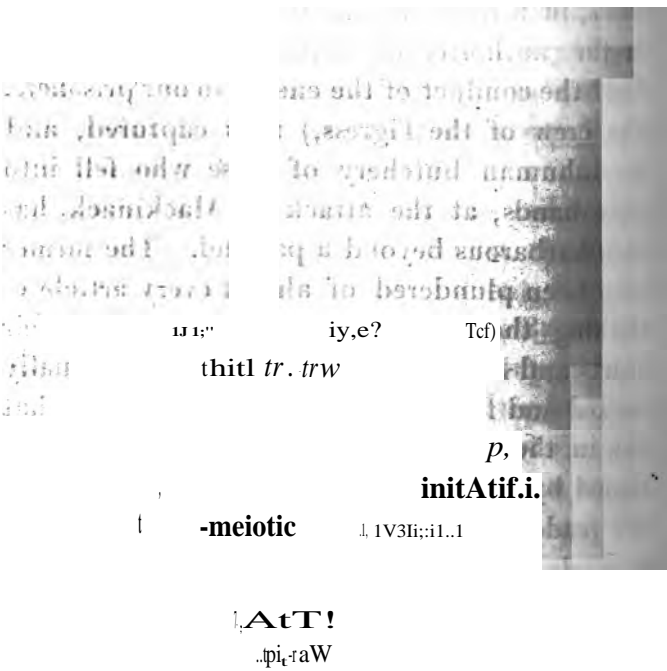


even hinted at in the proceedings of the court of inquiry, (filling as they do the column of a newspaper,\*) that tried the officers and crew of the Tigress; and which court would, most gladly, have published the fact. And would doctor Smith and Mr. Thomson, so ready at catching tales of the sort, have let pass such an opportunity of stigmatizing the British ? The most surprising thing is, that it should be a " fourth edition, revised and corrected," wherein we find so disgusting, and so flagitious a paragraph.

\* National Intelligencer, July 29, 1815.



CHAPTER XVII.

*Assemblage of troops in Lower Canada—Contemplated attack upon Sackett's Harbor—Arrival there of general Izard—British camp at Chambly—March of the left division towards Plattsburg—Origin of the expedition—Arrival of the left division near the lines, and correspondent retreat of major-general Macomb—Slow advance of the left division—Behaviour of the American militia—Description of Plattsburg—Required co-operation of the Champlain fleet—Comparative force of the two squadrons—Important particulars from the letters of " VERITAS "—Remarks on the American official account—Prisoners and deserters—Loss on both sides—American accounts—Painted representation of the action—Subsequent death of sir George Prevost—Remarks upon plans of conquest matured at a distance—Re-encampment of the left division of the British army in Lower Canada—Proceedings of the right division—Improved state of the defences, and augmented force of the garrison, at Fort-Erie—Effect of sickness and loss on the British—Preparations for a sortie—State of the British. Works—Distance between them and the*

*British encampment—Advance of the American' sallying party—State of the weather —Surprise of the British piquets—Skirmish with the guard, and capture (f part of the batteries—Advance of the American reserve—Arrival of the support-brigade from the British camp—Repulse of the American troops, and recovery of the captured batteries—Mutual loss—American accounts—Continued exposure and sickness of the .right division—Its removal to a healthier contiguous spot, and subsequent retreat 4o Chippeway-Veneral Izard's departure from Sackett's Harbor His cautious proceeding,. and junction with general Brown —Amount of the united American forces—Further retreat of general „ Drummond—Skirmish at Lyon's creep—British command of Lake Ontario—A small reinforcement to the right division—Retreat of the American-, army to Fort-Erie—A second reinforcement to • the British—Abandonment and ..destruction of Fort-Lrie, and departure of generals Izard and Brown from Upper Canada —Distribution of both armies, on the Niagara, into winter quarters—State of alarm at Sackett's Harbor — Two successive predatory incursions . into the western parts of Upper Canada.*

LEAVING •Mr. Madison. to profit by the advantage" he has gained upon Lake Huron, we hasten to Lower Canada ; where a force of

British regulars was now assembled, sufficient, for the first time during the war, to give serious alarm to the American government. During the months of June and July, the Quebec papers were continually announcing • the arrival •• of transports with troops, • and those troops, too, such as, under Wellington, had hitherto carried all before them. . When the people of the Canadas began to reflect, how sparingly they had been supplied with troops, in the first two years of the war, a very familiar proverb could not fail to press upon their thoughts. When, again, they saw nothing but petty reinforcements sent to general Drummond on the Niagara, and that the important post of Sackett's Harbor was still a flourishing depot in the hands of the enemy, what rational man among them could come to any other conclusion, than that the commander-in-chief was determined to wipe away the disgrace he had incurred in the May of the preceding year ?\* Sir George, did certainly say something, in his intercepted letters to lieutenant-general Drummond, about ordering a brigade of i troops, under major-general Kempf, to Kingston, for the purpose • of attacking 'Sackett's Harbor ; although, at the same time, he must have known, that our fleet was not in to situation to appear on the lake ; nor likely to be so, till the new 100-gun-ship! )was launched-. . So satisfied

▲i \* See Vol. I. p. 1n.

were the Americans, that Sackett's Harbor would be the first point of attack, even if sir George had to cross the St. Lawrence, and march overland, that general Izard, on the 1st of September, broke up his encampment at Plattsburg, and marched there with between 3 and 4000 regulars.

