of defence at New Orleans, coming under the general head of *fortification*, were either overlooked or rejected—a fact the more extraordinary, as the topography of the city and its environs, so distinctly indicated their use. Had the General been better acquainted with military history, he would not have suffered a single day, of the twenty he had for preparation, to have passed, without forming one or more intrenched camps for the protection of the city. To sustain this opinion, we offer the following maxims of Napoleon and Frederick: "Intrenchments are useful alike in offensive and defensive war. They furnish excellent means for retarding, embarrassing, enfeebling, and disquieting a superior enemy."—"To elude a battle, with

a force greater than your own, you must intrench: positions, as ordinarily found, requiring the aid of art." "If the ground in your choice offers natural means for securing your flanks, occupy it; and if such is not to be found, resort must be had to fortification."

6th. When, at one o'clock of the 23d, the General was accidentally apprized of the arrival of more than two thousand men (forming the elite of the British army) on the banks of the Mississippi, and within nine miles of their object, he promptly decided to take at once the offensive, march upon the enemy, and bring him to action, before a second debarkation could be made. In this project, there was an obvious mixture of skill and error. The employment of the armed vessel was well imagined; and the disposition made of the troops, to sustain and increase the impressions produced by the fire of the shipping, was sufficiently conformed to the rules of art; but here our praise must end—for the *darkness* thought necessary to success, became the proximate cause of its defeat. Had the attack made by the schooner taken place half an hour before daybreak of the 24th, the surprise and confusion, on the part of the enemy, would not have been less than it actually was; but with this important difference—that, in a morning attack, Jackson's movements would have been made with the use of his eyes; no confusion would have been seen in his columns, nor would the British division, stowed away as it was, "panic-struck and prostrate behind a dike," been deemed "too formidable for attack."¹ A single well-

¹ Eaton's Life of Jackson.

directed discharge of the American artillery, would have driven it from its hiding-place, and exposed it, in mass and disorder, to the fire of fifteen hundred American rifles and muskets. It will not be thought extravagant to add, that, under such circumstances, a speedy surrender of the whole British detachment would have followed.

7th. In the General's official letter of the 9th of January, we have a detail of the important occurrences of the day preceding—exhibiting, on the part of the enemy, a total rout, setting at defiance both persuasion and authority; a fact, which at once presents the question—why, under such circumstances, the victory had not been consummated, by a prompt and vigorous pursuit of the fugitives. To this question, three answers, different if not discordant, have been given; that of Jackson himself ascribes the omission altogether to “the defeat of Morgan on the western side of the river;” that of Eaton, the General's biographer and protégé, “to a want of arms, which the government had failed to supply;” while the historian of Louisiana attributes it to “a *bonhomme*,” somewhat akin to the inspiration which, according to Plutarch, prevented Hannibal from entering and sacking Rome, after the battle of Cannæ.

It may not be useless to see how far such reasons will be sustained by rules, probably coeval with war as a science. According to these, “when, from any cause, you find your enemy weak and dispirited, it becomes your duty to attack him promptly and vigorously.”—“Nothing should prevent you from pursuing

a beaten and flying enemy, but a total want of provisions."—"Why engage in a war, but to subdue an adversary? And if so, why, after beating him to-day, give him time to rally and fight you to-morrow? The mere possession of a field of battle, is a barren victory." "Decisive battles shorten wars, and thus confer a benefit on both belligerents." Yielding, however, to General Jackson, the right of interpreting military maxims, as freely as he was wont to interpret constitutional questions and legal enactments—that is, "*as he understood them,*" still it may be asked, why, if forbidden by prudence and humanity from destroying a beaten enemy, he should not have followed the example of Cesar, who, though refusing on this ground to fight Afranius, was, at the same time, careful to seize strategic points, cut him off from his supplies, and thus, without shedding a drop of blood, compel him to surrender.

That the adoption of this policy by Jackson, at any time between the battle of the 8th, and the retreat of the 18th of January, would have had a similar effect on Lambert, will not be doubted by those who know that, during the period we have mentioned, the temper of the British army had been much soured; their discipline greatly impaired; their self-confidence entirely lost; their magazine nearly exhausted; and their only source of supply (the British shipping) eighty miles distant;¹ ten of which were quagmire, furnishing a single, narrow, and dangerous pathway, on which

¹ Narrative of Campaigns in America, by a British officer.

were strategic points which, if seized and defended, by even small corps, would have completely severed Lambert from his base, and compelled him to choose between a surrender and famine.¹

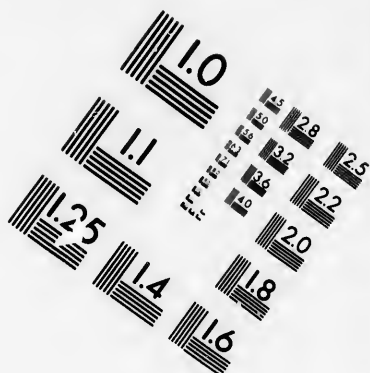
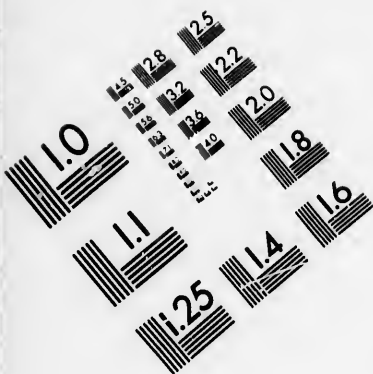
8th. If a pursuit of the enemy on the 8th, was, in the General's opinion, a game too hazardous to be adopted, what, under any view of the subject, prevented a seizure of the cannon, left behind him on the field of battle till midnight? A detachment of one hundred men would have anticipated Lambert, and deprived him of his guns, either by removing them, or by knocking off their trunnions. The omission to do this, is the more extraordinary, as the British batteries, after their abandonment, were visited, and the guns counted, by a part of Jackson's army.

Having thus freely discussed the errors of our own functionaries, it may not be amiss to glance at those committed by their opponents—were it only to illustrate the maxim, that, “to know how far the winners of battles are entitled to applause, we must take into consideration how much of their success was owing to the blunders of their adversaries.”

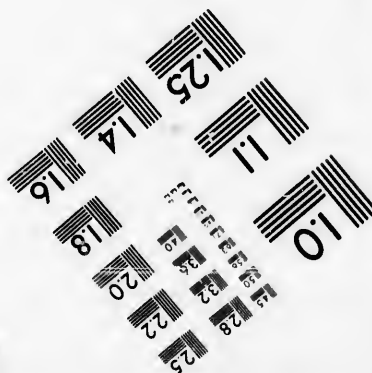
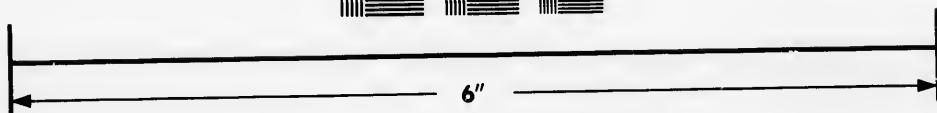
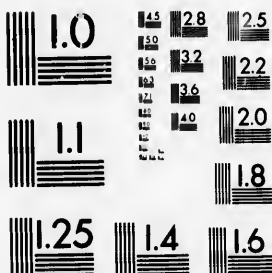
1st. We have seen that the first division of the British army, forming its advance, and amounting to two thousand four hundred combatants, arrived at 4 o'clock, A. M., of the 23d of December, at the junction of Villeray's canal with the Mazant, without loss, annoyance, fatigue, or even discovery; that, at half after eleven, it took a position on the eastern bank of the

¹ Latour's Memoirs.





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Mississippi, barely nine miles from its object of attack ; that between this and its present position, no American force or fortress of any kind had been established ; that an open country and good road led directly to the city ; that the mass of Jackson's army lay four miles north of this on the Gentilly road ; and, lastly, that, till half after one, P. M., the American General was wholly unapprized of the successful landing and near approach of his enemy.¹ Can it be doubted, under circumstances thus auspicious, that, if Keane, instead of halting, first at the mouth of Villeray's canal, and again on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, had marched vigorously forward from either point, he would have found New Orleans defenceless ? And again : had the British commander, at daybreak of the 24th, when the first division had been reinforced by the second, giving him an aggregate of four thousand eight hundred combatants, directed his columns on the new position taken that morning by Jackson, this officer must have chosen between fighting and flying ; and in either case, New Orleans must have fallen.

2d. Nor was this inaction less apparent, in omitting to disturb the labors of his enemy on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of the month—*three entire days*, during which the left flank of the American intrenchment was unfinished, and of course liable to be either stormed or turned—yet, were these important duties postponed for the paltry purpose of driving off, or destroying, a small armed vessel !—a service, which, as

¹ Latour's Memoirs.

the event showed, would have been well and readily performed by a single gun, a few hot balls, and half a dozen practised artillerists.

3d. The command of the army having now devolved on Major-General Pakenham, the 28th was employed in a reconnoissance and demonstration, made on the American line of defence, which, as we have seen, led to the conclusion, "that the works to be assailed, were not to be longer considered as field fortifications, but proceeded against by a regular siege.¹ An experiment of this kind was accordingly begun on the first of January; but, finding the American artillery more executive than their own, the plan was speedily abandoned, and another prescribed, differing from its predecessor only, by having annexed to it a *diversion*, to be made on the right flank of Jackson's intrenchments, and obviously intended to induce that officer to detach freely for its defence, from his *right* or *left*; and thus favor the assaults intended to be made on these points. It is not possible to say with certainty, what would have been the result, had this project been executed; but, fortunately, perhaps, for us, its contrivers, by the most obvious blundering, completely defeated it. The errors alluded to were—failing to supply a sufficient number of boats to transport Thornton's entire detachment across the river; want of punctuality in assembling such as had been procured; omitting to establish signals of departure and progress between the main army and the detachment; and, lastly, by

¹ Narrative of British Campaigns in America.

directing that the different parts of the operation should take place *simultaneously*—in direct contradiction to the well-known maxim, that, “a *demonstration*, made on an enemy’s line of battle, and intended to draw his attention from points destined to attack, must (to fulfil that intention) “*precede the main operation.*”¹

4th. The conduct of Lambert, in whom the casualties of the 8th had vested the command of the army, was marked throughout with great circumspection and judgement. Though deciding, on the 9th, to forbear all farther attempts on New Orleans, and to make good a retreat to the shipping as soon and as safely as was possible, he so contrived to manage the business, as to give no indication to his enemy of such intention; and even impressed him with a suspicion that “availing himself of the *Bienvenu* or the *Sumonville*, he might yet turn his left flank, and carry the city by surprise,”² an idea which may, perhaps, best explain Jackson’s inactivity after his decisive battle of the 8th of January.

¹ Narrative of British Campaigns in America.

² Latour’s Memoir.

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APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

Plan of Campaign.

THE time at which we had reason to expect an ascendancy on Lake Ontario, has arrived. If our hopes on that head be fulfilled, though but for a short period, we must avail ourselves of the circumstance, and give to the campaign a new and increased activity. For this purpose, our forces on the Ontario should be concentrated; because neither section of them, as now located, will be competent to any important object. The point of concentration is more doubtful.

1st. If at Fort George, our utmost success can but give us the command of the peninsula, which, if Harrison succeed against Malden, will be of diminished interest, both as respects us and the enemy; to us, because Malden will more completely cover our western frontier, and control the savages, than Forts George and Erie; to the enemy, because Malden lost, our inroad on the peninsula will but have the effect of *shortening*, not of *dividing*, their line of defence; in a word, success at this point, will not give to the campaign a character of decisive advantage.

