

## CHAPTER VII.

*Critical situation of major-general Vincent's army—American army sent against it—Lieutenant-colonel Harvey's gallant proposal of a night-attack—Its adoption and successful result. Capture of the two American generals—Confusion and retreat of the American army—7 Commodore Chauncey's return to Sackett's Hat, bor—Sir James Yeo's attack upon the Americans at their second encampment—Arrival of the American army at Fort-George, and abandonment of the detached posts—Surrender of colonel Bcerstler and 541 Americans to a subaltern's detachment of the 49th—Colonel Clark's successful attack on Fort-Schlosner Alliance between the Americans and Indians—The tatter's declaration of war against the Canadas—Gross misrepresentations of the Americans corrected-7.*

*iii. British plan for saving American prisoners in the hands of the Indians—Barbarous experiment made with British prisoners by the American major Chapin—Lieutenant-colonel Bisshop's successful attack on Lack Rock—His untimely fall—Capture of unarmed Canadians—Second capture of York—Its defenceless state—Destruction of private property—American officers on parole.*

WE must now return to major-general Vincent, whom we left encamped at Burlington

Heights, distant from Fort-George about 50 miles. The capture of York, and the American superiority on the lake, rendered the situation of this army extremely critical. The officers and men were in absolute want of those necessaries, which they had been compelled, either to leave behind at the evacuation of, or to destroy during the retreat from, Fort-George, Should the enemy approach in force too superior to justify a battle, the British were without the means of carrying away their few field-pieces, or even their wounded. Should, on the other hand, a battle offer the slightest chance of success, the quantity of ammunition, 90 rounds per gun, was too small to admit of perseverance in their efforts. -

Determined to drive the British from their position, or, if resolved to fight, to ensure their capture, general Dearborn, on the 1st and 2d of June, despatched from Fort-George generals Chandler and Winder, with their two brigades of infantry, accompanied by colonel Burn and his dragoons, and by a strong detachment of artillery, having in charge eight or nine field-pieces, both heavy and light. On arriving, on the morning of the 5th, at the vicinity of Stony Creek, and within about seven miles of the British encampment, the Americans pitched their tents, in order to make further preparations for attacking a force, of much less than half their numbers\*4...--

Lieutenant-colonel Harvey, at the head of a reconnoitring party, consisting of the light companies of the 8th and 49th regiments, advanced close to the enemy's encampment, and took an accurate view of his position. With a promptitude, as honourable to his gallantry as his judgment, the lieutenant-colonel suggested to major-general Vincent, in the strongest terms, a night-attack upon the American camp. He had planned the whole in his mind; and offered, in person, to lead the advance. The object was, to throw the enemy into confusion ; and, if possible, compel him to abandon his intended attack upon the British army. It was certainly a desperate measure, but British soldiers were to make the attempt, and not to make it wouki bring down the same consequences as a fail ure,—the capture or destruction of general Vincent's force.

The night of the 5th of June, as if propitious to the undertaking, proved one of the darkest that had been known for many years. Owing to that very circumstance, as small a number as could well be employed, would, it was justly considered, co-operate with the best effect. The men had been kept under arms, awaiting an attack from the enemy, since early in the afternoon; and, at half-past eleven, as if merely to take up some new position accessory to the defence of the post, five companies of the 8th, and the whole of the 49th regiment, marched

Out of camp. The number was exactly " 704 firelocks," or, which is the same thing, rank and file.

Let us now pause awhile, till we have fixed, as accurately as may be, the number and force of the American army. The only assistance we procure from the American accounts, are the names of the regiments and corps. These consisted of the 5th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 22d, and 23d regiments of infantry, divided into two brigades, of, according to the lowest returns in an American work, 1450 men each. We find 800 artillery mentioned as part of the Fort-George force admitting half only of that number, some of which were acting as light troops, to have been detached on this occasion, and adding the 250 dragoons under colonel Burn, we have, for the force encamped at Stoney Creek, 3550 men ; but a Boston paper of June 24, 1813, states the number at 4000. It becomes us, however, to be rather under, than over the mark ; we will therefore fix the amount, in round numbers, at 3500 Americans ; just,—without estimating the nine field-pieces,—five times the number of the British who, in the solemn stillness of the night, were fearlessly marching to attack them.