If any any thing could raise British courage beyond its accustomed height, it was, surely, the emulation which existed between the troops that had recently arrived from the Peninsula, and those that had been originally allotted for the defence of the Canadas : the one, highly jealous of the reputation they had already gained ; the other, equally so, of their local experience, and of the dressing they had several times given to superior numbers of the very same enemy, against whom the two united bodies were now about to act. Under these circumstances, will any one, except an American, say, that 11000 of such troops would not have beaten, upon any ground where evolutions could be practised, 17000 of the best troops which the United States could have brought into the field ? A British army, then, of 11000 men, with a proportionate and most excellent train of artillery, commanded in chief by sir George Prevost, and, under him, by officers of the first distinction in the service, left their camp at Chambly, " with a view," says the American official account, " of con-

quering the country, as far as Crown Point and Ticonderoga." We are here bound to acquit sir George Prevost of being the framer of this expedition. It originated in England. j'

The approach of sir George's army, by Odell-town, to the line of demarcation, was the signal for major-general Macomb, with the few regulars of general Izard's army left under his command, to retire from the neighbourhood of the lines, to Plattsburg. His abandoned camp was entered by sir George Prevost on the 3d of September. From this position the left division, of about 7000 men, composed of all but the reserve and heavy artillery, moved forward on the 4th, and halted on the 5th, within eight miles of Plattsburg; having advanced 25 miles within the enemy's territory in the course of four days. On the morning of the 6th, the left division proceeded on its march, major-general Power's, or the right column advancing by the Beckmantown road ; and major-general Brisbane's column,—except one wing of De Meuron's regiment, left to keep up the communication with the main body,—taking the road that runs parallel to Lake Champlain. At a bridge crossing a creek that intersects this road, the American general had stationed a small force, with two field-pieces, to abatis and obstruct the way. In the meanwhile the right column, meeting with

no impedimentS to its progress, passed rapidly, on, 700 .American militia,\* upon whom " the British troops did not deign to fire, except by their flankers and advanced patrols," 1- retreating before it. General Macomb, out of compliment to the regulars, perhaps, states that 250 of them, under major Wool, " disputed the road with great .obstinacy ;" yet, in almost the next paragraph, admits that, after the detachment of 340 regulars, with two field pieces, had retired from Dead creek, and joined major Wool, and while the riflemen " at rest," were pouring in a destructive fire," and the field-pieces doing " considerable execution," " so undaunted was the enemy, that he never deployed in his whole march, always pressing on in column." The rapid advance of major-general Power secured major-general Brisbane from any further opposition, than what .he might experience from the American gun-boats and gallies.:Notwithstanding a heavy fire from their long 24 and 12-pounders, the bridge across the creek was presently re-constructed, and the left column moved forward upon Plattsburg.

The village -:a Plattsburg contains about 70 houses and -stores, and is situate on both sides' of the river Saranac, close to its confluence with Lake Champlain. The statement in the British official account, that " the column entered Flats-

\* Sketches of the Wat,q). 318.

1- App. No. 45.

burg," must, therefore; be understood to mean, either the *township* of that name; or the small portion of the village which was situate on the north-side of the stream. It was to the south-side that general Macomb, after taking up the planks of the bridge, had retreated ;. and it was " on the elevated ridge of land" forming its bank, that the Americans erected their works. General Macomb mentions three forts, and two block-houses strongly fortified." One of the latter, according to a grand panoramic view of the action, mounted three guns. 1, We believe there were from 15 to 20 guns in all ,most .of them of heavy caliber. There was, also, a large new stone-mill, four stories high, that formed an excellent position for the American riflemen. It was on the evening of the 6th, that the left division arrived **on the north-bank** of the: Saranac. " But," 'says Mr. Thompson, " not all the gallies, aided by the armament of the whole flotilla, which, then lay. opposite Plattsburg, under commodore Macdonough, could have prevented the capture of Macomb's army, after its passage of the Saranac, had sir • George Prevost pushed his whole force upon the margin *of* that stream. Like general Drummond, at Erie, he made a pause, in full view of the unfinished works of the Americans, and consumed. five days in erecting batteries, and throwing up breast-

\* App. No. 42.

works, for the protection of his approaches. Of this interval the American general (lid not fail to avail himself; and kept his troops constantly employed in finishing his line of redoubts."\* The reader need scarcely to be reminded, that this is the same Plattsburg, at which colonel Murray, with 1000 troops, landed ; the river on which it stands, the same Saranac, up which the colonel ascended, three miles, to burn the enemy's barracks; and that those barracks were burnt, while an American regular army, more than twice as strong as general Macomb's, lay encamped in the neighbourhood.t

Unfortunately, a service which one brigade of the left division, had it been allowed to make the attempt, would have most promptly and completely executed, was to be deferred, till a ship, which had been launched only 11 days, was armed, manned, and equipped ; and, with her puny companions, ready to fight a much superior fleet of the enemy. There is no doubt that orders were sent from home, for this ship to be laid on the stocks, so that she might be ready to co-operate in the Plattsburg expedition. Six days only after the *Confiance* had been launched, and nine days before a crew arrived to man her, was sir George's army already in the enemy's territory. If sir George's orders were so impe-

l Sketches of the War, p. 319.

l- See Vol. I. p.

rative as to a naval co-operation, why did he not wait quietly at his camp at Chambly, till the new ship was fitted ; and then commence his three days' march to Plattsburg

A gentleman, residing near the scene of action, has, under the signature of " *Veritas*," so ably descanted upon the merits of the Plattsburg failure, that we cannot do better, than make an extract from his interesting pamphlet ; \* first, however, calling the reader's attention to our statement of the action fought between the rival fleets ; wherein will be seen detailed some of the many difficulties under which poor captain Downie laboured. t So much of that statement as respects the relative force of the British and American squadrons, cannot well be dispensed with ; and is therefore here transcribed :

*Gr Comparative force of the two squadrons.*

	British.	American.
Broadside-metal	5 Long guns, 507	588
in pounds	. Carronades, 258	606
	765	1194
Complements of men and boys,	537	950
Size in tons,	1426	2540."

" In order," says the writer of *VERITAS*,<sup>s</sup> " to convey an accurate idea upon the subject of the expedition to Plattsburg, by reasoning upon fir George's official letter, 1 extract from it, that, on the 3d of September, our army seized

\* Published at Montreal, Upper Canada.