2d. If, on the other hand, we make Sackett's Harbor the point of concentration, Kingston may be made our object of attack; which, by the way, will but be returning to the plan of operations prescribed to General Dearborn. This post is one of great importance to the enemy, and will no doubt be defended with much obstinacy, and with all the resources which can be safely drawn from other points. That it may

be taken by a joint application of our naval and military means, is not, however, to be questioned. The enclosed diagram, will show the number and character of the enemy's defences. His batteries marked No. 1, cannot be sustained but by his fleet. These carried, he is open to a descent at Nos. 2 and 3. If he divides his force between the two, we oppose one half of his strength with the whole of ours. If he concentrates at No. 2, we seize No. 3, and command both the town and the shipping. If he concentrates at No. 3, we occupy No. 2, and with nearly the same result.

Contemporaneously with this operation, another may be made on the side of Lake Champlain, indicating an intention of attacking Montreal and its dependencies, and really attacking them, if to save Kingston, these posts have been materially weakened.

3d. A different operation to which our means may be competent, would be a movement from Sackett's Harbor to Madrid, on the St. Lawrence. At this place the river may, as I am informed, be most easily crossed. The ground opposite to it, is said to be a narrow bluff, skirted by the river on one side, and on the other, by a swamp of considerable extent and difficult passage. This gained and fortified, the fleet continuing to command the water-line from the head of the river to Ogdensburgh, and Lake St. Francis occupied by a few gun-boats and barges, the army may march on Montreal in concert with General Hampton. The only natural difficulty, in the execution of this measure, will be found in crossing a branch of Grand river, which, though generally deep, may, at this season, be fordable, or safely passed in rafts, covered by our artillery.

Under the preceding statements, it is respectfully submitted whether it will not be most advisable to make Sackett's Harbor the point of concentration, and leave to the commanding General an election (to be determined by circumstances) between the two plans, suggested under the 2d and 3d heads.

Approved 23d July, 1813.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

*Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.**August 8th, 1813.*

The main objection to any plan which should carry our operations wide of Kingston, and westward of it, is, that, in the event of its success, it leaves the strength of the enemy unbroken; but wounding the tail of the lion, and, of course, not calculated to hasten the termination of the war, either by increasing our own vigor, or by materially diminishing that of the enemy. Kingston is the great depot of his resources; and so long as he retains this, and keeps open his communication with the sea, he will not want the means of multiplying his naval and other defences, and of reinforcing and renewing the war in the west. Kingston, therefore, as well on grounds of policy, as of military principle, presents the first and great object of the campaign.

[No. 2.]

*Secretary of War to General Hampton.**September 25th and 28th, 1813.*

Commodore Chauncey left the harbor on the 18th with the intention of running up to Fort George, and covering the transportation of the troops from that point to this. On the 21st he had not arrived—the effect, as I suppose, of adverse winds. This circumstance will necessarily bring with it a delay in the execution of our joint operations, and indicate the propriety of your not advancing beyond Malone, or the Four Corners, until you have advice of Wilkinson's movement. An express can reach you in thirty hours, and enable you to gain the village of Coghawaga, as early as may be proper.

The position you have taken, is better calculated to keep up the enemy's doubts with regard to your point of attack.

STRONG.

than any other. Hold it fast till we approach you. In the present state of the campaign, we ought to run *no risks* by *separate attacks*, when *combined ones* are *practicable* and *sure*. Had you been able to have broken the head of Sir George's defences, and seized St. Johns, it would have embarrassed his knightship; but on the whole, the western movement is to be preferred, because, in it, there are *safety* and *concert*; and, in the meantime, enough to render necessary his attention to different points, and thus keep his forces in a state of division.

[No. 3.]

By command of the General, who is too much indisposed to write, I have the honor to send you the subjoined report of the movements of this division from the 19th of September to the 28th of October, both days included.

19th of September. Troops assembled at Cumberland Head, consisting of four thousand infantry, one squadron of dragoons and of artillery, one 12-pounder, one howitzer, and eight 6-pounders. Embarked the infantry in boats, the artillery and horse sent by land. Arrived at Chazy about midnight. Elite detached under Majors Snelling and Hamilton, to Odel-town, to surprise two British pickets, forming Prevost's advanced posts; one of these, stationed in the village, the other, near it, on the lake shore. Both parties of the elite misled by their guides. Snelling, finding himself off the track leading to the picket on the shore, pushed for the other, in the town, and killed or captured nearly the whole of it. Hamilton arrived soon after, and soon after him the army.

20th. Examining our new position, we found in our front, a hemlock swamp of great extent, (behind which lay Acadie,) the position the General aimed at; on our left, the St. Lawrence, with Prevost's main body; on our right, the Sorel, with

the posts St. John and Chamblée, and a strong regiment under Col. Taylor, commanding on the Isle Aux Noix, covered by three gun-boats, carrying each a heavy gun. The roads through the swamp, carefully abbatied and occupied by Canadian militia, presented serious difficulties, which would not have prevented us from advancing and removing obstructions, as we could, but for a *scarcity of water*, so great as made it necessary to send back our horses and draught cattle to Champlain. From this cause, a council of war unanimously decided that this route be given up, and that of Chateaugay taken in its stead.

21st. Began our march this afternoon for Four Corners.

25th. Arrived at that village, distant twenty-five miles from St. Regis, and forty from Coghawaga—the latter said to be within ten miles of Montreal.

26th. Employed in improving our communication with Plattsburgh.

4th of October. Road finished to-day—quite a turnpike. During the afternoon, the camp of the elite was smartly attacked by a British, Canadian, and Indian party. Speedily routed and driven off to their camp, about twelve or fourteen miles from this place, where they are busy in obstructing the road. Two of our men killed, Lieutenant Nash and a private, both of the 33d regiment.

12th. Several deserters came in to-day. One of them, a native of New England, gives a very clear account of the force and positions, past and present, of the enemy. Chateaugay route, no defence upon it till we took our present position. Detachments have since been sent to form two lines of defence, both on the western side of the Chateaugay; the one six miles southward of the confluence of English river and Chateaugay, the other, about the same distance northward of it. The works at both places, when finished, will consist of heavy abbaties, flanked by block-houses.

18th. Another deserter came in to-day. Gives the following account of the enemy's strength on each line :—

finished. The enemy's entire force on this line did not exceed three hundred and fifty combatants, altogether Canadian and Indian, and commanded by a militia colonel, (De Sallaberry.)

25th. The plan of attack adopted by the General, was to detach Colonel Purdy with the elite and 1st brigade, forming the most efficient part of the army, across the river; and, by a night march, gain the fording place on the left of the enemy's line, recross the river at that point, and, at dawn of day, attack the enemy's rear; while Izzard's brigade, under his own direction, should pursue the road, and, at the same hour, attack it in front. The whole of this plan miscarried shamefully; Purdy's column, probably misled, fell into an ambuscade, and was quickly beaten and routed; and that of Izzard, after a few discharges, was ordered to retreat.

28th. The two brigades again united, when, with the sanction of a council of war, they returned to the Four Corners.

W. KING, *Adjutant-General.*

[No. 4.]

Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.

September 20th, 1813.

In the haste with which my letter by Major Lee was written, I omitted to notice your suggestion, that "the main body of the enemy, (4,000 men,) leaving to Yeo and the fleet the defence of Kingston, may follow you, and fall upon your rear," &c. Such an event is, in my opinion, highly improbable, and decidedly impossible, if Chauncey put himself in a position to command both channels, as he intends to do. But again: what chance in the game (should the contingency you anticipate happen) could be more propitious to our views, since, in executing his purpose, the enemy must necessarily forego all the advantages given him by his fortress and his fleet, and con-

sent to a field-fight with a force double his own? In such a case, therefore, your course is obvious; turn upon and beat him, and follow up your blows till you get possession of Kingston. You will thus literally fulfil the orders you have received, and merit the baton of a field-marshal.

[No. 5.]

Colonel W. Scott to the Secretary of War.

GEORGETOWN, December 31st, 1813.

I left Fort George on the 13th of October last, by order of Major-General Wilkinson with the whole of the regular troops of that garrison, and was relieved by Brigadier-General McClure, with a body of the New York detached militia. Fort George, as a field-work, might be considered as *complete at that period*. It was garnished with ten pieces of artillery, (which number might easily have been increased from the spare ordnance at the opposite fort,) with an ample supply of fixed ammunition, &c., as the enclosed receipt for those articles will exhibit.

Fort Niagara, on the 14th October, was under the immediate command of Captain Leonard, 1st artillery, who, beside his own company, had Captain Read's, of the same regiment, together with such of General McClure's brigade as had refused to cross the river. Lieutenant-Colonels Flemming, Bloom, and Dobbins, of the militia, had successively been in command of this fort by order of the Brigadier-General, but I think neither of them was present at the above period. Major-General Wilkinson, in his order to me for the removal of the regular troops on that frontier, excepted the two companies of the 1st artillery, then at Fort Niagara. And under the supposition that I should meet water transport for my detachment at the mouth of the Genesee river, I had

his orders to take with me the whole of the convalescents left in the different hospitals by the regiments which had accompanied him. This order I complied with.

[No. 6.]

General L. Cass to the Secretary of War.

WILLIAMSVILLE, *January 12th*, 1813.

I passed this day the ruins of Buffalo. It exhibits a scene of distress and destruction, such as I have never before witnessed. The events which have recently transpired in this quarter have been so astonishing and unexpected, that I have been induced to make some inquiry into their causes and progress; and, doubting whether you have received any correct information upon the subject, I now trouble you with the detail.

The fall of Niagara has been owing to the most criminal negligence. The force in it was fully competent to its defence. The commanding officer, Captain Leonard, it is confidently said, was at his own house, three miles from the fort, and all the officers appear to have rested in as much security as though no enemy was near them. Captains Rodgers and Hampton, both of the 24th, had companies in the fort. Both of them were absent from it. Their conduct ought to be strictly investigated. I am also told that Major Wallace, of the 5th, was in the fort. He escaped, and is now at Erie. The circumstances attending the destruction of Buffalo, you will have learned before this reaches you. But the force of the enemy has been greatly magnified. From the most careful examination, I am satisfied that not more than six hundred and fifty men of regulars, militia and Indians, landed at Black Rock. To oppose these, we had from two thousand five hundred to three thousand militia. All, except very few of them,

behaved in the most cowardly manner. They fled without discharging a musket. The enemy continued on this side of the river until Saturday. All their movements betrayed symptoms of apprehension. A vast quantity of property was left in the town uninjured, and the Ariel, which lies four miles above, upon the beach, is safe. Since the 1st inst., they have made no movement. They continue in the possession of Niagara, and will probably retain it until a force competent to its reduction arrives in its vicinity.

[No. 7.]

The pretences set up by the General, in vindication of his disobedience, were a want of food for men, forage for cattle and horses, and means of transporting more of the former, than each soldier could carry on his back. The testimony given on Wilkinson's trial, in relation to these assertions, is as follows:—

General Bissel deposeth—"That he reached the Four Corners with his regiment, on the 15th of November, from St. Regis—that the marching was generally dry, the roads frozen, and part of them sandy—that, for a few miles through the woods, the frost, in some places, yielded to loaded wagons—that he had a number of horses with his regiment, but found no difficulty in procuring supplies for them, his quartermaster purchasing a considerable quantity of hay and corn, within three miles of the Four Corners."

Colonel Thomas, quartermaster-general of Hampton's army, deposeth—"That there was always on hand full supplies of hard bread, flour, salt pork, and beef, and beef cattle with the army; and that he was always competent to furnish means of transportation for said army, wherever it might be ordered to move, as well after as before General Wilkinson's

order to General Hampton to join the army on the St. Lawrence."

Major Wadsworth, issuing commissary, deposeth—"That he had constantly a full supply for the troops, of hard bread, flour, salt pork, and beef; and after the 1st of October, constantly with the army, a considerable number of beef cattle. About the 10th of November, when the division moved from Chateaugay (Four Corners) to Plattsburgh, there was in deposit forty-five days' provision of bread and flour, a considerable quantity of salt meat, and at the Four Corners and its vicinity, seven or eight hundred head of fat cattle."

