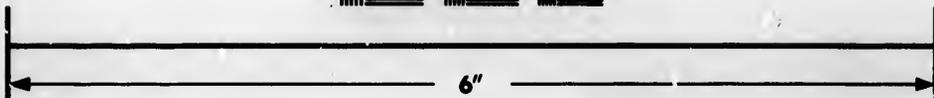
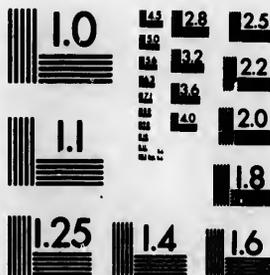


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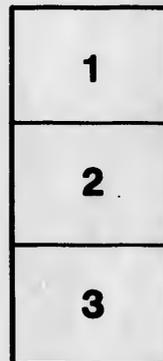
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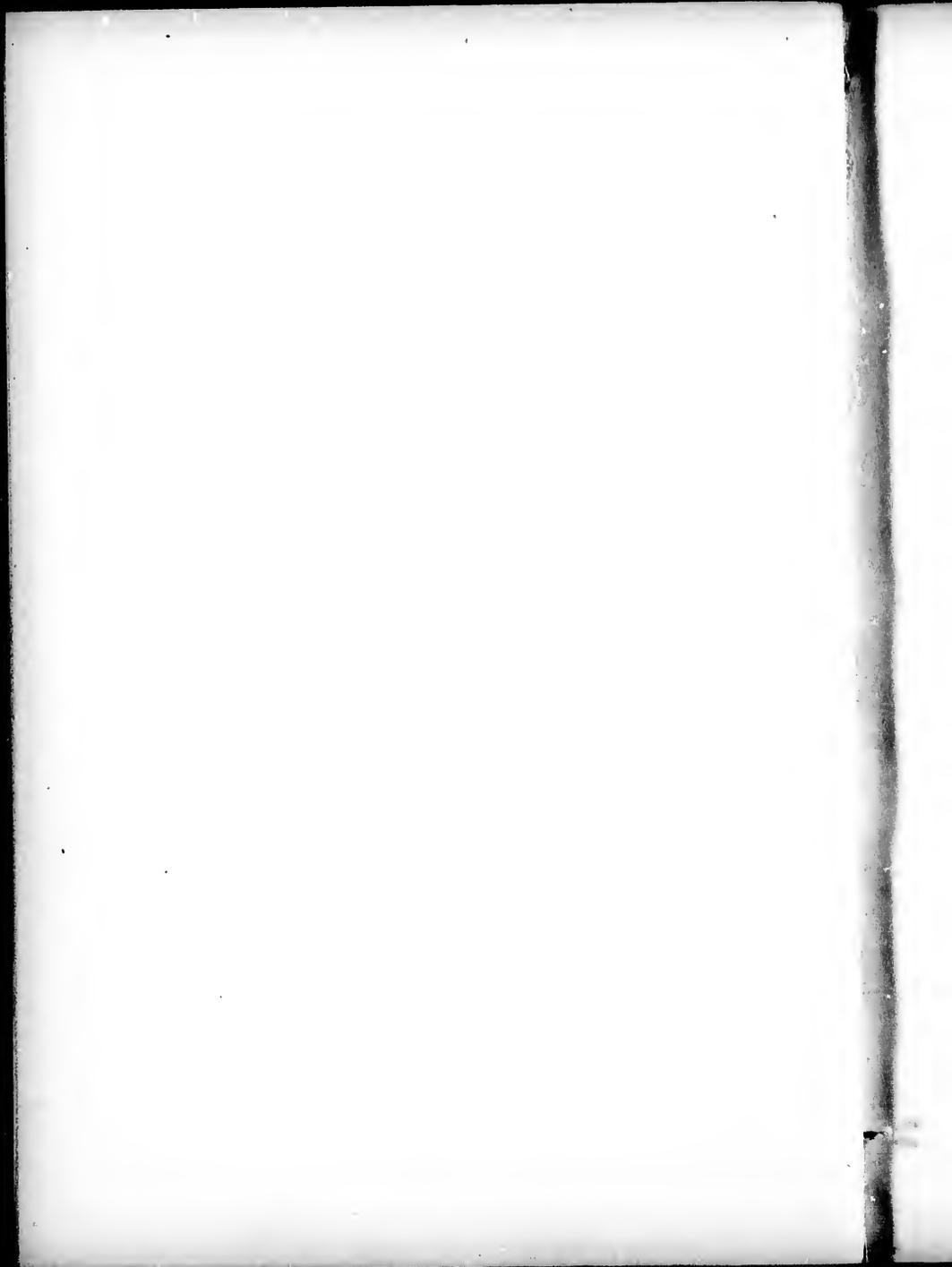
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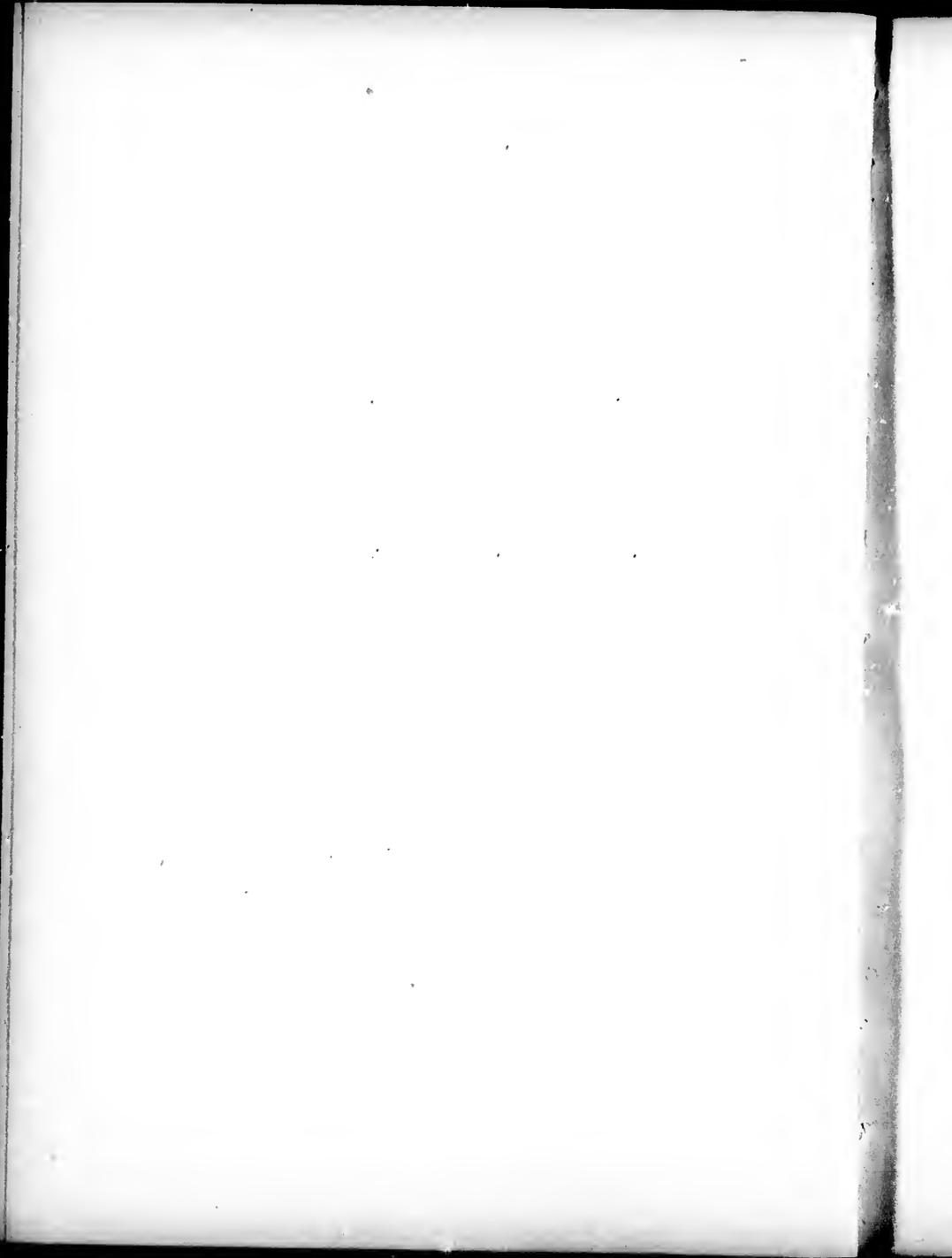
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1st Battalion Royal Scots,

To his Wife.