James's Nay. Occur. p. 405-35.

the enemy's entrenched camp at Champlain; town (what a feat !) after it was abandoned by them; that, on the 5th, the army halted within 8 miles of Plattsburg ; and, on the 6th, entered Plattsburg, after reversing the position of the enemy at Dead creek, which they abandoned and left to be defended by the gun-boats. Sir George then describes the position of the enemy as upon an elevated ridge south of the Saranac, with redoubts, &c. armed with heavy ordnance, with their flotilla, the Saratoga, Surprise, Thunderer, Preble, and 10 gun-boats, (which gun-boats please to remark, reader, were, a moment before, said to be at Dead creek,) at anchor out of gun-shot from the shore.' lie adds, that he immediately communicated this circumstance to captain Downie, who had the *Confiance*, *Linnet*, *Broke*, and *Shannon*,' (captain Piing calls. the latter the *Chub* and *Finch*,) and 12 gun-boats,' and • requested his co-operation; (mark that ;) and, in the mean time, batteries were constructed. On the morning of the 11th our flotilla was seen over the isthmus of land; (it seems he would not trust to his ears, in respect to the scaling Of the guns for a signal as agreed upon ;) when, immediately, certain brigades Were ordered to advance to force the ford of the Saranac, and escalate the enemy's works upon the heights ; but; "Sareely had the troops forced a passage and ascended those heights, when he heard the shout of victory (here his ears appear

10 have been pretty sharp) from the enemy's works, in consequence of the flags of the *Confiance* and *Linnet* being struck, (they did not strike within 15 minutes of each other,) and the gun-boats flying. Finally, he adds, ^this unlooked for event, depriving me of the co-operation of the fleet,' (but, in the name of honor and good faith, why did you not co-operate before ?)

without which, the further prosecution of the service was become impracticable, I did not hesitate to arrest the course of the troops advancing to the attack, because the most complete success would have been unavailing, and the possession of the enemy's works: offered no advantage to compensate for the loss we must have sustained in acquiring possession of them.'

" Now, would it not be supposed, that all this was done in the time that sir George was turning himself round from looking at the fleet, to look at his troops,: and *vice versa* ! but, what must the astonishment be, when it is found, that the *Confiance* resisted two hours and a half, and the *Linnet* 15 minutes longer !. Surely the troops, whose commander was so impatient to see the fleet come up, ought to have been ready to enter the enemy's works the moment they did appear. Had they so entered, it is unquestionable that our fleet would have been victorious ; or, had they been permitted to enter, even when recalled, it is almost demonstrable that the enemy's fleet must have surrendered, or ours

at least, have been retaken. There may be some truth in sir George's official narrative but much is concealed. A letter was sent to captain Downie, strongly urging him to come on, as the army had been long waiting for his co-operation, (stating, as a proof of it, that it had been under arms from day-light the day before, in expectation of the fleet,) and closing with a hope, that nothing but the state of the wind, prevented the fleet from coming up. This last insinuation conveyed more meaning than meets the ear, as if hinting that artificial delays were made. The brave Downie replied, that he required no urging to do his duty ; that he should be up the first shift of wind, and make the signal of his approach by scaling his guns. He was as good as his word ; the guns were sealed when he got under weigh ; upon hearing which, sir George issued an order for the troops to *cook*, instead of that of instant co-operation. At length, when *he saw the flea*, a movement was ordered, but of course too late, as so little previous arrangement had been made for being ready to come into immediate contact with the enemy, that the troops put in motion, had a circuit of miles to make ; and then, when at length close in with their object, were recalled the moment that the fleet fell. As to captain Downie's being urged by sir George to go into action, the whole chain of circumstances corroborate the fact, and the indiscretion of major Coore in furnishing living evidence of

what the hero, now no more, said, is not more fortunate for the cause of truth than conclusive thereon. Besides this, every professional man knows, that no naval officer, in his senses, would, from choice, (if left to the guidance of his own judgment,) have gone into action with a new ship and raw crew, immediately after her equipment, without a week or ten days to discipline that crew, and accustom them to their stations and quarters. Much stress is laid by sir George and his friends upon the allegation that the enemy's fleet was out of gun-shot from the shore ; which is not true. But why not have entered the enemy's works, and given practical proof of the range of shot against their fleet, instead of making conjectural assertions ? Had that been done, widely different would have been the issue. So thoroughly did captain Downie depend upon co-operation by land, that he harangued his men when going into action, to this effect :-

My lads, we shall be immediately assisted by the army a-shore---Let us show them, that our part of the duty is well done.' Poor fellow, how he was mistaken ! In 10 minutes afterwards he fell; and left sir George to tell his own story. This speech proved to have a pernicious effect upon the crew, when the promises it conveyed, were seen not to be fulfilled on shore.

" It is a fact, that the American commodore was so impressed with the idea that their works on shore would still be carried, that he did not

no impediments to its progress, passed rapidly, on, 700 .American militia,\* upon whom " the British troops did not deign to fire, except by their flankers and advanced patrols," t re trotting before it. „,General Macomb, out of compliment to the regulars, perhaps, states that 250 of them, under major Wool, " disputed the road with great obstinacy ;" yet, in almost the next paragraph, admits that, after the detachment of 340 regulars, with two field pieces, had retired from Dead creek, and joined major Wool, and while the riflemen " at rest," were pouring in a destructive fire," and the field-pieces doing " , considerable execution," " so undaunted was the enemy, that he never deployed in his whole march, always pressing on in column." The rapid advance of major-general Power secured major-general Brisbane from any further opposition, than .what he might experience from the American gun-boats and gallies. Notwithstanding a heavy fire from their long 24 and. 12-pounders, the bridge -across the creek was presently re-constructed, and the left column moved forward upon Plattsburg.