Captain Conklin, of the 4th U. S. infantry, deputy quartermaster, being asked by the court what time it would have taken to remove the division, with its provision and baggage, from the Four Corners to St. Regis, on the St. Lawrence, deposeth—"That he did not exactly know the distance between the two places, but if twenty-five miles, as reported, it would have taken three days."—See Wilkinson's Trial.

[No. 8.]

Minutes of a council of war, holden at Sackett's Harbor, August 26th, 1813. Present, Major-General Wilkinson, Major-General Lewis, Commodore Chauncey, Brigadier-General Brown, and Brigadier-General Swartwout, quartermaster-general.

Major-General Wilkinson states to the council the views of the government, and the relative situation of affairs. The conquest of the province of Upper Canada, comprises the instructions of the Executive of the United States for the service of the army; the impending campaign, and the reduction of Kingston, by a direct attack, or indirect movement, embraces the previsory object of those instructions.

From the best information possessed, the main force of the enemy in Upper Canada, opposed to this command, is divided between the head of Lake Ontario, Kingston, and Prescott—say, at the first place, two thousand regular troops, beside militia and auxiliary savages; at Kingston, three thousand six hundred and fifty regulars, and one thousand five hundred militia, together with the naval force when in port, estimated at one thousand, or twelve hundred men; and at Prescott, eight hundred and fifty men: making a total of at least nine thousand combatants. But this force is so divided, that not more than four thousand men can be brought to act seasonably with effect at any given point, unless we should attack Kingston; in which case, by the addition of seamen and marines, the number may be increased to six thousand, for the defence of the various, extensive, and widely-detached works of that depot.

The whole present effective force of the army of this district, may be estimated at seven thousand four hundred combatants, exclusive of the naval department. But this force may, it is expected, by the recovery of the sick, and the junction of recruits, be augmented to nine thousand, exclusive of militia, on whom no solid reliance can be placed, by the 20th of next month.

Our army, at present, occupies the following places, viz: At Fort George and Niagara, three thousand five hundred; at Oswego, one hundred; at this place, two thousand; and at Burlington, Lake Champlain, four thousand. This distraction of our force weakens our hands, and puts it out of our power to make any decisive stroke to break the strength, and impair the vigor, of the enemy. Indeed, the division on Lake Champlain is too remote to afford us prompt assistance in this quarter, should it become necessary, but it may operate a powerful diversion on the side of Montreal, where it is believed the enemy rests his defence chiefly on his organized militia.

The season is wasting rapidly, and the honor and interests of the nation imperiously demand, that a deadly blow should

be struck somewhere. In the meantime, the enemy continues to reinforce his posts in this quarter, and to strengthen his position in the neighborhood of Fort George, where the commander-in-chief is now acting in person. As the success of every operation will depend on the conjunct exertions of the army and navy, it is required by the Executive that a cordial co-operation, and a perfectly good understanding, should be maintained between the commanders of those departments respectively.

Having submitted this statement of facts to the consideration of the council, Major-General Wilkinson requests their sentiments on the following points :—

1st. To wait, in our present positions, a combat between the rival squadrons, for the supremacy on the lake.

2d. To assemble a sufficient force at Fort George to cut up the enemy in that quarter—then to descend to this place, call the division from Champlain, incorporate the whole, and make a direct attack on Kingston.

3d. To concentrate all the troops on the lake, in this vicinity, order the division on Lake Champlain to make a feint on Montreal, or to carry a real attack against it, should circumstances warrant, and then, with the troops assembled here, to reduce Kingston, and proceed against Montreal, should the season permit; or,

4th. To rendezvous the whole of the troops on the lake, in this vicinity, and, in co-operation with the squadron, make a bold feint on Kingston, slip down the St. Lawrence, lock up the enemy in our rear, to starve and surrender, or oblige him to follow us without artillery, baggage, or provisions, and, eventually, to lay down his arms; to sweep the St. Lawrence of armed vessels, and, in concert with the division under Major-General Hampton, take possession of Montreal.

Upon the various propositions submitted by the commander-in-chief to the council, consisting of the general officers of the division, and Commodore Chauncey, of the navy, they are of opinion—

1st. That it is not necessary to await the result of a conflict

between the hostile squadrons, as the operations of the army, in the event of the adoption of either of these propositions, will not depend on a co-operation with the fleet, farther than to secure the passage of the troops into the St. Lawrence.

2d. The second proposition is rejected, because the object appears to be a partial one, as far as relates to the proposed operation against the division in the neighborhood of Fort George. The loss of time, also, would probably render it difficult to carry an attack against Kingston this campaign.

3d. This proposition is also considered as a partial operation, and one for which the force upon this lake might prove inadequate.

4th. The last and fourth plan meets the approbation of the council. The object appears feasible, and, if accomplished, the upper country must fall, of course, being incapable of subsisting the enemy's force for any length of time; and the possession of Montreal will certainly destroy the line of communication between the upper and lower province. The feint on Kingston is reserved for farther consideration.

(Signed,)

MORGAN LEWIS,
ISAAC CHAUNCEY,
ROBERT SWARTWOUT,
JACOB BROWN.

A true copy from the original, in my possession.

R. H. McPHERSON, *Captain and Secretary.*

The following note, in the hand-writing of General Wilkinson, and signed by him, is endorsed on the margin of the document, of which this is a copy:—

“PLATTSBURGH, *March 1st, 1814.*

“Having just taken command of the army, and being, consequently, a stranger to the force and position of the enemy, the information (offered to the council) on these points was chiefly derived from Major-General Lewis, and Brigadier-General Brown.

(Signed,) “JAMES WILKINSON, *Major-General.*”

[No. 9.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Sackett's Harbor, Sept. 22d, 1813.

DEAR GENERAL: I this morning wrote a short letter to you, acknowledging the receipt of your despatches of the 16th, 17th, and 18th inst., but from interruption, was unable to say more than a few words on the point to which you call my attention, and request my advice. To supply this defect, I subjoin the following observations:—

The facts which appear to embarrass you, are precisely those which, in my judgement, leave no doubt of the course you ought to pursue; for if the British force, now investing Fort George, amounts to three thousand combatants, exclusive of militia and Indians, and if Yeo and the fleet be co-operating with it, the defence of Kingston must necessarily be left to a garrison not exceeding twelve hundred men; many of whom, according to General Brown's statement, are broken down by service or intemperance, and fit only for light garrison duty—a state of things most propitious to our objects, and one of which we ought immediately to avail ourselves; for, Kingston captured, the whole of the upper province, westward of the mouth of the St. Lawrence, with all the British force it contains, naval or military, falls with it. Compared with an acquisition giving such results, of how little importance would be a victory gained on the peninsula, limited in its effects to the ground on which it occurs, leaving Kingston untouched, and Yeo to his ordinary skill and activity on the water?

But, again: What solid reasons are there for believing, that were your project adopted, a battle or a victory would necessarily or even probably follow? Will the advanced stage of the season justify such a belief? By your own admission, twenty-one days will be indispensable for preparation, which, counting from the 25th inst. (the day on which you may receive this letter) will bring the commencement of your enter-

prise to the 13th of October—a date at which the weather of this climate is always doubtful, and often such, as of itself will be sufficient to put an end to all military operations. But, weather aside, will the enemy fight a decisive battle on your invitation, and in direct opposition to what is so obviously his own interest and policy? This is not to be expected from an old soldier, acquainted with that rule of the art which forbids him to fight, but on motives and calculations entirely his own; and still less from Prevost, who appears to have perfectly understood, that, by keeping up the war on the peninsula, he can most easily and certainly secure Kingston and Montreal, the two great and vital points in his line of defence. Admitting, however, for a moment, that De Rottenburgh, the commander de facto, is an ignorant and unprincipled blockhead, regardless of the wisdom and experience of others, totally indifferent to the interests of the nation that gives him bread, and solicitous only to illustrate his own name by a battle, what reason is there for supposing that such a man, at the head of three thousand veterans, with a cloud of militia and Indians at his disposal, would suffer himself and his army to be cut up or captured en masse, as you expect he would, without inflicting blows nearly as numerous and fatal as those he received. On the other hand, supposing the character of this commander to be just the reverse of all that is said of him above, and that, sufficiently sensible of the duty of yielding personal considerations to national objects and interests, he should adopt the wise and wary system, of just fighting enough to preserve the morale of his own troops, while he drew yours after him step by step, into the gorges and defiles of the mountains—what in this case would be your resource—a battle or a retreat? And, in either event, what becomes of the greater objects of the campaign? In this case, as in that of Dearborn, they must be postponed for another year.

From these views of the subject, there is no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that nothing forbids, and everything invites, to a prompt and steady prosecution of the plan of operations already prescribed to you—concentrating, as speedily

as possible, the two divisions at the Harbor, and, in conjunction with the fleet, attacking Kingston.

(Signed,)

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Major-Gen. WILKINSON.

P. S. A word or two, in relation to things you must soon leave behind you. I have already said that Fort George is to be retained, for, beside depriving the enemy of a convenient harbor, its character and position will furnish useful means for checking any attempt made by the enemy on our frontier. Flank movements, including the passage of a river like the Niagara, with a hostile fortress on each side of it, cannot be made but at great risk. My letter will give the extent of the regular force to be left in the fort, and do not forget that our old friend, Moses Porter, is to succeed you in the command of the fort and its dependencies. If P. B. Porter and his associates do not over-rate their popularity, and are able to do even half as much as they promise, the frontier will have nothing to fear from your removal. Should there, however, be any doubt of this, call for another militia brigade in addition to McClure's, before you set out. You already have a copy of the unexecuted order given to Dearborn with respect to the removal of Leonard from the command of Fort Niagara. The authority of this still exists, and should be immediately exercised.

Hoping soon to see you, I am, &c.,

J. A.

[No. 10.]

Memorandum sent by Wilkinson to Chauncey, and Chauncey's answer.

The main body of the division of the army at this point, has sailed to join that at Sackett's Harbor, at the head of the

St. Lawrence, with the design to reduce Kingston and Prescott, and to proceed against Montreal.

The main body of the enemy's force is, in this vicinity, at the head of the lake and in York, leaving Kingston very weak.

The enemy's squadron, beaten and forced to the head of the lake, is not in a situation to attempt the regaining of Kingston harbor, while the American squadron keeps an eye upon it.

Under these circumstances, will it be for the interests of the service, that the American squadron should accompany the flotilla with the troops, or shall it watch the British squadron, effect its destruction, and prevent the sudden transport of the division of the enemy by a rapid movement by water to reinforce Kingston.

It strikes me, that, in the first case, the enemy being apprized of our intention, by our movement, which cannot be concealed, may, with the aid of their squadron, reach Kingston before our troops are embodied and organized for the attack; and thus the reduction of the place may be spun out to the consumption of the season, and, of course, the main design must fail.

In the second case, while the American squadron blocks up that of the enemy at the head of the lake, the flotilla will enjoy a free sea, and the British, by being cut off from transport by water, will be thrown back a month in their arrival at Kingston; long before which period, the place must be taken, and our army landed on Montreal island—no act of God intervening to thwart our intentions.

FORT GEORGE, *Oct. 1st, 1813.*

In this state of things, Major-General Wilkinson requests of Commodore Chauncey, his opinions and advice.

U. S. SHIP PIKE, OFF NIAGARA,

October 1st, 1813.