CANADA, 1813-14.



EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

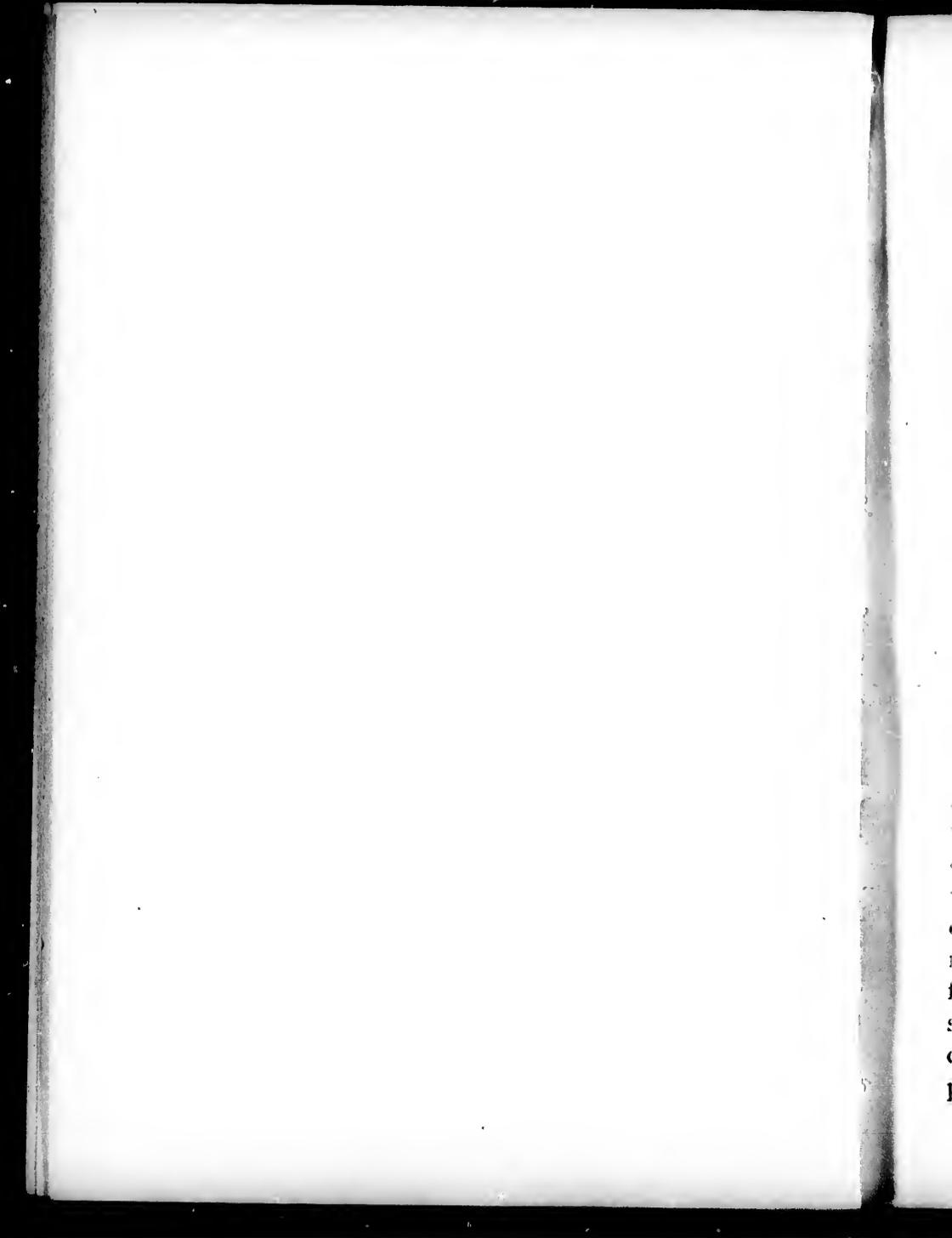
FROM

Lieut. and Adjutant WILLIAM MACEWEN,

1st Battalion Royal Scots,

To his Wife.

CANADA, 1813-14.



EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS.