The advance of this determined band was led by lieutenant-colonel Harvey; and, at 2 o'clock,

\* App. No. ;s3.

the British regulars, with fixed bayonets, rushed into the centre of the American camp. The 49th regiment, headed by major (now lieutenant-colonel) Plenderleath, charged some field-pieces ; and one of the artillerymen was bayoneted in the very act of discharging a gun. A body of American infantry, stationed near the artillery, and composed, it is said, of the light troops and 25th regiment, fired a most destructive volley at the 49th ; but, instead of repeating what might have changed the fate of the day, turned upon their heels and fled. On this occasion major Plenderleath's horse was shot under him, and himself severely wounded. Serjeant Fraser of the 49th, having captured brigadier-general Winder, now brought him as a prisoner to major Plenderleath. The latter mounted the American general's horse, and lost that, also, by a shot, almost immediately afterwards. Brigadier-general Chandler was taken, much bruised, under one of the guns.. All this while, the five companies of the 8th regiment, under major (now lieutenant-colonel) Ogilvie, who so distinguished himself at Fort-George, were dealing destruction to the enemy's left flank, composed of the 5th, 23d, and 16th regiments.

The utmost confusion reigned in the American camp, and the troops were flying in every direction to the surrounding heights. The plan having fully succeeded, and it not being pru-

dent to let the Americans discover what a small force had so put them to the rout, lest they should rally, and overwhelm their few opponents, the latter, just as day dawned, retired to their cantonments ; taking with them two brigadier-generals, one major, five captains, one lieutenant, and 116 half-commissioned officers and privates, of the American army ; also two out of four of the captured pieces of artillery, along with nine horses to draw them.\*

Owing to the extreme darkness of the night, each side suffered from friends as well as foes. Our loss amounted to 23 killed, 136 wounded, and 55 missing ; - being almost a third of the party. The Americans admit a loss of 17 killed, and 38 wounded ; but make their missing amount, in all, to 100, instead of 125. General Dearborn's letter states that " colonel Clark" was mortally wounded, and fell into their hands. This was not the case, but brigademajor Clerk was most dangerously wounded, and found on the ground by two stragglers, one a British, the other an American soldier. They carried him to a farm-house, where he had scarcely been put to bed, when an American guard arrived, and the officer inhumanly ordered major Clerk, bed and all, to be placed in a waggon, the jolting of which set his wounds bleeding afresh, and nearly terminated his life.

One of the American accounts of the Stoney Creek business contains the following statement : " Captain Manners, of that regiment, (the 49th) was taken in his bed by lieutenant Riddle ; who, from a principle of humanity, put him on his parole, on condition of his not serving the enemy, until he should be exchanged. An engagement which that officer violated, by appearing in arms against the American troops, immediately after the recovery of his health."\* This is a serious charge against a brave officer, now living. Thus it is answered. Close to captain Manners, on the field, lay a captain Mills, of the American army, still more severely wounded. The two officers agreed, and mutually pledged their honors, that, no matter by which party captured, they should be considered as exchanged, and at liberty to serve again. Lieutenant Riddle soon afterwards came up ; and, although he could not stay to bring away even his friend, exacted a parole from captain Manners. When the American army subsequently fled, the two officers were found by the British. The instant captain Mills recovered from his wounds, he was sent by a flag to the American lines ; and captain Manners became, of course, exonerated from his parole. That an American editor should give insertion to any story, reflecting upon a British officer, is not at all strange. Bat

Sketches of the War, p.

it is so, that an American officer should have allowed three editions of Mr. Thomson's book to pass, every one containing so scandalous a paragraph.

The American official account describes the 704 regulars that performed this exploit at Stoney Creek, as " the whole of the British and Indian forces ;"\* although not an Indian moved with the troops, and those that had been left at the encampment did not exceed 20 or 30. This Indian story was just the thing for Mr. O'Connor. Accordingly, he says : " The army, on this occasion, has proved its firmness and bravery, by keeping its position in a night-attack, in which the yells of the Indians, mingled with the roaring of the cannon and musketry, were calculated to intimidate." j' General Dearborn, next, pronounces " the enemy completely routed, and driven from the field ;" although he admits that, " by some strange fatality," his two brigadiers were taken prisoners.\* So boasted commodore Chauncey, when sir James Yeo captured two of his schooners. It is to the very circumstance of the absence of the two commanding brigadiers, perhaps, that we may attribute the general's want of information on the subject. Who else, for instance, but some stupid corporal or drummer, could

\*App. No. 36.

+ Mist. of the War, p. 98.

James's Naval Occur. p. 298.

have told him, that they sent in a flag with a request " to bury their dead." So far from that having been the case, the Americans ran away and left their own dead to be buried by the British.

Really, the confusion that prevailed in the American camp, seems to have extended its influence to the heads of the American historians. One editor declares, that the British, when they attacked, had " no musket loaded," and turned the captured guns upon the encampment ; when, in truth, the British did fire their muskets, but did not fire the captured guns; chiefly, in the latter case, because they had no artillerymen to manage them. " The dragoons charged upon, and completely routed them ;"\* says one editor. " The squadron of dragoons remained formed and steady at their posts, but could not act on account of the darkness of the night, and the 'thickness of the adjacent woods ;"\* says another. The last was the fact ; at least, no dragoons were encountered or seen by any of our troops.