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\* Sketches of the Watitp. 318.

t App. No. 45.

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\* App. No. 42.



upon sir George, as an imperious duty, to furnish' that set-off, by capturing the enemy's army, to prevent the effect which a retreat, under such circumstances, must produce, ornamented, as he well knew it would be, by American gasconade? The mischievous moral effect of the Plattsburg business, has been, and will be, incalculable, both in America and in Europe ; for that will be heard of in many countries and places, where it will not be known, that the commander alone was to blame, and the army under him indignant on the occasion. Were the events of sir George's command, and especially the expeditions to Sackett's Harbor and Plattsburg to become examples for the British army to follow; from possessing the hearts of lions, they would soon be reduced to the timidity of lambs ; and the future inquiries of military men would be, not who had nobly done his duty, but who had -avoided a battle, or who had contrived to escape unhurt.

" It has been said, that his General Orders and official letters were often composed with a view to deceive at a distance ; and his Haftsburg letter furnishes direct proof of this accusation's being correct. It is dated there, the 11th of September, 1814, as if written on the spot, immediately after the naval battle, and before the degrading retreat commenced ; whereas, it is well known, that the letter did not go from Canada

until it was carried by Mr. Secretary Brenton, who sailed from Brandy Pots on the 9th of October ; consequently, it was written in Montreal long after the date it bears. In proof of this, read the following paragraph of that letter, As the troops concentrated and approached the line of separation between this province,' (is Plattsburgh then in Canada ?) and the United States, the American army, &c.' What a sad slip of the pen, or memory, is here ! But if for

Plattsburg, 11th September,' be substituted

Montreal, 21st September,' or any subsequent day, then the blunder will be explained. It is true, such was the celerity of his personal retreat, that on the 13th, he issued an order, dated at Odell-town ; but I strongly suspect that, on the 11th, after the action, he was not in a state to write letters any where. Another proof of the official letter's having been written at Montreal, and not at Plattsburg, is, that in the first General Order issued afterwards, the gun-boats were, in a manner, commended for effecting their retreat in safety ; (probably from a sympathetic feeling of the moment ;) whereas, in the revision of that order, they are left out, although they had been mentioned in this false dated letter as flying; because, upon reflection, their not having done their duty, might lead people aside from the consideration, that he had not done his own. But why was the letter dated at

Plattsburg? Truly, just to deceive JOHN Butt; and prevent the necessity of then letting him know, how many men were lost by desertion in that memorable retreat, and what Tiantity of provisions and stores were destroyed in it, or . during the expedition."

In addition to sir -George's, we have copied into the Appendix sir James Yeo's letter.\* Captain Pring's, which details the naval battle, will be found in its proper place.t Some parts of the American official account require an explanation. It is by that intended to be understood, that the whole British army was, on the morning of the 11th, drawn up on the banks of the 'Saranac : whereas, but four battalions were theree' stationed ; the remainder of the troops being at some distance in the rear. NI here did general Macomb learn, that our troops were three times , " repulsed," in their efforts to cross the river ? The fact is, major-general Brisbane, with a portion of his brigade, not only crossed the Saranac, but brought away some prisoners. This was accomplished to shew the practicability of the thing, and not as any part of the general attack *about* to be commenced. Had general Brisbane been permitted to advance, he would soon have made the brave volunteers and militia" skip along as nimbly as, according

App No. 43.

+ jimeei'Naval Occnrreneeg, his Appendix, No. 00.

to general Macomb himself, they had already done upon the Beckman-town road. " The gallant conduct of captain M' Glassin," who, on the night of the 9th, " with 50 men, drove off a working-party, consisting of .150, and defeated a covering-party of the same number, killing one officer and six men **in** the charge, and wounding many,"\* was a feat worthy to be performed by Americans. Let us take a view of it, in its unadorned state.. The battery mounted two guns, and had suffered so much from the enemy's fire, as to need considerable repairs. These were best performed at night ; and the men had actually their coats and accoutrements off; when this " gallant" party surprised them. Such as were not instantly disabled or made prisoners soon picked' up their muskets, and drove the Americans back to their works, with the utmost precipitancy. General Wromb, well knowing that captain•M' Glassin had not time even to spike the two guns, leaves that to be inferred. Mr: Thomson, while, in stating the routed foe as only *one* " guard. of 150 men," he appears to consider general Macomb's " covering party" as the same men *covered* with their cloaths, understands what is:expected from him, as to the other part of the account ;\_ and therefore unblushingly says : " Being now in possession of a work, which would have , incalculably

\* App. No. 44. : " 4

annoyed the batteries at Fort-Brown, captain M<sup>c</sup>Glassin destroyed it with all possible haste, and returned to the American works with the loss of three men missing."

The only prisoners taken by the Americans, near the river, were some of the light infantry company of the 76th regiment, and a few stragglers from other corps, who, having, when the order came for a general retreat, lost their way in the woods, got cut off from general Brisbane's brigade. General Macomb assigns a better reason for the discontinuance of the bombardment by the British, thus : " Every battery of the enemy being silenced by the superiority of our fire." <sup>t</sup> So wide is this from the truth, that general Brisbane silenced, and drove away the men from, every one of the American guns on the banks of the river, preparatory to the lodgment which he had intended to have made with his brigade, had not the attack been countermanded.

The rear-guard was commanded by this officer, who waited till the bridge at Dead creek was completely destroyed, and left nothing behind, except what the badness of the roads prevented being removed. One of these articles was the broken carriage of a 24-pounder, which <sup>a</sup> Burlington journalist immediately magnified into " 90 pieces of cannon." General Macomb, in his first letter, says: " The light troops and

militia are in full pursuit of the enemy, and making prisoners in all directions." In his second letter, he baulks the expectations he had raised in the minds of his countrymen', by enumerating only " five dragoons of the 19th regiment, and several others of the rear-guard." This " pursuing" enemy, however, knew better than even to shew himself to " the rear-guard." The "prisoners" consisted chiefly of deserters ; of whom there were, from first to last,—such an effect had the retreat upon the minds of the men,—more than 800.