DEAR SIR: The reasons you assign, in your memorandum, why the American squadron should remain in this vicinity,

in preference to accompanying the flotilla down the lake, are so conclusive, and correspond so exactly with my own ideas and wishes upon the subject, that I have no others to offer. I will barely observe, that my best exertions shall be used to keep the enemy in check in this part of the lake, or effect his destruction. Yet, with my utmost exertions and greatest vigilance, he may (when favored by a strong westerly wind) slip past me in the night, and get 18 or 20 hours the start of me down the lake, before I can discover his movement. If that should be the case, I shall lose no time in following him, with so much celerity, as to prevent his interrupting you in your operation upon Kingston.

(Signed)

ISAAC CHAUNCEY.

That a man of Wilkinson's habits, should have yielded to a revery like this, may not appear extraordinary; but that any project, impracticable in itself; giving to the fleet a false position; diverting it from the important duty of covering the descent of an entire division of the army from Fort George to Sackett's Harbor; and directly exposing this to capture or destruction—should have met the high approbation and cordial welcome it received from the naval commander, is a problem less easily solved. "Your argument," says this functionary, "*is conclusive, and so exactly meets my ideas and wishes on the subject, that I have no others to offer.*" Yet, in the moment of this *applause and adoption*, the commodore is careful to add—"Do what I may, (and my best exertions and greatest vigilance shall be employed,) the enemy, if favored with a westerly wind, may pass me in the night, and get eighteen or twenty miles start of me down the lake, before I discover his movement"—an opinion entirely sustained by the event. Fortunately, Yeo, in making good his retreat to Kingston, kept the northern side of the lake; and thus left the boats carrying the division (much dispersed, and wholly defenceless) without molestation. Had any accident given a more southern direction to his course, the whole division would no doubt have been sacrificed.

[No. 11.]

"The general impression on my mind at the time was, that the Secretary was in favor of attacking Kingston, and that General Wilkinson was for going to Montreal."—Gen. Lewis's testimony given on Wilkinson's trial.—(See *Wilkinson's memoirs*.) "On General Wilkinson's arrival from Niagara at Sackett's Harbor, the Secretary of War gave it as his opinion, that no time should be lost in moving the troops to Grenadier island, so as to meet those coming from Niagara; and, with our united strength, advance *directly upon Kingston*, before the enemy could have time to concentrate for the defence of that position. The Secretary appeared to believe, that the attack upon Kingston, would not delay us long, as Commodore Chauncey had now the command of the lake, and could co-operate. *General Wilkinson differed with the Secretary in opinion. He was opposed to attacking Kingston*; and appeared disposed to delay the embarkation of the troops at the harbor, for the purpose of perfecting the organization with the troops from Niagara—stating that he had ordered the corps from that place to Henderson's harbor, with a view to that object."—General Brown's statement of a conversation between the Secretary of War and Gen. Wilkinson, on the 4th of October, 1813.

[No. 12.]

Extract of a letter from Gen. Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, dated Oct. 18th, 1813.

"The diminution of our force by disease and various casualties, and more especially, the uncertainty of the period of our movement against Montreal, render it necessary

in my judgement, that you should revoke the order of march you have given to General Hampton, and that he should be directed to march for Morrisville, as rapidly as may be consistent with the health of his troops. This proposition is founded on the presumption, that we make the reduction of Kingston, and the conquest of the upper province, the first objects of our operation."

WAR DEPARTMENT,
October 19th, 1813.

I received your letter of yesterday, and should have answered it more promptly, but that business of the south and west required my immediate attention.

When, on the 4th inst., you returned from Fort George, we had the prospect of a speedy concentration of our force at this point; the Niagara division had sailed on the 30th ult.; the enemy's principal force occupied a cantonment between Lakes Erie and Ontario; his fleet was at the head of the lake, and his garrison at Kingston, reduced to seven or eight hundred men. Under these circumstances, it was no doubt wise to decide, as we did, that our first attack should be carried against that place: but do these circumstances any longer exist? The expected concentration is but now effected, (18th October) a reinforcement of 1500 men has been thrown into Kingston; the British fleet has got into port there, and our force, from disease and other casualties is, according to your statement, diminished and diminishing. To reinstate and augment this, it is now proposed to order General Hampton from his present position at Chateaugay to Morrisville, on the St. Lawrence. These places are distant upward of one hundred miles. A march of such length at this season of the year, and in the present condition of the roads, loaded as he is with a train of artillery, with means of subsistence, and with tents and baggage, cannot be performed under fifteen days; to which must be added, the time necessary for giving the order, for settling the arrangements preliminary to such a

movement, and for making also the subsequent one from Morrisville to the mouth of Gaunoqui; all of which would probably protract the moment of junction till the 15th of November. Admonished as we are, by the storms which have assailed us for ten days past, and which have not yet ceased, I cannot but think, that a period so late, would of itself be fatal to the project.

Other circumstances lead to the same conclusion. Beginning our operation from the mouth of the Gaunoqui, we shall have a march of twenty-four miles to Kingston, and through a country covered with woods, destitute of inhabitants, and pervious only by two roads, which, without any interruption from the enemy, are represented as nearly impassable at present. This movement (unlike that originally projected) cannot be made without the aid of horses, and a less number of these than six hundred, including the 2d regiment of dragoons, is, I understand, deemed insufficient. Now, these must be fed, and their provender drawn from this place, as the country between Gravelly Point and Putneyville affords none, and interposes a swampy desert, which shuts us out from the supplies of Rossie and Rayville, &c. An important question arises here—can the necessary forage be obtained from this neighborhood? The quartermaster-general says “it cannot, that it must be carted from Lowville (40 miles distant) and transported hence by water.” These facts on your plan, menace our operations against Kingston with a delay, which would probably surround us with all the embarrassments of a Canadian winter, and extinguish every hope of grasping the other, the safer, and the greater object below. I call it the safer and the greater object, because—At Montreal, you find the weaker place, and the smaller force to encounter; at Montreal, you meet a fresh, unexhausted, efficient reinforcement of four thousand men; at Montreal, you approach your own resources, and establish between you and them, an easy and expeditious intercourse; at Montreal, you occupy a point which must be gained, in carrying your attacks home to the purposes of the war, and which, if

seized now, will save one campaign; at Montreal, you hold a position which completely severs the enemy's line of operations, which shuts up the Ottawa, as well as the St. Lawrence, against him, and which, while it restrains all below, withers and perishes all above itself.

These, General, are the thoughts which present themselves on your proposition, which I understand, as abandoning for this campaign the proposed attack on Montreal. I am entirely disposed to listen to all that can be said on the other side of the question, but at present, the reasons assigned leave me no doubt of the policy of pursuing, promptly and firmly, the plan already indicated, and which, beside the approbation of the President, has received the sanction of a council of war. I am, &c.,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Major-General WILKINSON.

Extract from General Wilkinson's letter of the 19th of October, 1813, to the Secretary of War.

"Personal considerations would make me prefer a visit to Montreal, to an attack on Kingston, but before I abandon this attack, which, by my instructions, I am ordered to make, it is necessary to my justification that you should, by the authority of the President, direct the operations of the army under my command, particularly against Montreal."

The Secretary of War to General Wilkinson.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

October 20th, 1813.

I received your letter of yesterday by Major Lee. You appear to have written it under an impression that your instructions of August last made a direct attack upon Kingston unavoidable. A copy of these instructions is before me, and in the last paragraph of them we find a summary of their substance. It is as follows: "After this exposition, it is unnecessary to add, that, in conducting the present campaign, you

will make *Kingston your principal object*, and that you will choose, as circumstances may indicate, between a *direct* and an *indirect* attack on that post." Both modes of attack are slightly detailed in these orders, and a preference given to the latter, but without at all infringing your right of choice, or in any degree lessening your responsibility. Nor am I now at liberty to change the ground of these instructions, since the only effect of this would be, to substitute my opinion for yours. The former has not, however, been withheld; it has been given freely and fully, and is yet unshaken by any consideration presented to my mind.

As we are now about to part, it may be proper that I should subjoin to what I have said in favor of a movement on Montreal, a short statement of my objection to a direct attack on Kingston.

1st. If its garrison consists of four thousand of the best troops of the enemy, (as you suggest,) your attack will fail.

2d. If your attack fails, your retreat is impracticable.

3d. Your descent must necessarily be made above or below the town, on the water's edge, and within a short distance of your object. If made below the town, your fleet cannot cover it; if made above the town, it must be done in presence of the enemy, and within stroke of his fleet, and that he will think the object sufficient to justify the risk cannot be doubted. Besides, an approach on this side, however successful, leaves to the enemy the means of escaping.

4th. The experiment already made of the lake navigation is not encouraging. Though pressed by no enemy, other than the weather, the army has not been able to reach Grenadier island, but in broken order, and with considerable loss. On your plan, they have eighteen other miles to go on the open lake, and much of this distance under the eye of the British fleet. Is it probable, that our *scows* will be able to navigate this remaining distance, (a. a season, and under circumstances so unfavorable,) in better order, or with less loss?

(Signed,)

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 13.]

*Proofs of Wilkinson's drunkenness, while conducting the army
down the St. Lawrence.*

“On or about the 6th of November, 1813, (the night the American troops passed Ogdensburgh and Prescott,) having received orders to muffle the oars, and leave men enough barely sufficient to man the boats, we marched the remainder by land below Ogdensburgh. When we arrived, as we thought, near the place where we were to meet the boats, (say a mile below Ogdensburgh,) we halted at a small house near the river (D. Thorp's); and while there, discovered a boat approaching the shore. Major Forsyth hailed the crew, and on explanation was informed it was Gen. Wilkinson's boat. The major, myself, and others, met the General at the water's edge, and asked if he wished to come on shore. Indicating that he did, Forsyth and myself took him by the arms to assist him out of the boat, and up the bank. We found him most abominably intoxicated, and hurried him into the house; during which time, he was muttering the most desperate imprecations against the enemy—saying, that if they did not cease firing, he would blow to dust the whole British garrison, and lay waste their country. After seating him on a chair near the fire, the major and myself retired to consult what was best to be done, under the present situation of the commander-in-chief; when we concluded to detail and post a guard near the door of the house, to keep out both citizens and soldiers. I made the detail and posted the sentinel, and soon afterward perceiving the General to nod, and apprehending that he would fall into the fire, I proposed laying him on something like a bedstead that was in the room, and having done so, he was, in a very short time, in a sound sleep. The time to the best of my recollection, at which we received the General, was about two o'clock in the morning. For some time after this occurrence, he was not very accessi-

ble; it was said that he was in bad health."—*Major Birdsal's statement.*

Owin Chatfield deposeth and saith, that, on the night the American army passed Prescott, this deponent went to the house of Daniel Thorp. This deponent farther saith, that Gen. James Wilkinson was there, and in a state of intoxication; and that his deportment, and obscene and vulgar conversation, but too plainly manifested his being in that situation. This deponent farther saith, that the General sung several obscene and vulgar songs; and farther saith not.

(Signed) OWIN CHATFIELD.

Sworn before me at the village of Ogdensburgh, this 17th of July, 1835.

JOHN SCOTT,
Justice of the Peace, &c.

Daniel Thorp deposeth and saith, that he lives about a mile below the village of Ogdensburgh, and that, in the night the American army passed Prescott, Gen. James Wilkinson came to the house of deponent in a state of intoxication, as deponent verily believed at the time, and which he still believes; and that soon after his arrival at deponent's house, the General was put to bed. This deponent farther saith, that the General remained at his house several hours, and that, during his stay there, his behavior was very unlike a gentleman, and his conversation very vulgar and obscene.

(Signed) DANIEL THORP.

Sworn before me, this 18th of July, 1819.

JOHN SCOTT,
Justice of the Peace, &c.

[No. 14.]