Although general Dearborn had killed major-general Vincent, Mr. Thomson declared he was only missing, and " discovered by his own people, in the course of the same day, almost famished, at the distance of four miles from the scene of action."-f At all events, both of the

\* Hist, of the War, p. 98. t Sketches of the War, p. 136.

captured American generals dined with the British general on the clay of the attack, and were sent forward to Montreal that same afternoon. Amidst all their confusion, the three American historians agree in this, that the American troops behaved in the bravest manner and that the British, although " superior" in numbers, " fled in every direction."

After the British had retired, and when broad daylight enabled the Americans to see well around them, the latter returned to their camp ; but only to destroy their blankets, carriages, provisions, spare arms, ammunition, &c. They then, " having given up the pursuit of the enemy,"\* precipitately retreated, or " fell back," gently, no doubt,--because the roads were scarcely passable, **Forty-mile Creek**, about 11 miles in the rear of the field of battle. Mr. O'Connor says, a council of war decided that the army " ought to , retire." Admitting the council was not long sitting, this was probably the case;\_, At all events, when a reconnoitring party of the British arrived in sight of the field of battle, about eleven o'clock on the same morning, not an American soldier was to be seen, except the dead and the badly wounded. Several of the British wounded, and among them major Clerk and captain Manners, again found themselves in the midst:

Sketches of the War, p. 137.

friends. The state of want to which our troops had been reduced, was in a great measure relieved by the spoils of the deserted camp.

The American army re-encamped on a plane of a mile in width ; its right flank on the lake, its left on the Forty-mile Creek, skirting the base of a perpendicular mountain. On the afternoon of the day of battle, a detachment, consisting of the 6th and 15th United States' regiments, and a park of artillery, under colonel James Miller, joined the army ; as did, the next afternoon, generals Lewis and Boyd, the former of whom assumed the command. The army, at this time, must have amounted to upwards of 4000 men.

As soon as commodore Chauncey had ascertained that the British fleet was again in Kingston, he left the protection of his batteries at the head of the lake, and hastened to Sackett's Harbor ; there to await the launching and final equipment of the ship General Pike. On the 3d of June sir James Yeo, with his squadron, on board of which he had some clothing and provisions, and about 250 of the 8th regiment, for major-general Vincent, sailed from Kingston, to co-operate with that officer; as well as, by intercepting the enemy's supplies, and otherwise annoying him, to provoke commodore Chauncey to re-appear on the lake.

At daylight on the 'morning of the 8th, sir

James found himself close to general Lewis's camp at the Forty-mile Creek. It being calm, the larger vessels could not get in, but the Beresford and Sidney Smith schooners, and one or two gun-boats, succeeded in approaching within range of the American batteries. Four pieces of artillery were brought down to the beach ; and, in less than half an hour, a temporary furnace for heating shot was in operation.\* The fire of the British vessels was then returned, the Americans say, " with full effect." They admit, however, that at noon on the day of sir James's appearance, the troops broke up their cantonments, and scampered off as fast as they could, having previously sent away a part of their camp-equipage and baggage in batteaux to Fort-George ; but this hasty removal, say the historians, was owing to orders just received from general Dearborn. The batteaux put off. Twelve of them, with their contents, were captured by the Beresford, and the remaining seven were driven on shore and abandoned by their crews.

In compliance with the directions of major-general Vincent, sir James Yeo landed the detachment of the 8th, under major Evans, at the Forty-mile Creek, that it might join lieutenant-colonel Bishopp, with the flank company of the 49th, and one battalion company of the 41st.,

\* Sketches of the War, p. 138.

which had arrived there from the heights. At about seven o'clock on the evening of the 8th, this advanced corps, numbering about 450 rank and file, entered the second deserted American camp, where the men found, generously spared to them out of the conflagration of stores, 500 standing tents, 140 barrels of flour, 100 stands of arms, besides a variety of other useful and necessary articles ; also about 70 prisoners. Nothing of this appears in the American accounts. The British advance, being now so well provided, encamped upon the spot, to await the arrival of the Main body.

Whether it was through the imbecility of the officers, or the fears of the men, the American troops, under general Lewis, fled in the utmost haste ; having sustained a loss in killed, wounded, and missing, including desertions, (if we may trust the American newspapers,) of nearly 1000 men. So apprehensive, indeed, were they of being cut off, that, instead of proceeding to Fort-George by the direct route, they marched round by Queenstown. The accounts they brought to general Dearborn, of the number and prowess of the British, led to preparations for defending that post, and to an immediate concentration of the detachments from Chippeway and Fort-Erie; nor was Fort-George, with the strongly entrenched camp in its neighbourhood, although garrisoned by upwards of 5000 Americans,

deemed a situation of perfect security : therefore, the bulk of the remaining baggage was sent across the river to Fort-Niagara. Thus, was the whole interior of the Lipper Canada peninsula rescued from the ravages of an invading army, by a mere handful of British troops, ordered from their own camp at the bold suggestion, and led into the midst of the enemy's, by the judgment and intrepidity, of lieutenant-colonel Harvey.