In killed and wounded our loss was comparatively small ; amounting to two captains, one ensign, four serjeants, 30 rank and file, of the former ; and of the latter, one general staff, one captain, six lieutenants, seven seijeants, and 135 rank and file. The missing amounted to four lieutenants, two serjeants, one drummer, and 48 rank and file ; making a total of 37 killed ; 150 wounded ; and 55 missing : grand total, 235.\* As this trifling loss would show, at once, what a small portion of the British troops Caine into action ; and that it could not have been the prowess of their opponents that coin=  
pelted them to retire, general Macomb, to whose numerical accuracy we are no stratigers,<sup>t</sup> says : " The loss of the enemy, in killed, wounded, prisoners, and deserters, since his first appearance, cannot fall short of 2500.'1: This number

\* Sketches of the War, p. 3e1.

<sup>t</sup> App. No. 44.

satisfies Mr. O'Connor, but not doctor Smith ;' the latter, therefore, with his ready pen, makes it " 3050."t Mr.. Thomson pretends to more accuracy. • „ale states the number of deserters that surrendered on, „the first day, at 400 ; adding :—" Besides these, sir George lost 75 prisoners; and, as nearly as could be ascertained, about 1500 killed and wounded ; among them several officers of rank." t , The Americans state their own loss, in regulars, at one subaltern, one serjeant, one musician,,and,p4 privates, killed; two subalterns,one serjeant-major,four serjeants, two corporals,, four. ,musicians, and 40 privates wounded; total, 4 , killed, and 62 wounded: grand. total 110.rL The number of missing among the regulars, or the general return of loss among the 1141unte@rs and militia, no where appears..

None of the American editors have magnified the British force.. beyond 14000 men ; and Mr. O'Connor states general Macomb's force at 1500 regulars, and 2.500 militia and Volunteers; total 4000 ►en.\* . This is exclusive of 3000 militia that joined during the night of the 11th; and there were, besides, according to an American, editor, " many thousands more on the road in full and willing. march4",. The reader is, no doubt, prepared for a budget of boasting, on the

History of the United Statei, Vol; III. p. 319.

, + Sketches of the War, p. 324. i;

History of the War. p. 273.

part of the Americans ; and, without characterizing it as a " splendid engagement," had they not reason ? We shall only notice a large " Painting ;" of which we have the " Key," now before us. Among the British officers represented as close to the bank, are major-generals De Rottenburg, Robinson, Brisbane, and Baynes ; and a horseman, in full speed from one of the contiguous houses, is styled,— " Aide de camp from general Prevost." The British encampment is, by the painter's magic, brought full into view. We are not a little surprised to see— " Colonel Wellington, (Willington,) of the Buffs, encouraging and giving an example to his men ;" when Mr. Thomson had, with more accuracy than usual, " killed" that officer, at the head of these same " Buffs," while marching to Plattsburg, on the 6th.t By way of sheaving that the " State-dragoons of New York," with their " red coats," bad ceased to " give alarm to the militia,"I some of the former appear among the fierce groupe on the south-side of the Saranac. As the picture, by all accounts, gave, at " 25 cents \$ each," every satisfaction to the citizens, two important objects were attained : the proprietor filled his pockets, and the national vanity became raised to the highest pitch.

In all cases where the troops of the United

\* Sketches of the War, p. 324.

+ Ibid, p. 318.

App. No. 44.

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VOL. H.

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States have traversed the Canadian territory, their progress has, to borrow an American phrase, been "marked with the all-desolating ruin of the locust." Quite opposite, in its effects, was the retreat of the British along the shores of Champlain ; they may be said to have shed manna' as they went. Not an inhabitant of the place but was fed and enriched by the Plattsburg expedition ; which is all that remains to console us for its unsuccessful result. In the remarks which it has been our duty to make, in order to illustrate this memorable historical event, we hope the reader will understand, that the two services were as willing to co-operate, as, for the glory of their country, they ought always to be. That the fleet did all that could rationally be expected from its means, our naval volume will shew : that the army, had it been allowed to act, would have clone the same, with less trouble, and not many more casualties, than usually attend one of its field-days, has, we trust, already appeared in these pages. The individual, who, undoubtedly, caused all this, has since paid the debt of nature.\* While, against him and his memory, we disclaim all feelings of a personal nature, we as firmly deny, that the principle—' *De mortuis nil nisi honum*-' can be extended to a public character.

The indiscreet impatience of the Quebec

\* James's Nay. Occur. p.

journalists led them to announce, in a pompous and boastful manner, every movement of the left division, after its departure from Odell-town. Unfortunately, just as they had done favoring the public with "the highly gratifying intelligence, that our brave troops entered Plattsburg, with little opposition," the mail closed for England. So that, in one month after our discomfiture, the whole United Kingdom rang with the "INVASION OF NEW YORK, AND TAKING OF PLATTSBURG." The same wind that conveyed home, so quickly, this cheering piece of news, brought accounts, also, of the capture of Penobscot. The editor of a London evening journal, after announcing, first, that the "district of Maine" had been captured, and then, that "Plattsburg had been victoriously entered by our troops," says :—"By a glance at the map, it will be seen that, by this invasion, our army had already advanced in the interior to about 50 miles further south than the Penobscot, where the coast-operations were carrying on ; leaving, of course, the whole intermediate country between Lake Champlain and the sea, as it were cut off from the United States." Much of the ridicule incurred from hundreds of paragraphs like these, would have been saved, had the troops from Europe been accompanied by a commander-in-chief, competent to lead them; and he directed to govern his movements by

circumstances as they might exist at the time of his arrival, and not peremptorily to obey orders, issued at 4000 miles distance ; orders, which could not be put in execution, till a six month's fluctuation of events had, in all probability, destroyed their expediency.