*No. 1—containing the order intended to be executed.**Letter of the Secretary of War to General Brown, of the
28th of February, 1814.*

SIR—It is obviously Prevost's policy, and probably his intention, to re-establish himself on Lake Erie, during the ensuing month. But to effect this, other points of his line must be weakened, and these will be either Kingston or Montreal. If the detachment from the former be great, a moment may occur in which you may do, with the aid of Commodore Chauncey, what I last year intended Pike should have done without aid, and what we now all know was very practicable, viz: to cross the river, or head of the lake, on the ice, and carry Kingston by a coup de main. This is not, however, to be attempted, but under a combination of the following circumstances: practicable roads, good weather, large detachments (made westwardly) on the part of the enemy, and a full and hearty co-operation on the part of our own naval commander. If the enterprise be agreed upon, use the enclosed letter [No. 2] to mask your object, and let no one into your secret but Chauncey.

(Signed,)

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

No. 2—intended to deceive the enemy.

SIR—Colonel Scott, who is in nomination as a brigadier, has orders to repair to the Niagara frontier, and to take with him a corps of artillerists, and a battering, and field train, &c.; Major Wood, of the engineers, and Dallaba, of the ordnance, will accompany, or follow him. Four hundred Indians, and about four thousand volunteer militia, are under similar orders. The truth is, that public opinion will no longer tolerate us in permitting the enemy to keep quiet possession of Fort Niagara. Another motive, is the effect which may be expected from the appearance of a large corps on the Niagara,

in restraining the enemy's enterprises westward of that point. But will a corps, so constituted, be able to reduce Niagara? or long impose on an enemy, as well informed as itself? This is not to be expected; whence it follows that the President orders you to assemble means for conveying, with the least possible delay, the brigade you brought from French Mills to Batavia, where other and more detailed orders await you. Our advices from M. state that large detachments are under orders for K—westwardly, and that no intention exists of attacking the harbor. Should, however, new movements from M. indicate a different design, they will be promptly known to General —, and will produce a counter movement.

[No. 15.]

It will be remembered, that after abandoning the enterprise on Montreal, General Wilkinson cantoned the troops for the winter, at French Mills, on Salmon river, whence he soon after reported, that "the army was now safe from the enemy, and snug against the weather, but somewhat prone to disease from bad aliments." Nor, according to a second report, was his personal condition at all better; for in this he says: "Though willing to die at my post, I am not so when unable to draw my sword: repose and retirement have become necessary to my health, and the re-establishment of my constitution. I must therefore beg leave to remove my quarters to Albany, leaving Brigadier-General Izzard in the chief command, and giving to him the Four Corners for his station."

It was under these circumstances of acknowledged incompetency for field-service, that the General began a new display of his skill in strategy. The first project to which he invited the attention of the government, was founded on the information of a deserter, who had served at the Isle aux Noix, and

who gave such a description of the defences there, as induced the General to believe that "the fort might be easily taken, in the course of the winter, from Plattsburgh." This plan, if it can be called one, soon gave place to another, and greater. "To counteract," he says, "the effect of the enemy's successes on the Niagara, and the unlooked-for results of General Harrison's campaign, I meditate a contre coup on the positions of the enemy near me, which shall reach the bone. I propose to march, on the 3d or 4th of next month, a column of two thousand men from Chateaugay, and the same number from Plattsburgh, with the necessary attirail and sleighs for transport. The first column to take Hampton's route, and sweep the enemy to the St. Lawrence; then to turn to the right, and march for St. Pierre, where the two columns will form a junction, and proceed against the posts of St. Philip, Acadie, and St. John's, and having beaten, routed, and dispersed the detachments at these defenceless cantonments, then to be governed by circumstances whether to halt and occupy them, [the defenceless cantonments,] or to go on and reduce the Isle aux Noix; or, lastly, to return again."

This is, however, but one half of the plan, and certainly not that half that would reach the bone. Let us then look at the other: "Simultaneously with this movement, [the march by different routes to St. Pierre, and the attack on defenceless cantonments,] four thousand men will cross the St. Lawrence, attack Cornwall, capture, or rout the regular troops there, disperse the militia, fortify, and hold possession of the village, and effectually cut off the intercourse between the two provinces." This, indeed, would have been doing something, but like its predecessor, the plan was only born to die. In a letter to the government, of the 16th of January, he says: "Want of provisions, and other circumstances depending on the season, leave us no expectation of being able to take post in the enemy's territory, (as proposed in my letter of the 7th,) and even menace us with the necessity of a retrograde movement." But as, according to the General's belief, expressed but a fortnight before, "a march to Plattsburgh, and the erec-

tion of huts there, would kill the whole army," he wisely concluded "to burn his boats, send off his sick, wounded, and convalescent, to Plattsburgh, [to die,] and with the residue of the army, (seven thousand men,) steal a march into Canada, take Prescott by surprise or storm, and there, and at Kingston, barrack them for the winter."

Such palpable gasconade and inconsistency could not fail to admonish the government against longer confiding in the discretion of a man, who, finding himself compelled by want of food and the pressure of the season, to relinquish an attack on defenceless cantonments, within striking distance of his own position, could, for a moment, entertain a project of attacking, under the same circumstances, two points, more remote, more strongly fortified, and better garrisoned, than any others in the Upper province of Canada. He was, accordingly, ordered to fall back upon his own resources, and take post at Plattsburgh, where the army was soon and comfortably supplied, and, on the 30th of March, in condition to enter on the execution of the General's last and great labor—the attack of La Cole Mill.

[No. 16.]

Letter from the Secretary of War to the President.

April 31st, 1814.

SIR: So long as we had reason to believe that the enemy intended and was in condition to re-establish himself on the Thames, and open anew his intercourse with the Indian tribes of the west, it was, no doubt, proper to give to our naval means a direction which would best obstruct or defeat such movement or designs. An order has been accordingly given by the navy department, to employ the flotilla, in scouring the

shores of the more western lakes, in destroying the enemy's trading establishment at St. Joseph's, and in recapturing Fort Michilimackinac. As, however, our last advices show, that the enemy has no efficient force westward of Burlington bay, and that he has suffered the season of easy and rapid transportation to escape him, it is evident that he means to strengthen himself on the peninsula, and make Fort Erie, which he is now repairing, the western extremity of his line of operation. Under this new state of things, it is respectfully submitted, whether another and better use cannot be made of our flotilla ?

In explaining myself, it is necessary to premise that, the garrison of Detroit and Malden included, it will be practicable to assemble on the shores and navigable waters of Lake Erie, five thousand regular troops, and three thousand volunteers and militia, and that measures have been taken to produce this effect on or before the 10th day of June next. Without, however, the aid of naval means, this force will be comparatively inoperative, and necessarily dispersed, but with such aid, competent to great objects.

Lake Erie, on which our dominion is undisputed, furnishes a way scarcely less convenient for approaching the heart of Upper Canada than Lake Ontario. Eight, or even six thousand men, landed in the bay between Point Abino and Fort Erie, and operating either on the line of the Niagara, or more directly (if a more direct route is found) against the British post at the head of Burlington bay, cannot be resisted with effect, without compelling the enemy so to weaken his more eastern posts, as to bring them within reach of our means at Sackett's Harbor and Plattsburgh.

In choosing between this object and that to which the flotilla is now destined, there cannot, I think, be much if any hesitation. Our attack, carried to Burlington and York, interposes a barrier, which completely protects Malden and Detroit—makes doubtful and hazardous the enemy's intercourse with the western Indians—reduces Mackinac to a possession perfectly useless—renders probable the abandonment of Fort Ni-

agara, and takes from the enemy half his motive for continuing the naval conflict on Lake Ontario. On the other hand, take Mackinac, and what is gained, but Mackinac itself.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 17.]

Heads of plan of campaign within District No. 9.

1st. That such portions of the Erie fleet, and of the garrison of Detroit, as the officer commanding may deem necessary for the purpose, be despatched without delay to the western lakes, with orders to attack or capture a British fort or depot, established at Matchedash bay, on Lake Huron; recapture Michilimakinac, and break up such other hostile establishments within these inland seas, as may be practicable.

2d. That all surplus vessels belonging to the fleet, and left at Detroit, be brought down the lake, and employed in transporting the division of the left, its arms, ammunition, subsistence, and baggage, to such point on the Canada shore, as may be indicated; and in such other acts of co-operation with the division, as may be proper or necessary.

3d. That, after landing, the troops be marched, as expeditiously as possible, on the British position at Burlington bay, with orders to seize and fortify that post; and, having thus cut the enemy's line of land communication between York and Fort George, await the arrival and co-operation of the Ontario fleet; which, from statements made by the Secretary of the Navy, will be prepared for action by the middle of June.

4th. Under these circumstances the commanders of the two arms will have within their choice—a speedy invest-

ment of Forts George and Niagara; a rapid descent on Sackett's Harbor; a junction with the brigade at that post, and a direct attack on Kingston. In choosing between these objects, circumstances must govern. The former will enable us to take a new line of operation from Fort George to Lake Simcoe, shutting out the enemy from all direct communication with the western lakes, and thus destroying his means of sustaining his western posts and settlements, and of reinstating his influence over Indian wants and policy. The latter, beside comprising all the advantages of the former, will put an end to all farther naval expenditure on Lake Ontario; give us an uncontested possession of a great proportion of Upper Canada, and enable us to carry our whole concentrated force on Montreal—which, if gained, cannot fail to give to the war a speedy and favorable termination. All which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[No. 18.]

“Toward the evening of the 2d, General Ripley appeared to be very much discomposed. He objected to the division made of the transports, and complained that he would not be able to cross with sufficient force; that the principal fighting would be above the fort where he was ordered to land, and that he had seen lights during the night, and smoke during the day, for some time past. General Brown endeavored to satisfy him, but in vain. He (Ripley) tendered his resignation which was not accepted, as the General was inflexibly determined that the army should cross agreeably to the arrangements he had made.”—*Gen. Brown's memorandum of occurrences in the campaign of 1814, on the Niagara.*

[No. 19.]

Letter from Gen. Miller to Gen. Brown.

20th November, 1818.

MY DEAR GENERAL: Even at this remote period there are disputes respecting the war of the Revolution. It is a lesson to us who have acted in a more recent struggle, so to transmit the occurrences of it, that nothing be left to a future and indistinct remembrance.

The foregoing reflection is one cause of the present letter, but a more immediate motive consists in my dissatisfaction at the unauthorized use which has been made of my name, by those whose views are unfriendly to you, and which, if I remain silent, may induce you to believe that I have taken part against you. If the attempt to show a variance between you and myself has, in this case, been successful, let me disclaim any intentional agency in it, and, at the same time, disclaim any intentional act, wherein my name could be brought against yours.

The best part of that service which has procured me the indulgence of my country, was under your command. The slightest reference to that period, would disprove the possibility of our being found in opposite ranks. If I gave you at that time not only my subordination as a soldier, but my affection and unshaken confidence as a man, should I be likely to withdraw, at a later period, when success had given a final seal to your reputation, what I never withheld while success was doubtful? And nothing has ever occurred since the battle of Niagara, to diminish my attachment to you as a friend, or to lessen my admiration of you as a commander.

During an active part of the defence of Fort Erie, and shortly after Gen. Ripley's return, he requested me to write a letter to some friend of mine at Boston, which might tend to check the tide of opinion then running against him. I en-

tered into his situation, and felt for him as a soldier commonly feels for a brother officer so circumstanced, and, actuated by a wish to repress the extremity of public opinion, I wrote a letter to my friend Mr. Jonathan Howard of Boston, as the friend of Gen. Ripley, but not as your enemy. Gen. Ripley had the perusal of it, and well understood that I did not intend it for publication, (as I had in the margin restricted my friend in the use he might make of it,) and I never expected that Gen. Ripley would have made any farther use of my generosity. But what was my astonishment when I saw in the summer of 1815, in a pamphlet entitled, "Facts and documents respecting the campaign of the Niagara," a paragraph purporting to be an extract of a letter from me.