Major-general Vincent, having been reinforced by the 104th regiment, had placed the advanced corps of his little army under the command of lieutenant-colonel Bisshopp ; who, about the 21 of June, pushed forward detachments, to occupy the cross-roads at the Ten-mile Creek, and at the Beaver Dam. One of these detachments, consisting of a subaltern and 30 rank and file, of the 104th, occupied a stone-house near to the dam. To reconnoitre, and, if possible, to capture this force, lieutenant-colonel Bcerstler, with a detachment of infantry, cavalry, artillery, militia and volunteers, numbering 673 officers and men, was sent from Fort-George.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 24th, colonel Bcerstler and his party unexpectedly encountered, in the woods, a body of about 200 Indians led by captain Kerr. A skirmish ensued, which lasted upwards of two hours, when the American troops, dreading being led into an

ambush, endeavoured to gain the wood leading towards Lundy's Lane ; but were unexpectedly encountered by lieutenant-colonel Thomas Clark, at the head of 15 militia-men, accidentally passing in that direction. These immediately opened a fire, from the wood, upon colonel Bcerstler's army; and compelled it to halt upon the open space of ground, across which it had been retreating. Mr. Thomson, out of kindness to colonel Bcerstler, has denominated these 16 militia, "one company of the 104th regiment, and about 200 militia, in all 340 men ;" and declares, that even this force was continually augmenting, and became, at last, greatly superior. The colonel must have thought so too ; for he sent to Fort-George, a distance of 16 miles, for an immediate reinforcement.

During the retreat from the Indians, lieutenant Fitzgibbon of the 49th, having with him a small detachment, consisting of a subaltern and 46 rank and file, closed upon, and reconnoitred the American troops. He stationed his men on an eminence to the right of their position ; and, receiving information of the expected reinforcement from Fort-George, resolved upon the bold measure of immediately summoning colonel Bcerstler to surrender. This, lieutenant Fitzgibbon immediately did, in the name of lieutenant-colonel De Haren. Mr. Thomson has exerted himself to save colonel Bcerstler's character on

this occasion, by stating, that " lieutenant Fitzgibbon informed him, on the honor of a British soldier, that the regular force, commanded by lieutenant-colonel Bisshopp, was double that of the American, and that the Indians were at least 700 in number. Colonel Bcerstler," proceeds this editor, " trusting to the veracity of the officer, fearing the impracticability of escaping, and being unwilling to abandon his wounded, agreed to terms of capitulation."\*

Just as these were drawing up, arrived major De Ilaren, who had been sent for by lieutenant Fitzgibbon ; and who brought with him about 220 men, consisting of the light troops attached to the advanced detachment. The major put the finishing stroke to this admirable *ruse de guerre*, by affixing his name to the document surrendering lieutenant-colonel Bcerstler, along with one major, six captains, 13 lieutenants, one cornet, one surgeon, 25 serjeants, two drummers, and 462 rank and file, as prisoners of war ; besides 30 militia, intended to have been released on parole : making a total of .542 men. At the same time were also surrendered, one 12 and one 6 pounder, two cars, and the colours of the 14th United States' regiment.<sup>1</sup> The amount of the American wounded in the affair with the Indians no where appears ; but, referring to the number of men sent on the expedition, either the loss

\* Sketches of the War, p. 1M.

† App. No. 38.



must have been great, or several of the party had escaped previously to the surrender.

The complete success attending this exploit, seems to have greatly mortified our three historians ; one of whom had already boasted of " the terrifying effects of lieutenant-colonel Bcerstler's lungs upon the British ;" alluding to the affair near Frenchman's creek.\* We cannot learn whether the American colonel did, or did not, open his throat upon lieutenant Fitzgibbon ; but we require no stronger evidence than the former's " unaccountable" t surrender, to be assured of this fact,—that a Stentor's lungs and a Caesar's heart do not always inhabit the same breast.

As the American editors are very loud in their railings against us, because major-general Vincent refused to ratify the last article of the capitulation ; stipulating, that the militia and volunteers should be permitted to return to the United States on parole, this may require an explanation. In the first place, the stand of colours of a militia-regiment was found concealed about the person of one of major Chapin's volunteers. In the next, these were recognized as the identical men who, led by their " gallant commander," had recently been pillaging the houses and carrying off the horses, of the Canadian inhabitants in the neighbourhood. In several instances, the marauders had actually

See p. 114.