After the British army, on its return from Plattsburg, had re-encamped at Champlain, the road to Sackett's Harbor lay open to sir George. Instead of directing his views that way, he marched, with the army, across the lines, to Odell-town ; and then set off for Montreal. After his departure, the principal part of the troops were distributed between Isle aux Noix, St. John's, Chambly, and La Prairie ; where we will leave them, and attend to the operations of the right division.

No sooner had the British retired to their encampment, after their unsuccessful assault upon Fort- Erie, \* than the Americans set about to repair the bastion which had been injured by the explosion ; as well as to complete the new works that were constructing, when the attack commenced. In a little while, the defences were all entire, and " garnished with heavy cannon ;" numbering, according to Mr. Thomson's plan of the fort, 27 pieces.

On the 2d of September, general Brown, having recovered from his wounds, resumed the

\* Sec p. 178.

command of the garrison ; which had, in the mean time, been reinforced by new levies of militia.\* On the 3d, came about 320 regulars, in the St. Lawrence brig, from Lake Huron, and a company of riflemen, 80 strong, from Sandusky. Small detachments of regulars, whose numbers cannot be ascertained, also crossed the strait, from Batavia and Sackett's Harbor. Notwithstanding, therefore, the loss sustained on the 15th of August, and by repeated desertions since, the American army still mustered about 3400 men, who, instead of the two captured schooners to protect their flanks, had now, the St. Lawrence, Niagara, Lady, Prevost, and Caledonia brigs, and Porcupine, schooner ; mounting, between them, 58 guns. Well might Mr. Thomson boast, that Fort-Erie was rendered " impregnable to the attacks of any other than a vastly superior force."

The British right division, although, it had been reinforced by the 6th and 82d regiments, of, united, about 1040 rank and file, was, on account of its recent loss, and the departure of six companies of the 41st for Fort-George, and of the small remnant of the 103d for Burlington, no stronger in numbers than previously to the assault : but, in effective strength, it was much weaker ; for the heavy and constant rains, operating upon the swampy nature of the ground

\* Sketches of the War, p. 328.

f Ibid, p. 323

upon which the troops were obliged to be encamped, and the severe privations, for want of provisions and other necessaries, under which they laboured, spread sickness among them. A supply, either of provisions or of men, could not well be forwarded, while the American squadron retained the command of the lake.

Several immaterial affairs of piquets occurred, till general Brown, enspirited by the business at Plattsburg, and encouraged by information of general Drummond's intention to retreat to a healthier position, resolved, by a sortie, to gain the credit of having compelled this movement. To render the enterprise less hazardous, he invited across a reinforcement of seven-day men,\* or men hired to act for that term only. Of this fact there is no doubt ; but we are willing to concede every advantage, in point of numbers, that was derived from it, and to estimate general Brown's force at no more than 3400 men, of whom upwards of two-thirds were regulars. The British had commenced upon a new battery, intended to enfilade the western ramparts of the American works ; but, being on the eve of retreating, and having as yet got up but additional guns,\* the work had not been persevered in. Two small wooden buildings, denominated, though not worthy the name of, block-houses, one upon the right flank, the

\* See p. 168.

other near the centre, of the British lines, had recently been constructed. The British encampment was distant a mile and a half from the works, which were situated in the midst of a thick wood.

Until it is admitted that the mere throwing of a red coat upon a man's back can endow him with all the well-known qualities of the British soldier, no one can be surprised that general Brown should have deferred his sortie till he had ascertained, that De Watteville's regiment, (which, without disparagement to the brave officers in it, was composed of foreigners of all nations and principles,) joined by the few numbers of the 8th, was doing duty at the batteries. It was at about two o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th of September, when the rain was pouring in torrents, that the Americans sallied from the fort. , " Lieutenants Riddle and Frazer, of the 15th infantry," says Mr, Thomson, " had already opened a road from the southern angle of the garrison, to a point within pistol-shot of the enemy's right wing, and with such secrecy, that it was not discovered till the actual assault commenced." We here gain a piece of important information ; and, it is our duty to add, that part of De Watteville's regiment composed that " right wing." • The Americans, at about three o'clock in the after-

\* Sketches of the War, p. 325.

noon, advanced, in two columns, under a heavy fire from their batteries ; one column passing through the woods, so as to flank the outer British battery, or No. 3 ; the piquets belonging to which were completely surprised. The other, emerging from a deep ravine, in which it had been concealed, penetrated the British lines, in front, a little to the right of No. 2, or the centre battery ; then, turning short to the left, surrounded the British right, and got almost immediate possession of No. 3 battery, its magazine, and, but not without a struggle, the block-house upon its right, garrisoned by a few men of the 8th regiment.

While a party was securing the prisoners, destroying the three 24-pounders at No. 3 battery, and blowing up the magazine, a strong column turned to the right ; and, after meeting with a gallant resistance from the piquets, composed of a part of the 8th, and De Watteville's regiments, succeeded in gaining possession of the remaining block-house and of No. 2 battery. General Miller, at the head of the 9th, 11th, and 19th infantry regiments, joined by the 21st regiment, forming the reserve under general Ripley, inclined towards the river, in order to assail the British battery, No. 1. By this time, the remnants of the first battalion of the royal 'Scots, of the second battalion of the 89th, and

the Glengarry light infantry ; also three companies of the 6th, and seven companies of the 82d regiment, had arrived from the British camp. The royal Scots, and 89th, under lieutenant-colonel Gordon, of the former regiment, advanced by the road leading to the block-house, upon the right and soon drove general Porter and his volunteers, in number 1000,\* along with the regulars supporting them, from the block-house and the battery, No. 3. The recovery of No. 2; and the defence of No. 1 batteries, were entrusted to the three companies of the 6th, under major Taylor, and the seven companies of the 82d, under major Proctor ; amounting, together, to about 560 rank and file. These detachments, after a free use of the bayonet, drove the 9th, 11th, 21st, and part of the 19th, United States' regiments, numbering, at the very lowest estimate, 1000 rank and file; from the battery No. 2, before they had effected its entire destruction, or that of the two guns in it, and then across the British entrenchments, nearly to the glacis of Fort-Erie ; making several prisoners in the pursuit. In the mean while, the Glengarry light infantry, under the immediate command of lieutenant-colonel Battersby, and accompanied by lieutenant-colonel Pearson, had recovered the possession of the new intrenchment, or

\* TIM, of the War, p. 263.