How far my memory may serve me correctly, I cannot positively say, but I feel disposed to declare my full belief, that the extract published in the above mentioned pamphlet, (which publication I am among the last to approve,) was taken from the draught of a letter, which was at the time offered to me for my signature, and which I refused to sign. I have remained silent all this time in hopes to get possession of my original letter, which has been mislaid or lost by my friend, but not gone into the hands of General Ripley, and which, if found, would, I believe, materially correct that extract.

I beg leave farther to remark, that the extract imputed to me, contains some assertions that I cannot suffer to pass unnoticed. After saying, that "the enemy's artillery was advantageously posted on a hill commanding the plain; the destruction which it dealt through our ranks, suggested the necessity of carrying the heights. This, General Ripley directed to be done with his own brigade. The 21st regiment, which I then commanded, advanced, and charged the battery in front; he led the 23d on their flank. Both these regiments present were less than 700 men; the movement was performed in the most heroic manner by both regiments, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in possession of the whole park, consisting of seven pieces, and the enemy were routed in every direction."

All this, I never did subscribe to. The fact is, that after receiving from yourself, in person, the order to storm and take the enemy's artillery, I obeyed it as soon as possible, with my regiment, (the 21st). The 23d, led by General Ripley, so far from acting simultaneously with the 21st, did not appear on the eminence for half an hour after the 21st was there—some say more.

It was difficult, however, to measure time in such a night scene as that; we could only judge of it by what was done, A small detachment of the 17th, under that meritorious officer, Captain Chum, was at that time acting with the 21st, and thus, consolidated, after a severe conflict, we drove the enemy from his cannon; we took thirty or forty prisoners—secured them in the old church—beat the enemy in two if not more attempts to regain what he had lost, and had a respite sufficient to detach my adjutant, Lieutenant Holding, with a party of men, to roll the captured cannon down the hill toward our friends. General Ripley, in his way coming up, fell in with this party, and, as Lieut. Holding told me, ordered him to desist, to leave the pieces where they were, and to return to the combat, (which was by no means at an end). All this was done before General Ripley gained the eminence, or I never saw the flash of a gun on the heights of Bridgewater. I do not mean to insinuate that General Ripley lost a moment's time unnecessarily, for he was engaged with the enemy before he joined me.

I feel a satisfaction in stating to you at this time, these historical truths, instead of leaving them a subject of dispute after death has sealed my lips.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) JAMES MILLER, B. G. U. S. A.

[No. 20.]

Secretary of War to General Izzard, 12th of August, 1814.

"The movements suggested in my letter of the 27th ult., against Kingston, rest altogether upon the presumption that Chauncey has beaten Yeo, or, at least, driven him into port, and confines him there. If, however, the enemy should carry his force from Montreal to Kingston,) and this is the shorter line of the two,) and be prepared to meet you at this point, the attack may be suspended, and another and safer movement substituted for it. This will be to embark four thousand men at Sackett's Harbor, and carry them up to the west end of the lake. United with the second division, you will be able to reduce Fort George, and what is of more importance, capture the whole of Drummond's force on the Niagara.

We have already seen, that Riall, on General Brown's approach to Fort George, withdrew his main body to Twenty-Mile creek. Drummond, when he falls back, will pursue the same policy and retire to the same place, or to Burlington Heights. To defeat this, these heights should be seized by you—a measure which will compel him to take a position at Fort George, and abide the fate of that place, or of a battle; it will also completely sever his communication with York and Kingston by land as well as by water, and thus deprive him of the resources of the neighboring country. From this point of debarkation, your movements should be made in concert with Brigadier-General Gaines, who now commands the division of the left. Commodore Chauncey will be instructed by the Secretary of the Navy on this plan of operations.

[No. 21.]

That the facts and opinions, offered by the General, in justification of his disobedience on this occasion, were wholly

unfounded, will be seen by the following letters of General Swift and Colonel Totten—the former long the senior officer of the United States engineers, the latter the present head of that scientific corps.

“In my opinion, with the force under General Izzard’s command, a position in the vicinity of Rouse’s Point could have been occupied, so as to control the enemy’s passage through the Narrows, more effectually than from any other position. La Cole Mill formed no sufficient objection to the occupancy of this point. A battery on Cumberland Head could not have prevented the passage of an enemy’s fleet into Lake Champlain, unless by some error of the naval commander, the distance of the Head to the opposite island being two miles—as measured with a chain by Lieutenant Platt of the navy, on the ice.”—*Gen. Swift’s Letters to Gen. Armstrong, of the 6th of August, and 27th of October, 1838.*

“There was ground enough in the rear of Rouse’s Point for small works, and for such as would, with an adequate garrison, defend the position against great enterprises, or even a siege. Having no faith in the power of any works on Cumberland Head, capable of impeding or materially injuring a passing squadron, I felt bound in conscience, to state my views to the General. My opposition, though earnest, was in vain. I do not now see, and never have supposed, that there was any thing in the vicinity of La Cole Mill, or in the character of its garrison, to render the occupation of Rouse’s Point hazardous to brave men.”—*Col. Totten’s Letter of the 6th of August, 1838, to Gen. Armstrong.*

[No. 22.]

Letter from Col. Elisha Jenkins to Gen. Armstrong.

“As soon as I was informed of Gen. Izzard’s movement and its object, I started for Lake George, for the purpose chiefly

of endeavoring to put him on the shortest route to Sackett's Harbor; having been informed that his intention was to pass by the way of Schenectady, and thence through Utica. His reason for pursuing the southern route, was that it might have the effect of diverting an attack from New York by the British fleet hovering on the coast. I know not exactly how long Izzard remained at Fort George, it must have been three or four days at least."

Major O'Connor, deputy adjutant-general, in an official report made at the time, states, that "the army was detained at Fort George four days, on pretence of refreshing them after their long march from Plattsburgh." The General's reasons, given to the War Department, for preferring a route double the distance of that he had been directed to take, were want of funds, bad roads, and the danger of being "overtaken and devoured," in the woods by Brisbane, between Plattsburgh and Parishville—all of which were fictions. Mr. Parish offering and actually supplying funds, the roads being practicable, though not good. and no enemy being near his line of march to Parishville.

[No. 23.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

August 20th, 1814.

SIR: I have this instant received yours of 7, A. M., this day. I am informed by gentlemen who have frequently travelled from this to Benedict, that there is a very good and direct road of 35 miles.

Should the enemy dash for this place, he will probably take this road, unless he should follow the bank of the river

to Nottingham, with his advance guard, to drive back your flotilla, and bring up his main body by water. This will have been decided before you receive this, and you will immediately send the flotilla up to Queen Anne's, with as few men as possible, and a trusty officer to remain there, and in the event of the enemy advancing upon the flotilla in force, to destroy the whole effectually, and proceed with his men to this place.

W. JONES.

JOSHUA BARNEY, Esq., commanding U. S. flotilla.

[No. 24.]

Dr. Catlett's answer to a question of the Committee of Inquiry.

"You ask for information as to the number of the enemy. With better means of judging than any other American officer after the battle, my estimate was—at Capitol square seven hundred men; at Turnpike Hill two thousand; at Bladensburgh, wounded three hundred, attendants and guards three hundred; at the city, wounded and attendants sixty, and killed at Bladensburgh one hundred and eighty—total 3,540. These estimates, though somewhat incorrect in the detail, are corroborated in the aggregate by the best information I could get from the British surgeons, sergeants, and others left in the hospital at Bladensburgh."

The doctor's statement is fully sustained by the writer of British Campaigns in America, who states Ross's army to have been composed of four regiments only—the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th, one battalion of marines, and a few rocket men and artillerists—the whole amounting to 4,020 men. Deduct from this number the 500 left at Marlborough to guard the boats and plunder, (more than half of whom were sick or convalescent,) and the result will bring the assailing army to 3,500, as stated by Dr. Catlett.

[No. 25.]

Condition of the British army on and before reaching Bladensburgh.

"The men, from being so long cooped up in ships, and unused to carry their arms and baggage, had become relaxed and enervated to a degree altogether unnatural, which, added to the excessive sultriness of the weather, exceeding anything we had yet experienced, quite overpowered them. The load they carried was also far from trifling, as, beside their arms, and sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, each man bore on his back a knapsack, containing shoes, stockings, and three days' provisions, with a canteen, or wooden keg, filled with water. We remained during the night at Nottingham, nor were we as usual early in motion in the morning, and hesitation had taken place as to the course to be pursued, whether to follow the gun-boats, or to return to the shipping. At last the former was adopted, and the pursuit continued ten miles, to Marlborough. Here we became apprized that the flotilla, which had been our object, had been destroyed; a new cause of hesitation, with regard to future measures, had arisen. At length, however, orders were given to form, and at 2 o'clock, P. M., of the 23d, we quitted Marlborough, taking the road to Washington. We had proceeded about nine miles, the last four of which the sun's rays had beat continually upon us, and we had inhaled as much dust as air. Numbers of men had already fallen in the rear, and many more could, with difficulty, keep up; consequently, had we pushed on much farther, at least half the army would have been left behind. A halt was therefore ordered near a stream, nor did ever a halt come more seasonably; yet, so oppressive was the heat, that we had not resumed our march above an hour, when the way-sides were again covered with stragglers, some of the finest and stoutest men in the army being unable literally to go on."

—*Campaign at Washington, &c., by an officer serving in the army*, pp. 117-18.

[No. 26.]

Gordon's terms.

The town of Alexandria (with the exception of public works) shall not be destroyed, unless hostilities are commenced on the part of the Americans, nor shall the inhabitants be molested in any manner whatever, or their dwelling-houses entered, if the following articles are complied with:—

ARTICLE 1. All naval and ordnance stores (public and private) must be immediately given up.

ARTICLE 2. Possession will be immediately taken of all the shipping, and their furniture must be sent on board by the owners without delay.

ARTICLE 3. The vessels which have been sunk must be delivered up in the state they were in on the 19th of August, the day of the squadron passing the Kettle Bottoms.

ARTICLE 4. Merchandise of every description must be instantly delivered up, and to prevent any irregularities that might be committed in its embarkation, the merchants have it in their option to load the vessels generally employed for that purpose, when they will be towed off by us.

ARTICLE 5. All merchandise that has been removed from Alexandria since the 19th inst., is to be included in the above articles.

ARTICLE 6. Refreshments of every description to be supplied the ships, and paid for at the market price by bills on the British government.

ARTICLE 7. Officers will be appointed to see that the articles Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are strictly complied with, and any deviation or non-compliance, on the part of the inhabitants of Alexandria, will render this treaty null and void.

JAMES A. GORDON,

Captain of his majesty's ship Sea-Horse.

“Of these articles, Nos. 3 and 5 were not enforced. No merchandise was required to be brought back to the town;

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Gen Cass' Eulogy upon
Gen Harrison delivered
at Paris France, on the
occasion of a meeting of
American Citizens on
of the death of President
Harrison.

Franklin

Wm June 9th 1841.

no assistance was required of, or offered by the citizens, in getting up the sunken vessels. The depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions, were confined to flour, cotton, and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town; only one vessel was burnt, no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner, nor were citizens personally exposed to insult.

The loss sustained from the enemy, it is believed, will not exceed the following: Three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, the number of which has not been ascertained; all of which were carried away, and one ship burnt. The quantity of flour carried away, it is believed, will not exceed sixteen thousand barrels, about one thousand hogsheads of tobacco, one hundred and fifty bales of cotton, and of wine, sugar, and other articles, not more than five thousand dollars' worth."

[No. 27.]

General Young's letter to the Committee of Congress.