KINGSTON, *6th June* 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I take the first opportunity of informing you that I arrived safely here, the day before yesterday. Our march was disagreeable beyond anything I ever experienced in the whole course of my life. We were ten days in getting to this place, which is poverty itself. We cannot get anything to eat, except our rations. The inhabitants of the country have either joined the army or made off; and although it is a beautiful part of the country, there is nothing to be had for love or money. I am happy I did not bring you here, as the women are ordered from the army down to Montreal. Mrs Billing, when I saw her five days ago, was preparing to come up, but now she must go the other way, as no officer or man can be allowed to have his wife with him. Before this reaches you, the news of our failure at Sacket's Harbour must have reached you. It ended very badly. We had four men killed and seven wounded, out of seventeen of the battalion present. They were commanded by Ensign Rutlidge, who got great praise for his conduct during the engagement.

I am sorry to inform you that I could not get my trunks further than Prescoat, which is nearly sixty miles from this place. I was obliged to take a few things in my haversack—whether I again see anything I left or not, God knows!

We are on parade every morning at two o'clock, waiting for the Americans, who are on the other side of the lake in great numbers. They are preparing to pay us a morning visit. I am sorry to say we are not in numbers sufficient to receive them in the manner they deserve. However, the battle is not always given to the strong, and may the Almighty be with us in the day of battle.

Let me know how many pairs Russian duck overalls I had in my trunk, and if you sent a pillow, as there was no pillow to be found when I left my baggage at Prescoat. Mr Hemphill and I have been together since we marched. We mess together, such as it is.

KINGSTON, 11th June 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I take the opportunity of the fleet that carries the women down to Montreal to inform you that I am well. I am certain you will think yourself fortunate in remaining at Montreal now that every one is ordered away.

KINGSTON, *18th June 1813.*

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I again take the opportunity of writing as a post leaves this in a few days.

Colonel Stuart arrived here yesterday, and seemed happy to see me. He informed me that he had seen you at Montreal, and that you were all well when he came away. I have been obliged to sell him my horse, as we are again under orders to march to York, with two hundred men. Major Gordon, Captain Wilson, Clyne, Fox, Hendrick, Johnston, and Rutledge embarked last night for same place. I have sold the horse for my own money, thirty guineas, which is thirty-five pounds currency.

I have given Lancaster (his servant) over to the Colonel with the horse, and if I should buy another, I will not give so much money for one in this country, during the war.

CARRYING PLACE, *23rd June 1813.*

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I again take the opportunity of a gentleman going down to Kingston, to inform you that I arrived here this morning in good health, after a march of nearly one hundred miles from Kingston. Our destination, I cannot at present give you the smallest information of, as the whole of our army is on the march against

the enemy, who are at Fort George, a place about three hundred miles from here. Our regiment has lost several men in the actions with the Americans, but we have always been the victorious party. We have destroyed one of their finest towns and plundered them of every article.

Billing is once more a prisoner, just what he wants, as he does not like the idea of smelling powder.

WOODS, 12 MILES FROM FORT GEORGE,
3rd July 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I arrived here yesterday. I can give you no idea of this place. We are in the centre of woods, which are wild in the extreme. There is nothing to be had for money, and we must live on our rations, which are bad, and I may say too little for any man in good health. However, I endeavour to live.

The Americans are in our front, strongly fortified in Fort George, and if reports are correct, they have mines in readiness to blow the place up as soon as our army gets into the garrison. I hope our generals will succeed in beating them out without running the risk of blowing the men up, as I have no doubt will be the case, should they enter the place. Mr Hemphill leaves this place with Captain Dudgeon's com-

pany to-morrow morning for another part of the army, distant from this place about sixty miles. This I am sorry for, as we have always been together since we left Montreal, but in these times I cannot expect anything like comfort, and this separation adds a great deal to my unpromising situation. Let me know how the garden comes on, also if you got my sword and epaulette from Mr Brown. I have been obliged to leave my brown trunk at York and bring my small one here with a few things, just as many as I can put in my haversack. No officer is allowed more than he can put under his arm and run with on all occasions.

CAMP, 4 MILES FROM FORT GEORGE,
26th July 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I have received your letters of the 18th and 24th June, and am happy you and our child are in good health.

Many of the officers and men are very ill with fever and ague, owing to the dampness of the ground and the closeness of the woods we are obliged to occupy in this poor country.