" unfinished battery No. 4." By five o'clock' the works were all re-occupied, and the line of piquets re-established.t

The British loss was very severe. It amounted to 115 killed, 175 wounded, and 316 missing; total, 609: T. a very large proportion, when we reflect, that the reserve, composed of major Lisle's troop of the 19th light dragoons, the seven remaining companies of the 6th, and the two flank companies of the 41st regiments, along with a small body of incorporated militia, was not at all in the action. What a contrast, in reference to the numbers of the respective armies, between the returns of casualties at the foot of major-general De Watteville's, and sir George Prevost's, official letters ! § The Americans acknowledge a loss of 10 officers and 70 men, killed ; 24 officers and 190 men, wounded; and 10 officers and 206 men, missing ; total, 510;\* nor does this return appear to include the militia or Volunteers.

•• We are only favored with the sight of a short extract from general Brown's official report. It is, however, quite enough to satisfy us of the spirit of the whole. "Within 30 minutes after the first gun was fired," says the general, " batteries, Nos. 3 and 2, the enemy's line of entrench.

\* Sketches of the War, p. 326. + App. No. 46.  
App. No. 47. § Ibid, No. 43.

ments, and his 'two block-houses, were in our possession. Soon after, battery No. 1, *was abandoned by the British*. The guns in *each* were spiked by us, or otherwise destroyed." With this falsehood set abroad, one cannot be surprised that general Brown's sortie should have been proclaimed throughout the republic a " splendid achievement," as he himself, in a private letter to general Gaines, has the modesty to call it ; nor at all the bombast to be found in the different American histories. The reader has had enough of this already ; we will, therefore, endeavour to be brief. General Brown we dismiss, with a very short extract from a letter written by the American " general Varnum," and dated " Buffaloe, September 18." " Our gallant little army," says this general " has again signalized itself, by gaining a splendid victory over a part of the enemy's forces, near Fort-Erie. Two of the enemy's batteries were carried, the guns spiked, trunnions broken off, and their magazines blown up." Mr. Thomson, after he has done stating, that the Americans had captured the two British block-houses, and all four of the batteries, and had succeeded in spiking the guns, (represented, upon his diagram as 12 in number,) and demolishing the captured works, very naturally tells us, that " the operations ceased, with the accomplishment of all

\* History of the War, p. 262-

the objects of the sortie."\* There is one part of Mr. Thomson's account, however, that we do not rightly understand. He declares that the impediments,—describing them fully—which the American regulars, under general Miller, experienced in their approaches to No. 1 battery, "produced some confusion in the column, and made constant appeals to the bayonet necessary."† An enemy's "bayonet," in such a case, would, one might suppose, produce still greater "confusion in the column." To what else, then, can Mr. Thomson allude, as so "necessary," but the "constant appeals to the bayonet," made by one of general Wilkinson's "tried serjeants,"‡:

Just in the place where honor's lodg'd" ?

And, no- sooner had the troops, thus doubly beset, faced about, than a still more forcible appeal " *au derriere*, acting by sympathy upon their heels, continued its potent stimulus, till the Americans reached the very walls of their impregnable" fortress.

The still unfavorable state of the weather, the increasing sickness of the troops, the loss of three out of six of the battering cannon, and the now very much reduced numbers of general Drummond's army, caused him, at night o'clock on the evening of the 21st, to

\* Sketches of the War. p. 327.      † Ibid. 326.  
See p. 82.

remove his remaining guns and stores; and retire to the neighbourhood of Black creek, about a mile and a half distant. Here the men bivouacked for the night, under torrents of rain. On the morning of the 22d, the Americans discovered this movement, but offered no molestation; although general Drummond waited till two o'clock on that day, ere he proceeded further downwards. On the 24th, after destroying the bridge across Frenchman's creek, and placing there a small artillery piquet, the right division arrived, and encamped, in comparatively comfortable quarters, at Chippeway.

As the naval ascendancy of the Americans upon Lake Ontario dismissed any present fears of an attack upon Sackett's Harbor, general Izard's army would, it was considered, be more profitably employed in strengthening the left division, at the head of the lake. Instead, however, of being carried to the British Twelve-mile creek, where a landing would have effectually cut off general Drummond's much inferior force, or to the neighbourhood of Fort-Niagara, so as to have assaulted and tried to recover that fortress, general Izard suffered himself and his army to be disembarked on the south side of the lake; and then stole, by a back route, to Lewistown; where he arrived about the 8th of October, with, according to American accounts, 2400 infantry, artillery, and dragoons, of the regular army.

Why did he not, then, cross instantly to Queens.. town, and place general Drummond between two fires ?—No ;—he preferred keeping on the safe side of the river till, arriving at Black Rock, on the 10th, he .crossed over to Fort-2,6e, and superseded general Brown ; who, on the 60, had received a reinforcement of 700 regulars from Detroit and Erie. As a proof that we have such authority as an American cannot dispute, for stating the American force upon this frontier at a much higher amount than we have hitherto fixed it, we here subjoin an article taken from the " Ontario Repository, of October 11," an American newspaper published on the spot.— " From Buffaloe, October 11th, we learn, that general Izard's army crossed at Black Rock only on that morning, and was to move down the Canada shore on the following day, with 8000 regular troops." May we, then, be allowed to say, that general Izard's army at Fort-Erie consisted of 6000 regular troops ?