± App. No. 40.

forced from the frames, and carried away, the poor people's window-sashes.

Early in July, major-general De Rottenburg, the late president of Lower Canada, succeeded major-general Sheaffe as president of the upper province ; and, as such, took the command of the troops from the hands of major-general Vincent. Major-general De Rottenburg, with the main body of the centre-divison of the army of Upper Canada, took his station in the neighbourhood of the Twelve-mile Creek, which is distant about 11 miles from Fort-George. About this time general Dearborn, harrassed in mind and body, very properly resigned the command of the American northern army. General Lewis was next in succession ; but, he having been ordered to Sackett's Harbor to assist commodore Chauncey in repairing the defences of that fortress, the command of Fort-George and its dependencies, as also of Fort-Niagara, devolved upon major-general Boyd.

As a proof to what a helpless state this numerous army of invasion had, by its fears, been reduced, lieutenant-colonel Thomas Clark, of the Canadian militia, during the night of the 4th of July, with 40 of his men, passed over in boats from Chippeway to Fort-Schlosser ; surprised the American guard stationed there; made 15 prisoners ; and brought away a considerable quantity of flour, salt pork, and other provisions;

also a brass 6-pounder, several stands of arms, some ball-cartridges, &c.

Early in the same month, the American government threw off the mask, and openly called to its aid, upon the Niagara, as it had before done upon the north-western frontier, " the ruthless ferocity of the merciless savages."\* " The characteristic mildness of American manners" f here underwent a surprising change ; for which every one of our three editors has invented, what he no doubt conceives, an adequate apology. Mr. O'Connor declares it was " the invasion of New York by the British" that gave rise to the measure ; thus tacitly admitting, that general Hull's invasion of Upper Canada, for which he had been preparing *long* previous to the declaration of war, justified *our* employment of the Indians. Mr. Thomson says, it was done " by way of intimidating the British and Indians, and of preventing a recurrence of their barbarities : " § and he has taken care to be provided with a flagrant case in support of his position. The clergyman is of opinion, that the Indian modes of warfare are not so much the objects of terror, as of horror ; and declares that our employment of the Indians " rendered it expedient for the Americans to incorporate in their armies, the same kind of force, in order to

\* See p. 180. + Mist. of the United States, Vol. III. p. 238.  
Viet. of the War, 106. Sketches of the War, p. 153.

counteract the habitual stratagems of the savages, and defeat their insidious hostilities."\* But this "fair and candid apology for the procrastinated alliance" \* equally existed previous to the 4th of November, 1812 ; at which time " the use made by the enemy of the merciless savages under their influence rendered it expedient" for Mr. Madison to declare, that he " was making exertions to *dissuade* them from taking either side in the war." t The fact is, the American government would have employed the Indians at the commencement of hostilities, could it have held out to them any reasonable hopes of conquest or plunder, sufficient to overbalance that " deadly animosity which they felt towards the Americans," for reasons best known to the latter. The capture of York, and the possession of the forts, George and Erie, gave an air of reality to the boastings of the American generals ; and the " Six Nations of Indians," described as " the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagoes, Senecas, Cayugas, and Tuscororas," or rather, a few stragglers from some of these nations, were persuaded to declare war against the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

In justice to the Indian character, we are bound to mention that, when our wire statesmen, at the peace of 1783, stipulated, by treaty, to surrender to the Americans the whole of the

\* Mist. of the United States, Vol. III. p. 238. t See p. 180.

Indian country, all the Mohawks, and a part of the five nations, abandoned their possessions; and, faithful to that alliance with us which they have never violated, settled in Upper Canada.

Mr. O' Connor has kindly favored us with the following •

## 4. DECLARATION OF WAR,

BY THE SIX NATIONS OF INDIANS.

"We, the chiefs and councillors of the Six Nations of Indians, residing in the State of New York, do hereby proclaim to all the war-chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, that war is declared on our part, against the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada: Therefore, we do hereby command and advise all the war-chiefs to call forth immediately the warriors under them, and put them in motion, to protect their rights and liberties, which our brethren, the Americans, are now defending.

THE GRAND COUNCILLORS.