In future you will draw what sums you want from the regimental agents in Montreal, Messrs Gardin, Auldjoe, & Company, and they will charge same to MacGregor here. There is some

mention of a peace taking place with America immediately, and if that happens, we may enjoy many happy days in this country. We have been continually skirmishing with the enemy and have always beat them into Fort George, where, however, we cannot attack them, as they have it mined and ready to blow up if we go in. We have certain information every day of their movements, and are waiting the arrival of the fleet. The Americans sent one of their armed schooners down the other day, and she fired a good many shots at us in the camp, but no lives were lost. Our artillery fired two shots into her, and finding they might be sunk if she continued much longer, she went off in a humbler manner than when she advanced. The schooner calls every day, but has never cared to come near us since. Captain Gordon went out riding on the 20th and galloped into the Americans. He has written a pitiful letter, but no one seems to care for him. He is now lodged as a prisoner of war, where he will remain for a little, I suppose much to his mind.

I would advise you to keep the carriage until winter at all events, as there may be some change before that time. If not, you will then be able to sell it to better advantage than you can at present. I wrote informing you that Mr Hemphill had left this part of the army and gone with Captain Dudgeon to a place in the rear called Burlington Bay. I now live by

myself in an Indian house, made of branches and leaves of trees, all that defends me from cold and heat, which are very great in the night and day in these woods. If you can procure me a box of cigars, some tea, sugar, pepper, mustard, and any other things you think of, send them by some careful party coming to this part of the army.

CAMP, 4 MILES FROM FORT GEORGE,
13th August 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I received your letter of the 26th July. . . . In one of my former letters I mentioned that several of our officers and men were very badly, and at that time I did not imagine I would be attacked. I am sorry to say I have been confined bedfast these fourteen days with fever and ague, and have been obliged, though much against my will, to go to quarters in the rear with many more. Mr Connall, Hendrick, M'Kenzie, are in the same state. Every one is complaining of something or other, owing to the damp bad ground we are encamped upon. Our fleet came here ten days ago, but the Americans who dashed about before they came, seem very shy and won't come out from under the batteries of Fort George. However, I hope in God a few days will decide the fate of this country. The inhabitants are indifferent

who gains the day. They are determined to do nothing themselves. Where I am obliged to live, the people would not sell me a fowl nor a potato, and even grumble when my men use their dishes.

* * * * *

I open this letter to inform you we have taken two of the enemy's schooners and sunk two. I hope in a few days more they won't have one remaining.

ST DAVID'S, *6th September* 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I received your letter yesterday. I am certified unfit for any duty, and have procured leave to go to York, which is sixty miles from this. I intend to leave this with the first boats for that place, if I am able to move, so you must stop there and inquire before you proceed further. I am informed that York is not a very healthy place, but my certificate from the surgeon mentions that I can go a little further, if I am not likely to recover, so that is left to my discretion. I hope when the winter sets in that the cold weather will clear away every infection from me and the others. Among the officers, Colonel Stuart, Captain Wilson, Lieutenant Hendrick, Connal, Jenoway, A. Campbell, Doctor Wilson, Ensign M'Kenzie, Miller, and poor M'Leod, and myself, are all bad with fever

and ague, and unable to be with the army, which is within four miles of the Americans, who are strongly entrenched. Our men and they are engaged every day and night, and they still come off with the worst. We have had several of our men wounded, but none killed since we came here. Our fleet chased theirs some time ago, and commenced a running fight, and in a very short time took two of their schooners, sank two, and disabled two more, in such a manner that it is doubtful whether they got into port or went down. However, I suppose you will have the news at Montreal very nearly as soon as some parts of the army, which is a good deal divided.

When I got to York in coming here, every officer who had two trunks left one or both, and took what would shift himself. I did the same some time afterwards. The Americans came and took everything they could lay their hands on, and my trunk with everything I brought away with me, except a change and my blanket and sheet. I heard a few days since that the baggage of Colonel Stuart, Major Gordon, and Adjutant MacEwen is safe however. My going there will satisfy me on that head. I had the information in good time, as officers and men were ordered to give in statements of their losses, and mine was in some days before the order was known, so that I had time to withdraw it until I found what loss I had actually sustained.

YORK, 12th September 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Montreal.

I take the opportunity of Lieutenant and Adjutant Stone of the 49th regiment going down to Montreal to acquaint you that I got here this morning. I cannot say I am much better.