Against such a force the British right division, reduced as it now was in numbers, had no chance of success. General Drummond, therefore, broke up his cantonments at Chippeway, and retired upon Fort-George and Burlington. On the morning of the 19th, a skirmish took place near Cook's mills, at Lyon's creek, between a brigade of American regulars, under general Bissell and detachments from the 82d, 100th, and Glen-

Barry regiments, amounting to about 650 rank and file, under colonel Murray. The thickness of the woods gave great advantage to the American riflemen ; and, although, with the addition of the reserve, we find the 5th, 14th, 15th, and 16th regiments named, besides a company of rifle men, under captain Irvine, making a total force of at least 1500 rank and file, the American "*corps d'elite*," as Mr. Thomson boastfully calls it, would not risk an encounter, with evidently inferior numbers, upon the open ground. After what ► may be termed, a drawn battle, each party retired ; the British, with the loss of 19 killed and wounded ; the Americans, according to Mr. Thomson, of 67 killed, wounded, and missing.\* This editor has magnified our force to 1200 men ; and made the " marquis of Tweeddale," in spite of the severe wound he was still labouring under at Kingston, the commander of the British party.

The British ship St. Lawrence having been launched on the 2d of October, commodore Chauncey, on the 11th, when he had ascertained that sir James would be on the lake in a few days, retired to Sackett's Harbor, and began mooring his ships head and stern, to prepare for an attack. Sir James sailed on the 17th, and, on the 19th, landed at the head of the lake, five companies of the 90th regiment, and a quantity

\* Sketches of the War, p. 329.

of provisions ; of which the right division was in great need. The fleet returned to Kingston on the 23d; and, on the 1st of November, sailed again to the head of the lake, with the 37th, and recruits for the 6th, and 82d regiments, and a brigade of artillery ; all of which, on the evening of the 2d, disembarked near Fort-George. The arrival of the first reinforcement, trilling as it was, and although it would not have augmented general Drummond's force much beyond half the amount of general Izard's, was made an excuse for the retreat of the latter to Fort-Erie. On the 22d of October the American volunteers crossed the strait, to be discharged ; and general Brown, with 2000 regulars, pushed forward to the relief of Sackett's Harbor. The arrival of the second British reinforcement produced a correspondent effect upon the remnant of the American force. Having, by the aid of their fleet, removed the guns, and completely destroyed the fortifications, the invaders, on the 5th of November, crossed from Fort-Erie to their own shore ; " after," says Mr. Thomson,—forgetting in whose possession Fort-Niagara was,—" a vigorous and brilliant campaign." The greater part of the American troops were distributed into quarters at Black Rock, Buffalo and Batavia ; the remainder, marched to Sackett's Harbor, to assist in repelling an attack

\* Sketches of the War, p. 330.

which no one could doubt would be made. The fighting being over upon the Niagara, lieutenant-general Drummond and suite, along with the 41st regiment, and a number of convalescents, departed from the head of the lake, on board the St. Lawrence, and arrived at Kingston on the 10th of November ; having left the right division, distributed along the Niagara frontier, in comfortable winter quarters.

The still defenceless state of the western district of Upper Canada, had exposed the inhabitants to all the horrors of a second American visitation\* On the 20th of September a band of depredators issued from the garrison. of troit ; and, crossing the stream, spread fire and pillage through a whole settlement ; •hereby reducing to misery no fewer than 27 Canadian

The plunder obtained in this excursion, and the impunity with which • the actors in it had got back to their homes,. stimulated a more numerous, and better organized body of •Americans, having, as their chief, " brigadier-general M'Arthur, of the United. States' army." The proceedings of this military officer. and his detachment having been thought worthy, of a place in one of the American histories, we cannot do better than transcribe the account. " On the 22d of the following month, (October,) brigadier-general M'Arthur, having collected

See p. 73.

720 effective regulars and militia, proceeded on a secret expedition, along the western shore of Lake St. Clair, and passed into the Canadian territory, at the mouth of that water. He penetrated 200 miles in the enemy's country; destroyed more than that number of muskets, attacked a large body of militia and Indians, encamped on favorable ground; made about 150 prisoners; and dispersed all the detachments to be found at the Thames, Oxford, or Grand River. During the march, he principally subsisted on the enemy, and fired several of the mills, from which the British troops in Upper Canada were supplied with food. Having gained intelligence of the evacuation of Fort-Erie, he abandoned his intention of proceeding to Burlington Heights, and returned to Detroit on the 17th of November. By this rapid expedition, the enemy's hostile intentions were diverted from another quarter, and his means of attacking Detroit entirely crippled; the destruction of his supplies rendering such an attempt altogether impracticable."\*

Mr. Thomson has here, by the usual arts of his trade, attempted to convert into a military exploit, what much more resembled the inroad of banditti. That general M'Arthur got possession of *some* muskets, is very probable; because, as the reader recollects, a few had

► Sketches of the War, p. 331.

been left in the hands of some of the inhabitants, by the commanding officer Of the district. \* No militia were, at this time, embodied; therefore, none could have been "encamped." The "150 prisoners" consisted of peaceable inhabitants, both old and young, and drunken Indians and their squaws. Had there been any "detachments" within even a day's march of the scene of general M'Arthur's exploits, he would not have been so bold. The instant it was ascertained that a detachment of the 103d regiment, numbering less than half "120 effective regulars and militia," had moved from Burlington Heights, the general and his gang "dispersed;" and so "rapid" was their flight, that the British regulars did not get within eight miles of them. If Mr. Thomson can acknowledge, that the American troops "subsisted on the enemy, and fired several of the mills," we may well conceive, what must have been the devastation and ruin that marked the track of general M'Arthur and his mounted Kentuckians.

\* See p. 5.

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