Those who are acquainted with the language used in an Indian talk, can have no difficulty in guessing at the authors of this important statement, by the great councillors." We could wish that equal publicity had been given to the special covenant," by which, says doctor Stineh, the warriors of the Six Nations bound themselves to abstain from that barbarity

towards the wounded and the dead, so congenial with their national habits, and so revolting to our civilized ideas!-

The above declaration, although without a date, "issued immediately after the invasion of the state by the British;" and the first invasion of New York, the state in question, occurred, as the reader knows, on the 22d of February.\* Supposing, however, that the fourth act of invasion, colonel Clark's affair at Schlosser, gave immediate rise to the declaration; it must have issued on the 5th of July; and, therefore, could not have been occasioned by a case of barbarity, that, according to the relater, took place three days afterwards. Having rectified this mistake of Mr. Thomson, we shall now proceed to investigate his details of the affair itself. He states that on the 8th of July, lieutenant Eldridge, of the 13th regiment, was ordered to the support of the American outposts, with a small detachment of 39 men; and that his impetuosity "led him into a thick wood, where a superior force of the British and Indians lay in ambush, and that, after an obstinate but fruitless struggle, his party were entirely defeated, five only out of the whole number escaping. All the prisoners, including the wounded, were then inhumanly murdered, and their persons treated in so barbarous a manner that the

\* See p.136.

**most** temperate recital of the enemy's conduct may, perhaps, scarcely obtain belief. The tame enemy," proceeds Mr. Thomson, " who had long ago implored the mercy of the American officer to be extended to his British prisoners, now fell upon the defenceless captives of his party, and scalped their heads whilst they were yet alive, split open their skulls with their tomahawks, tore their hearts out of their bodies, and stabbed and otherwise mutilated them. Lieutenant Eldridge was supposed to have experienced the same treatment. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood having informed the garrison that he had been led, wounded, into the woods, between two Indians, a flag was sent out on the next day, to ascertain his fate ; which soon after returned with an answer, that lieutenant Eldridge, having killed one of the Indian chieftains, the warriors of his tribe had retaliated this supposed act of treachery, by putting him to instant death. But this reply was ascertained to have been a subterfuge of the enemy, to evade the necessity of accounting for a prisoner who was known to have been taken alive." \*

We have given this statement at length, for the purpose of sheaving to what a pitch of horrid falsehood the malignant feelings of an American historian can lead him. The reader will be gratified to know, that not a British individual was

\* Sketches of the War, p. 153.

present when this American invading party was surprised. Even Mr. O'Connor, the zealous Mr. O'Connor, confirms the fact. He explicitly states, that the lieutenant " unexpectedly **found** himself surrounded in the wood by *Indians*, who opened a deadly fire upon his little corps."\* The word " Britith" no where appears in the account ; nor even the expression " the enemy," so artfully inserted in Mr. Thomson's statement: We can gather from the " answer" returned, that the American lieutenant, after he had surrendered, took an opportunity to kill " one of the Indian chieftains ;" and, for that " act of treachery," was, very properly, put to " instant death." This is designated in Mr. Thomson's *Index* to a work purporting to give " Sketches of the late War between the United States and *Great Britain*,"— "*Massacre of lieutenant Eldridge*." **Doctor** Smith's entire silence upon the subject, satisfies us of his having received from some of his friends, the most 'satisfactory assurances, that the British did not in any shape participate in Mr. Thomson's " too well authenticated" charge against them.

The real case, indeed, was this. Some medicine-stores, of which the British were in immediate want, having been, upon their retreat from Fort-George, concealed in a spot, now close to an American outpost, the Indian chief, Black

\* Hist. of the War, p. me.

Bird, volunteerd, with 150 warriors, to bring them to the British camp. While performing this important service, he encountered, and captured, lieutenant Eldridge and his party. No sooner had the American lieutenant surrendered, than he drew forth a concealed pistol, and shot one of the chiefs through the head. The officer's life fell a sacrifice to his treachery ; nor, can we wonder, if few of his men escaped to tell the tale.

This is the proper place to put the reader in possession of a fact, that will show how the British officers felt and acted, in reference to the cruel manner in which the Indians were wont to treat their prisoners. A committee, at the head of which was major-general Vincent, sat early in 1813, to devise the best means of putting an end to such barbarities ; and finally resolved to pay to the Indians 10 dollars for every American prisoner they brought in alive. This proceeding was afterwards sanctioned by the prince regent. In the meanwhile, the British officers generally carried about them a supply of dollars, to enable them to put in practice so laudable a plan. Some account of the resolution appeared in a Boston paper ; but none of the numerous Americans, officers as well as privates, whose lives and persons were saved in consequence, seem to have communicated any particulars to the furbishers of their exploits.