YORK, 21st October 1813.

Mrs MACEWEN, Carrying Ground.

I wrote you last night, and have now only to say that a Major Allan of this place, a good gentleman to the army, happens to be the person all the goods in your boats are for, and this morning a boat is going down to bring up some things, and you are to have a passage in her. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon in this place.

FORT GEORGE, 31st March 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Chippawa.

I received by the hands of Phillops a ham and a small basket of eggs, which came very opportunely, as there is nothing to be got here for money. The whole place is a ruin, nothing to be seen but brick chimneys standing, what the fire could not destroy, of the once beautiful town of Newark. The whole of the men have been employed raising batteries and other works for the protection of the place, but

I will say nothing as to the issue. We were alarmed last night, and were under arms most of the night, owing to the enemy firing over the river. As they are within a short distance, it was expected they would make a landing on this side; however, they did not make their appearance, so we were permitted to go to our quarters, which are beyond any I have occupied in this country, nothing to be had but water, and that would be scarce if the river was not near us.

I am getting into a barrack with Bailey and Vaughan, the only one in the place, and will have it ready in a few days for your reception, if you are determined to abide by a stirring and restless life. I am afraid this will be the case throughout the summer, as the Americans are determined to beat us from the place very soon. Give my respects to Captain Muirhead, Margaret, and all the family. See if you can get James to give you his Morgan to draw the cart, as my poor Paddy has been lame since I left Chippawa, and is at present unable to take the journey. Bring some spirits, and everything you want, as there is nothing here. At present the roads are very bad, and hardly passable for carriage or horse.

CAMP, NEAR FORT ERIE,
July 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Fort George.

We were partially engaged the whole

of yesterday, and expect the same this evening.
May the God of battles be with us.

FALLS OF NIAGARA,
29th July 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Fort George.

I came here yesterday on my way to Fort Erie, where the enemy is determined to make a stand. They have done a great deal of harm in this part, and among the sufferers is poor Muirhead, who has been burnt out of his house—Street's mills, and many more. Captain Rowan and Lieutenant Grant joined this morning, and it is expected we will move towards the enemy this evening.

STREET'S CREEK, 31st July 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Fort George.

I wrote you yesterday from the Falls. Captain Roxburgh of the Glengarry Regiment promised to deliver it to you.

This place, from the quarters we occupied yesterday, is one continuous ruin. We have not seen a single soul all the way we have come. We are making every preparation to move towards Fort Erie, where the enemy is in considerable force waiting for one more trial. If once more defeated here, they will be quiet for the remainder of the summer.

CAMP, BEFORE FORT ERIE,
6th August 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Fort George.

We are employed during the night in raising a battery, which I hope we will be able to make use of against the enemy to-morrow. It will cause them either to come to an engagement or leave the Fort. . . . I am certain if they fight it will be dreadful for the defeated side.

CAMP, BEFORE FORT ERIE,
9th August 1814.

Mrs MACEWEN, Fort George.

I take the opportunity of Corporal Lees going to the Fort. I wrote you on the 7th, under cover to Mr Haswell, and hope you received it. The substance of it was informing you of my agreeing with your wish to ride up and spend a day with me. If you can come up in your cart it will be the best way of travelling, as it will answer for your bed while you are here, and you can bring any little thing with you for your comfort while you remain. This you cannot do if you ride. You may buy a stout horse for the cart if you can get one cheap at Fort George, but you will endeavour to have some one near you who understands about age, movements, &c.

The enemy are determined to do everything

to save their honour, therefore the struggle will be great on both sides.

* * * * *

P.S.—We move forward this evening.

NOTE.

Adjutant MacEwen and his wife sailed with the Royal Scots from the West Indies in June 1812, and arrived in Canada in August following, after a hazardous voyage. Remained in Quebec for some months until the army was collected, when the regiment was ordered to advance.

The child referred to at page 7 was named George Edward. He died at Montreal, on 7th August 1813, aged ten months and four days.

After the war in Canada was over, the regiment returned to Scotland.

Adjutant MacEwen sailed with his regiment from Leith for the East Indies in January 1816, and was engaged in the Mahratta War, was present at the taking of Nagpoor, &c., and died in India in 1819. His wife died at Edinburgh in 1845.

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