On the 2d of August, I received orders to fall back with my detachment, and take the most convenient position on the road from Piscatawa to Washington, to defend the approach from below to Fort Washington. This order was complied with, and here we received information of the approach of the enemy from the Patuxent toward Washington, and also the approach of the fleet coming up the Potomac, and of their having passed the Kettle Bottoms. I accordingly took a strong position on Hatton's hill, about three miles in the rear of the fort. On the 23d of August, I received information from Colonel Tayloe, of the cavalry, that he had in charge to inform me that General Smith's brigade was retreating to Washington, and the enemy pursuing rapidly, and in case we

were compelled to retreat, the Mayor of Alexandria would send every boat that could be had to the fort, or Rosier's ferry, for the purpose of transporting the troops across the river. On receipt of this letter, I addressed one to General Winder, informing him of its contents, and requested that he would give Major Tripplett, my brigade-major, orders on the subject. On the morning of the 24th, I received a message from General Winder directing me to take up my line of march, and move on the road from Piscatawa to the Eastern-branch bridge, and take a position at the cross roads; on our march, and when the brigade had advanced about three miles, Major Tripplett returned with orders from General Winder, directing the brigade to cross to the Virginia shore. Soon after the receipt of this letter we were advised of the approach of the enemy up the river above Fort Tobacco, and I was also advised that the enemy were advanced that morning to Marlborough, about five miles. I determined, in obedience of orders, to cross the Potomac to the town of Alexandria. After some part of the brigade had embarked, and left the shore, I received orders from General Armstrong, dated the 24th of August, informing me that the most the enemy did the day before was, to move about two miles beyond Marlborough, and that the ships in the Potomac had no troops, and directing me to hold my present post, until assured that the enemy was in force, and about to attack me, or until I should receive farther orders, and to keep my vedettes well posted on every road. I accordingly recalled the troops embarked, and resumed my position on the road leading to the Eastern-branch bridge, and near its junction with the road leading to Marlborough. We were at this moment apprized of the enemy's being on his march to Bladensburgh, and soon after, of the commencement of the action, which was distinctly heard. My vedettes soon returned, and gave me information of the Eastern-branch bridge being blown up, and of the retreat of our troops through Washington. I had, in this interval, despatched the trooper, who brought me General Armstrong's letter, with an answer, informing him that I had, in obedi-

ence to his orders, returned to my position back of Oxen hill, and should there wait farther orders. The trooper, with great despatch, returned and informed me that he could not see General Armstrong, but had inquired of the President and General Winder, both of whom he met with the army retreating through Washington city, and they being unable to give any information of him, General Winder despatched the same trooper back, with verbal orders for my brigade to cross the Potomac, and form a junction with his army, in Montgomery county, Maryland.

[No. 28.]

Arriving, on the retreat, at Capitol Hill, a meeting and consultation took place between the commanding General, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of War—in which the person last mentioned, recommended a speedy occupation of the capital and adjacent houses, as a position capable of a powerful defence, and even redoubtable against a force coming as the British did, without artillery, baggage, or provision train; and, of course, meditating only a *coup de main*. The proposition was promptly, and even peremptorily rejected by the General, on two grounds—the great diminution of his morning force, and the fatigued and exhausted condition of what remained.¹ Mr. Monroe supported the opinion of the General, adding his belief, (from having seen a column of the enemy moving on the western road to the capitol,) that they would drive us into *cul de sac*, unless we took the position recommended by the General, which left open the west for

¹ The General's morning force was diminished only by the retreat to Baltimore of Stanbury's brigade, and Sterret's detachment, amounting to about 2,000 men. He had of course at his disposition, not less than 3000 men. Their fatigue could only have been the result of their flight from Bladensburgh to the capital.

retreat. Finding the majority of the council two to one, and having that morning received the President's order, "*to leave to the military functionaries the discharge of their own duties, on their own responsibility,*" the Secretary of War no longer opposed the retreat to Georgetown.—*See the report by the congressional Committee of Inquiry, of the statements severally made by Messrs. Monroe, Armstrong, Rush, and Winder.*

[No. 29.]

Col. Allen McClane's Journal of the campaign.

18th of August, 1814. British fleet much increased—seen going up the bay. Call made for district militia—two brigades, Smith's and Young's, and some troops of horse.

19th. Reports of yesterday confirmed, with the addition, that the fleet had entered the Patuxent; was preparing armed boats for going up the river, and landing troops at Benedict. Accompanied General Winder to the War office. The General asked the Secretary's opinion of the enemy's object; the latter replied, that the numbers, equipments, and movements of an enemy, best indicated his objects; of these, in the present case, we know too little, to speak with any degree of assurance. With the exception of landing troops at Benedict, his great naval force, and the direction given to the movement, would indicate Baltimore; but, whether it be Baltimore, the flotilla, or Washington, our course is a plain one—assemble as large a force as we can, place it speedily at Nottingham, or other point on the Patuxent; clear the road between that and Benedict of horses and cattle, break down bridges, abbatiss the route, when leading through woods; select strong points for defence, and, as soon as his movement begins, harass his front and flanks, by small attacks made by night and by day;

while Stewart operates in the same way on his rear. A plan of this kind, strictly pursued, will soon enable you to judge of the enemy's strength, equipment, and objects. If the first be small, and the second scanty, his objects cannot be great nor many—probably confined to an attack on Barney's flotilla. If, on the other hand, he shows a respectable park of artillery, with baggage and provision train, his object may be Baltimore or Washington.

20th. General Winder this day issued his proclamation, calling for militia in mass, and mustered Smith's brigade of district militia.

21st. McClane this day announced as volunteer aid to the commanding General. Smith's brigade began its march for Nottingham. Halted for the night four miles beyond the Eastern-branch bridge.

22d. General and suite followed, and arrived at the wood-yard much about the time Ross arrived at Nottingham, with a few pioneers, rocket-men, sharpshooters, and two three-pounders, dragged by sailors. Had we moved a day sooner, or even somewhat faster, and carried with us the regulars only, we might have struck a fine blow—capturing or killing the whole of Ross's party, which did not exceed one hundred and fifty men. Joined by Col. Monroe and Col. Beal. Both had seen the British columns; the former estimating its numbers at 7,000 men, the latter at 4,000. Had these reconnoiters confined their guesses to themselves and the General, as they ought, no harm would have been done; but they gave their opinions to every one that asked them, and their effect on the camp was bad and lasting. McClane and Col. Cross of Queen Anne's, despatched to Marlborough to inform Barney of the approach of the enemy. Found the commodore, who already knew all we could tell him—where the enemy was, his force, and his intentions, and was prepared to meet him. Instructed by a letter from the Secretary of the Navy, to destroy the boats, and join Winder with the marines and sailors. McClane got back to headquarters—found a light corps formed at last for trying the vigilance and

strength of the enemy. This corps, preceded by the General, Col. Monroe, and Laval, set out for a skirmish; but, on approaching Odin's, discovered that the enemy was also in motion. Question—what road he would take—that to Marlborough or that to Washington? Decided to watch both. The enemy soon after taking the former, the General fell back on the Battalion's Old fields. In the night, the President, Secretary of War, and Secretary of the Navy, arrived in camp.

23d. At sunrise, the General and McClane visited the President. The ordinary compliments passed; the Secretary of War asked the General for such information as he had been able to procure with regard to the numbers and equipment of the enemy: to which he replied, that Mr. Monroe and Colonel Beal, with the same means of observation, made very different estimates—the former making them 7,000 men, the latter but 4,000—that they came without cannon, cavalry, baggage or provision train—that they had a few rocket-men, and a few (two or three) guns, called grasshoppers, dragged by seamen—that their whole force, naval and military was yet at Marlborough, plundering the tobacco-warehouses—and from accounts received of the Potomac fleet, it was his opinion, that they would not move till that fleet had approached Fort Washington, when Ross would move to the rear of the fort and co-operate in taking it. Without noticing this opinion, the Secretary replied, that “the facts he had stated abundantly proved that, hitherto, Ross's movement had no object but that of covering and aiding the armed vessels destined to the attack of the flotilla; and that, should he make a movement, directed on Washington, it will necessarily be a mere Cossac hurrah, a rapid march and hasty retreat—coming, as he does, wholly unprepared for siege or investment. To meet an attack of this kind, two modes of proceeding may be suggested; the one strictly offensive, the other decidedly defensive—the former will consist of multiplied attacks, made simultaneously or in succession, on the front, flank, and rear, of an enemy's march throughout its whole extent. Such was

the well-known affair of Lexington, in the war of the Revolution, in which 1,800 of the British elite were so beaten, disheartened, and exhausted, that, had they not, at sunset, found armed vessels to protect, and an intrenched camp to receive them, not a man would have escaped capture or death. To this plan, however, serious objections may be made, arising from the subdivision of force, and multitude of commanders it makes necessary. The second, or defensive plan, is entirely free from these or any other objections of importance, and is precisely what, were I in your place, I would do. Assemble my force in his front, fall quietly back to the capitol, giving only that degree of resistance that invite a pursuit. When arrived in its front, I would immediately put in battery my twenty pieces of artillery, give the direction and management of these to Barney and Peters, fill the upper part of the house and the adjacent buildings with infantry, regulars, and militia, amounting to 5,000 men, while my 300 cavalry held themselves in reserve for a charge, the moment a recoil appeared in the British columns of attack. On the success of this plan, against the best executed coup-de-main, I would pledge both life and reputation, and earnestly recommend it to your adoption."

With this advice of the Secretary, so obviously right of itself, and represented so clearly and conclusively, the General appeared to be pleased, and, after directing Peters to feel the enemy's pickets and outposts, he set out immediately to give Stansbury's brigade a corresponding position. But failing to meet with any that pleased him, he returned, and finding that Ross was moving in force in the direction of his camp, he immediately ordered a retreat to the Eastern-branch bridge, at the same time ordering McClane to take a few dragoons and reconnoitre the road to McGruder's mill, on which it was expected that another British column was moving. No enemy was found on this road—went to Mr. Spriggs', where I found, at 10 o'clock, P. M., Messrs. Monroe, Rush, Thornton, and Charles Carroll, who immediately set out for Bladensburgh and Washington.

24th. McClane, Dr. Bird, and McConty, approached Marlborough, found a picket guard of the enemy on the bridge, part of a small corps left to cover the seamen employed in shipping tobacco, and other plunder. A fine stroke might have been made here, at daybreak, if the Secretary's plan of posting Stansbury had been executed; for, if Nourse of the navy, left in command at Marlborough, had then been attacked, it would no doubt have recalled Ross from his bivouac, six or eight miles from Marlborough, on the night of the 23d and 24th, on his route to Washington, and boats, plunder, and seamen, might all have been taken. But, unfortunately, in these first six days of campaign, there had been no fighting, to the no small encouragement of the British. McClane put himself on the enemy's right flank, had occasionally distinct views of the road by which they marched, and saw upon it many stragglers; so it continued till the enemy reached the hill on the eastern side of Bladensburg, soon after which the battle began, and soon ended by the rout of the militia. Joined General Winder on the 25th, at Montgomery Courthouse. Informed early on the 26th that Ross had evacuated the city in the preceding night in much haste, and fearing that he was marching on Annapolis, or Baltimore, he set off express for the latter, regretting much his not defending the capitol, as advised to do by the Secretary of War, as it was now plain that the attack on Washington was a mere Cossac hurrah, as General Armstrong called it.

Extract from "British campaigns at Washington."

The truth is, the capture of Washington was not the original end of the expedition. To destroy the flotilla was the sole object of the debarkation; and, but for the instigations of Admiral Cockburn, who accompanied the army, the capitol of America would have escaped our visitation.—p. 152.

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

ILLUSTRATING THE CAUSES OF THE INACTION OF THE ONTARIO
FLEET IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814.

Secretary of War to the President of the United States.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

July 25th, 1814.

SIR: I send herewith a letter, received by express, from Sackett's Harbor. The information given, is important; and though without the authority of a name, knowing as I do, the hand-writing and the character of the writer, I have no hesitation in vouching for the entire credibility of the statement.