" Of the influence of a cultivated people," says doctor Smith, " whose manners and religion the savages respect, to induce them to resign their inhuman treatment of their prisoners, major Chapin gave an instructive example, immediately after uniting his force with the warriors of the Six Nations. A corps, composed of volunteer militia, and of these Indians, had completely put to the rout a party of the enemy in the vicinity of Fort-George. In a council held before the conflict, (for all things among them must be done by common consent,) the Indians, by his advice, agreed among themselves, besides the obligation of their general treaty, which they recognized, that no one should scalp or tomahawk prisoners, or employ towards them any species of savage inhumanity. Accordingly, after the battle, sixteen wounded captives were committed solely to their management ; when, governed by a sacred regard to their covenant, and the benevolent advice of their commander, they exhibited as great magnanimity towards their fallen enemy, as they had shown bravery against their warring foe in battle."\*

What could have possessed this American editor, when he,—and he alone has,—promulgated this fact ? So, 16 British captives, writhing under the anguish of their yet bleeding wounds, were, by the orders of an American officer,

It History of the United States, Vol. III, p. 239,

" committed solely to the management" of a party of hostile Indians ; to determine, by way of experiment, whether those " ruthless savages," that " faithless and perfidious race," would listen to the " *advice*" of their civilized " brethren," and " impose any restraints upon their known habits of warfare ;" or, whether they would scalp and otherwise torture. their 16 captives as might best serve to glut " their demoniac thirst of blood." Even could the forbearance of the Indians have been religiously relied on by the American officer, what right had he thus to sport with the feelings of his prisoners? --Happily, amidst all that has been invented by the hirelings of the American government, to rouse the passions of the people, and gain over on their side the good wishes of other nations, no British officer stands charged with a crime half so heinous as that recorded to have been committed by the American major Chapin.

Following up colonel Clarke's exploit, lieutenant-colonel Bisshopp, taking with him, early on the morning of the 11th July, 20 of the royal artillery, 40 of the 8th, or king's, 100 of the 41st, and 40 of the 49th regiments ; also about 40 of the 2c1 and 3d Lincoln militia,\* amounting, in the whole, to 240 men, Crossed the Niagara, below Black Rock ; and moved up with great rapidity to the attack of that post. Two

\* App. No. 44.,

hundred American militia who had been stationed there, immediately fled; and the British took possession of the batteries, upon which eight guns were mounted. Four of these, two 12, and two 6-pounders, the British spiked; and they brought away one 12, and two 9-pounders, 177 muskets, some ammunition-kegs, round and case shot,\* a considerable quantity of army-clothing, and other stores ; also about 180 barrels of provisions, and seven large batteaux and one scow, in which the stores and provisions were contained.t The British likewise burnt a large schooner, and the block-house and barracks in the navy-yard, as well as those in the great battery-4: " While the main body," says the *Buffaloe Gazette* of **July 13**, " was employed in thus disposing of the public property, a party entered many houses in the village ; but we have not ascertained that they committed any outrages on private property." None of the American historians have thought it worth their while to record this fact.

Unfortunately, our troops were allowed to remain on shore longer than was prudent. A strong reinforcement of American regulars, militia, and Indians, under general Porter, arrived ; and poured a destructive fire upon the British, as they were retiring to their boats. In consequence of this, we lost 15 men killed ; lieu-

\* App. No. 43.      t Ibid. No. 44.      t Ibid. No. 91.

tenant-colonel Bisshopp, captain Saunders, and a lieutenant of the 41st, also 15 other officers and men, wounded. The gallant lieutenant-colonel Bisshopp had received three wounds ; and died shortly after he returned to the Canada side. He was a promising young officer ; not more than 27 years of age ; and of a most amiable private character. The American loss was three killed, and five wounded. All the boats got clear off; but the British were compelled to leave behind, eight of their killed, and about six of their wounded, including captain Saunders. " Our savage friends," says the Buffaloe editor, " expressed a desire to scalp the dead, but were prevented." Here, then, it required some stronger arguments than " the influence of a cultivated people," " the advice of an American officer," or " the obligation of their general treaty," to restrain the Indians from committing their usual barbarities. Doctor Smith, having, in imitation of his brother historians, omitted to notice this fact, has had no occasion to rack his brains for an explanation.

The new American ship General Pike being completely equipped, and manned with a numerous crew, about 120 of whom had recently arrived from the Constitution, and the remainder from other ships lying in the Atlantic ports, commodore Chauncey, on the 26th of July, again appeared on the lake. His fleet now

consisted of 14 vessels, of the united burthen of 2721 tons ; mounting altogether 114 guns, and manned with 1193 seamen.\* At this time, sir James Yeo, with his fleet, which was just one-third inferior to Chauncey's,t was lying in Kingston, and had its movements watched by two of the American schooners, stationed off Sackett's Harbor. Commodore Chauncey's first object was the destruction of a depot of stores and provisions at Burlington Heights. For that purpose, he took on board at Niagara " about 300 regulars," 1: under lieutenant-colonel Scott, according to sir George Prevost, "an unexchanged prisoner of war on his parole ;"§ and, **on** the morning of the 30th, landed the troops, along with a party of sailors and marines. But major Maule's detachment, which amounted to no more than 150 rank and file, was voted to consist of " from 6 to 800 regulars, strongly intrenched, and defended by about eight pieces of cannon ;<sup>+1</sup> and commodore Chauncey re-embarked his men and the troops, as soon as they had made prisoners of some of the unarmed inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

Commodore Chauncey was informed by the prisoners, that the whole of the regulars stationed at York had, since the preceding even-

\* James's Naval Occurrences, p. 998. 1- Ibid. p 997.

t Sketches of the War, p. 155. § App. No.45.