I am, &c.,

(Signed)

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

[*Confidential.*]

To the Secretary of War.

SACKETT'S HARBOR, *July 20th, 1814.*

SIR: Taking a warm interest in the success of the campaign and suspecting that government has not been as regularly informed of things at this post, as might be proper, I have ventured to give you the following statement of facts, which have recently taken place here; which, for more clearness and brevity, I give in the form of a journal.

8th of July. Saw the Commodore, who said he was now nearly ready, and would leave the harbor in a few days and take a station off the Ducks, to watch Yeo, if he was in Kingston.

12th. Fleet yet in port. General Gaines had a free conversation with the Commodore, who said *he should not go to the head of the lake, unless called there by Yeo's movements.*

14th. No change in the situation of the fleet, nor in the intentions of the Commodore, when he does sail. Will go to the Ducks.

15th. The Commodore sick with a fever. Expected to be able to go out in three or four days.

17th. Morgan's rifle battalion convoying a battering train sent for by General Brown, sailed yesterday in boats, supplied by the quartermaster. Their fate doubtful—our fleet being yet in the harbor (detained by something wanted for the Mohawk)—Yeo and his fleet at the Ducks. Commodore expects to be out by the 20th, but *will not go to the head of the lake, unless Yeo leads him there.*

20th. Morgan, with the riflemen and cannon prevented from sailing, by Yeo's *blockade of the harbor.* Expected the fleet (now ready) would break the blockade to-day. Prevented by the continued illness of the Commodore. Captain Jones would have gone out and settled the matter with Yeo, but had not authority to do so. Strange! that when the chief of a squadron is non compos, the officer next in rank is not entitled to the command. If this be a rule in the navy, it should be altered. Here was a fine opportunity of fighting and winning the long-wished-for battle; but lost, because, the only man in the fleet *not ready*, was the *commanding officer.*

Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Chauncey.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

August 3d, 1814.

SIR: It appears by your letter of the 8th ult., that the necessary changes in the officers and crews of the squadron under your command, incidental to the absence of Captain Smith, would detain you in port a few days longer, to make final arrangements. No other cause of detention was then apprehended, or intimated, and your entire silence from that day until the 25th, when Captain Jones wrote by your desire

(as you were too unwell to do so) to say—that “the squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the delay in obtaining blocks and iron work,” is so extraordinary and inexplicable, that, though reluctant to communicate, I cannot withhold from you the knowledge of the extreme anxiety and astonishment, which the protracted and fatal delay of the squadron in port, has excited in the mind of the President. Though entirely without information (other than rendered) of the serious indisposition with which it appears you have been afflicted, I am compelled to attribute to that cause, the detention of the squadron in port, during a period more critical and important than any that has occurred, and of which it appears you had been apprized by General Brown. The uninterrupted command of the lake during that period by the enemy, has enabled him to transport formidable reinforcements to Niagara, and nothing but the unexampled prowess and fortitude of the gallant army under General Brown, have saved it from utter destruction. These things cannot but be felt, and the questions naturally rise—why has our fleet been detained in port so late as the 25th, after the positive assurances that it would be out the first week in July? If the gallant and able commander of our squadron was rendered incapable by disease, why did not the second in command, in whom the national confidence also resides, lead it into action or scour the lake so as to prevent or intercept the transportation of the enemy, or force his fleet to battle while we have the known and decided superiority? Why was the Executive kept in ignorance of the ill state of health of the Commodore and of any real cause of detention from the 8th to the 25th of July, when, by timely notice, its orders might have provided for the contingency, and spared the flow of gallant blood, in an unequal though glorious contest? I shall not be able to answer to these interrogatories, “the squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the *delay in obtaining blocks and iron works!*”

(Signed)

W. JONES.

Secretary of the Navy to Commodore S. Decatur.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

July 28th, 1814.

SIR: The silence of Commodore Chauncey ever since the 8th instant relative to the sailing of the squadron under his command—the previous and positive assurance of his departure after the final arrangements which would be completed in a day or two; his reported sickness, and the apprehension that it might be so serious as fatally to retard the operation of the squadron and produce the most disastrous consequences; imperiously demand an immediate though eventual provision for that highly important command. You will therefore, sir, on receipt of this, without a moment's delay, proceed with the utmost celerity to Sackett's Harbor, and if the squadron shall be still in port, and Commodore Chauncey disqualified by the state of his health, for the immediate and active command of that force, take upon yourself the command, and proceed forthwith to carry into effect the designs of the campaign in that quarter. These objects I shall explain to you in general terms leaving your own judgment and discretion free to adopt such means as shall appear to you best adapted to the attainment of the end. There is no alternative between the absolute command of the lake by the capture or destruction of the enemy's squadron, before he shall have added the heavy line-of-battle-ship which he is now building, and taking shelter in port and acting on the defensive after that event. This alternative, in its ultimate consequences, approaches so near to defeat, that I can scarcely draw the distinction. If Yeo will give you battle in the present state of the two squadrons, I feel an assurance of victory. If he avoids battle and takes shelter in Kingston, it will then be desirable to blockade him with the greatest rigor and effectually shut all the avenues to the communication with the upper end of the lake by boats as well as ships, until he shall have attained the superiority by the access of his line-of-battle-ship; which Commodore Chauncey thinks

will not be before the month of October, though by the efforts he is making, and the importance of the object, I think it highly probable, he will accomplish it sooner. In either case, you will then afford the most efficient co-operation with the army of the United States that the nature of your force will admit.

The character of the war on the lakes, requires in a peculiar degree the joint operations of the naval and military means, and you will, on all occasions, with the most perfect harmony and reciprocal concert, combine with the movements of the army, all the aid and effect which the nature of your force, and the important naval objects which have been explained to you, will admit; but *you will yourself judge and determine upon the propriety and expediency of any particular mode of co-operation which may be required of you.* Of the effect of all these upon any proposed operation, nautical science, skill, and experience, can alone correctly determine. In the present state of things, it is peculiarly desirable, to afford to General Brown all the co-operation in your power. His situation is critical and becomes more so by every day's delay. His object and wishes you will ascertain from Commodore Chauncey and General Gaines.

The squadron is represented as being in the highest state of order and efficiency.—officered and manned with disciplined crews not excelled by any equal number of men in any fleet; if, however, on your arrival at Sackett's Harbor and taking the command you should deem it expedient to provide against contingencies by ordering one hundred and fifty volunteers of the President, you may do so; and if the ships shall be full, they may act in the gun-boats. The President entertains the highest respect for, and confidence in, the patriotism, valor, skill, and experience of Commodore Chauncey, and desires to proceed in this business with the utmost delicacy. If the state of his health will justify his retaining the command, no change is desired; and if before you start, or on your way you should learn with certainty, that the squadron has sailed, you will consider this order as null and void. As this order

may, or may not go into effect, and as the squadron will certainly have sailed, if Commodore Chauncey's health shall have enabled him to command, I shall not write to him.

(Signed) W. JONES.

Secretary of War to the President.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

July 28th, 1814.

SIR: Having been made acquainted with the instructions given to Commodore Decatur, in the event of his taking the command of the Ontario fleet, and not perceiving in them any provision for a prompt and efficient co-operation with General Brown and the army under his command, but on the contrary, a suggestion of measures, which if adopted will necessarily lead to a system of separate action, I have thought it incumbent on me to bring the subject under your special notice and consideration. In doing this, I shall state briefly the objects proposed by the Secretary—the means prescribed for their attainment—the objections to which the latter are liable, and lastly, the measures which, in my opinion, ought to be substituted for them.

The Secretary begins his letter with an opinion, that unless Yeo can be brought to a decisive action before his 80-gun ship be ready for service, our condition will so nearly approach that of positive defeat, as will make it difficult if not impossible to distinguish between them. To avoid an evil of such magnitude, he recommends the adoption and prosecution of two measures, the one, a decisive battle speedily fought with the British fleet; and the other, a rigid blockade of Kingston harbor, should the enemy decline a contest and run into that port.

That the first object, indicated by the Secretary, is the true one, will be readily conceded; but its attainment depending, as it does, on the will of the enemy, what reasonable ground of hope is there, that, unless associated with some operation

on our part, having a tendency to influence that will, the object will be attainable? Can it be believed, by any one having a competent knowledge of the past conduct of the British commander, that he who has hitherto refused to fight, but upon motives and calculations entirely his own, and who has always been able to avoid a decisive battle, when from any cause he thought proper to do so—will now accept the challenge of an enemy, obviously seeking to avail himself of a temporary superiority? In this view of the subject, the supposition is wholly unwarranted, and becomes a positive absurdity, when, as acknowledged by the Secretary, the exercise of a small degree of patience, will enable him to appear on the lake so re-inforced, as will compel his adversary to a speedy flight into Sackett's Harbor.

If such be the necessary or probable issue of the Secretary's first measure, having an object altogether proper, what can be said of the second, which fails alike in purpose and efficiency? Has the Secretary forgotten, that, from physical causes over which the power and policy of belligerents have no control, a rigid blockade of Kingston harbor is utterly impossible? On this point, it may be sufficient to refer to an opinion given by Commodore Chauncey to Gen. Wilkinson, who, in 1813, was desirous of penning up Yeo and his squadron in Amherst bay. "My best endeavors," says the Commodore, "shall be used to keep the enemy in check at this part of the lake, yet with my utmost exertions and greatest vigilance, he may slip past me in the night, when favored with a westwardly wind; and get eighteen or twenty hours start of me down the lake," an opinion, entirely verified by the event, and applicable to any new attempt at blockading either a western or northern port of this inland sea.

But admitting that this were otherwise, and that a rigid blockade of Kingston was as practicable as the Secretary supposed it to be, what will be its necessary effect? to keep our army in a state of comparative inaction on the western end of the lake—while on its eastern extremity our fleet will substantially consummate Yeo's policy; by keeping him and his squadron out of harm's way, till his new ship is ready for

service. In what sense, therefore, can a measure having such effects, be considered as one of *efficient co-operation* with the army?

It now but remains, that I should indicate the measures which, in my opinion, ought to be substituted for those recommended by my colleague. They are few and as follows: that the fleet sail promptly from Sackett's Harbor, with an express destination to the western end of the lake; that when arrived there, it enter at once into a free and full co-operation with the army; which, when increased by the junction of Izzard's column, will muster not less than seven thousand combatants, a force entirely competent to a full execution of the general plan of campaign. Both fleet and army will then be in their true positions—the one, cutting off all communication by land between the British peninsular posts and their base—the other, performing a similar service, by intercepting supplies sent from Kingston by water—a state of things, making it the duty of Drummond to call loudly and peremptorily for the interposition of Yeo and the British fleet: which, if refused, will give our arms the glory of another Burgoyne—and if yielded, will necessarily produce that decisive naval battle, so important in itself, and so much desired by my colleague.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

(Signed) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

President of the United States.

The result of the preceding correspondence was, a refusal by Decatur to direct the service proposed to him; a continuance of Chauncey in the command of the fleet; an adherence, on his part, to a system of separate action, and a direct refusal to co-operate with the army at the head of the lake: the consequences of all which were, that Yeo, refusing to be blockaded in Kingston harbor, sent four ships with supplies to Drummond, all of which arrived safely, and without meeting an enemy, and so excited Izzard's fears, as caused the hasty and disgraceful retreat made by him from Canada.

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Page 27. Read ammunition instead of munitions.
Page 51. Read parsimony, always paltry, is in war, the most
lavish prodigality.
Page 143. Dele note at the bottom.
Vol. 2d. Title page. Read late a General in the Army of the U.
S. instead of late a Major General.
Page 108. Read across the Nigara instead of across the St.
Lawrence.
Page 154. Read would have been as fortunate in the ong case
as creditable in the other.