Hist. of the War, p. 110.

*ing*, marched to reinforce major Maule. This intelligence, coupled with his knowledge that the York militia were still bound by the parole which had been exacted of them by himself and general Dearborn, about three months previous,\* determined the commodore to pay a second visit to York. The public was not supposed to know these facts ; and, considering the small number of troops engaged in the enterprise, a successful attack upon the " capital of Upper Canada" would read well in the newspapers, and give additional *eckit* to the measures of the government.

Accordingly, about four o'clock on the afternoon of the 31st, the two ships, Pike and Madison, and the brig Oneida, came to anchor off York ; while the nine schooners, with the troops under colonel Scott, reinforced by the marines of the fleet, stood into the harbor, and disembarked the whole at the garrison, as was expected, " without opposition."† The Americans then marched boldly into the town ; of which, it being utterly defenceless for the reason already given, they took quiet possession. They opened the goal, liberated the prisoners, and, among them, three soldiers confined for felony. They then proceeded to the hospital, and paroled the few men that could not be removed. The store-houses of same inhabit.

\* See p. 140.

† *Ist*, of the War, p. 111.

ants, called " public store-houses," were next entered; and " several hundred barrels of flour and provisions" taken therefrom. About 11 o'clock on the same evening, the Americans, with their booty, returned to their vessels. On the next morning, Sunday, they again landed ; and three armed boats went a short way up the Don in search of public stores. By evening, having captured or destroyed " five pieces of cannon, eleven boats, and a quantity of shot, shells, and other stores,"† the American troops and marines re-embarked ; and the fleet made sail for Niagara.

Breaking parole is a serious charge to prefer against a national officer ; one, especially, so high in rank as a lieutenant-colonel. All lists of prisoners, made, paroled, or exchanged, must necessarily be transmitted to the commander-in-chief; and sir George had, on the 13th of November, 1812, by one of his aides de camp, entered into an agreement with major-general Dearborn, relative to prisoners of war : in which agreement it was particularly stipulated,— "That prisoners on parole, of either party, should perform no military service whatever.‡ Even without this agreement, every officer, before he receives his parole, engages his honor, not to bear arms directly or *indirectly*, until

\* *nisi*. of the War, p. 111. — **Ibid.**

† *I*t Wilkinson's Mem. Vol. III. p. 197.



regularly exchanged. The following is a copy of the parole signed by lieutenant George Reab, along with some other. American officers, on the 19th of November, 1812.

*Quebec.*

" We promise, on honor, not to bear arms, directly or indirectly, against his Britannic majesty, or his allies, during the present war, until we are regularly exchanged. We, likewise, engage, that the undermentioned non-commissioners and privates, soldiers in the service of the United States, who are permitted to accompany us, shall conform to the same conditions."\*

To the doughty quarrel between Mr. President Madison and general James Wilkinson of the American army, we are indebted for some most important disclosures relative to paroled prisoners. The general very candidly tells us, that lieutenant George Reab, a witness examined on the part of the prosecution at the general's court-martial, held at Troy in the state of New York, in February, 1814, deposed on oath, "That on the 24th of December, 1813, while a prisoner on parole, he received from colonel Lamed, an order to repair to Greenbush, in the following words:

kr.

I am directed by the secretary of war, to

Wilkinson's Mem. Vol. III. p. 197.

call in all the American prisoners of war, on parole, at or near this vicinity, to their post, and that the officers join them for drilling, &c. You will, therefore, repair to the cantonments *at* Greenbush, without loss of time."

Lieutenant Reab further deposed, that he repaired to Greenbush in pursuance of the order, and made no objections to doing duty : that on general Wilkinson's arrival at Waterford, in the ensuing January, lieutenant Reab) called upon him, and exhibited the order received from lieutenant-colonel Lamed: that general Wilkinson thought the order very improper, and afterwards issued the following order, dated Waterford, January 18th, 1814:

" A military officer is bound to obey promptly, and without hesitation, every order he may receive, which does not affect his honor ; but this precious inheritance must never be voluntarily forfeited, nor should any earthly power wrest it from him. It follows that, when an officer is made prisoner, and released on his parole of honor, not to bear arms against the enemy, no professional duties can be imposed on him, while he continues in that condition ; and, under such circumstances, every military man will justify him for disobedience."\*

Such are the principles upon which Mr. Madison conducted the late war !—Lieutenant-colonel

\* Wilkinson's Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 93.