

allowed to march from their respective prisons, till long after - the period when they ought to have been again under arms in the service of their country. And even when they did get away, they were not taken to the most contiguous British port, but marched through the state of Ohio, during the sickly season, to Sandusky, by far the most unhealthy spot of any upon the North-American lakes. When there, no vessel was ready to receive them; although the American journalists were still boasting, that they had our fleet, and their own too, upon this very lake. While waiting at Sandusky for a conveyance, nearly all the officers and men became ill of, and many fell victims to, the prevailing disease, or *lake-fever*. At last, towards the end of August, came a small transport ; which took on board a portion of the sufferers, and landed them at Long-Point. We are often told how active the Americans are upon the water, and what quick trips they can make betwixt ports on the ocean. Unfortunately, none of this activity was displayed in transporting the British prisoners across Lake Erie; for the last division did not arrive at Long-Point, till the middle of October. The few survivors were but the shadows of what they had been : all had contracted disease ; many died after their arrival in Canada; and scarcely a man of the remainder was again fit for active service.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Determination of the United States to repossess • Fort-Michilimacinac—British reinforcement sent to the garrison—Perils of the voyage across Lake Huron—Arrival of the reinforcement in safety—Expedition from Michilimacinac to Prairie du Chien, on the Mississippi—Its arrival opposite the fort—Repulse of a heavy American gun-boat—Surrender of the post to the British—American expedition to Lake Huron—Shameful proceedings of the Americans at St. Mary's falls—Reduced state of the garrison at Michilimacinac—Attack upon that post by the American fleet and troops—Their repulse and retreat—Destruction by the Americans of a small block-house and vessel at Nattawassaga—Departure of the American commodore to Lake Erie—Boat-expedition against the United States' schooners Scorpion and Tigress, left to blockade Michilimacinac—Capture of both schooners, and obtainment of the command of Lake Huron.

THE recovery of Fort-Michilimacinac* had long been seriously contemplated by the Ame-

* See Vol. I. p. 56.



rican government ; and, but for the lateness of the season when the command of Lake Erie, and the expulsion of the British from the shores of the Detroit, had opened the way for an expedition to Lake Huron, the second north-western campaign would not have been allowed to close, till that object had been accomplished. On the other hand, the necessity of retaining a post, so favorably situated, in the hands of an enemy, for annoying the north-western trade, seems early to have pressed itself upon sir George Prevost's mind; and, in the beginning of April, a small reinforcement, placed under the orders of that active and zealous officer, lieutenant-colonel M'Dona, was forwarded, by a back route, to the little garrison at Michilimacinac.

On the 22d. of April, this reinforcement, consisting of a company of the royal Newfoundland regiment, with two or three 6 and 3-pounders; a few Canadian volunteers ; and a lieutenant, and 22 subordinate officers and seamen, of the Lake Ontario squadron, altogether under 90 Men, departed, in 24 batteaux, deeply laden With provisions and military stores, from Nattawassaga creek, on Lake Huron. Not the most experienced navigator of the ocean can form an idea of the storms that rage, and the perils that are to be encountered, upon the larger North-American lakes ; especially, in the winter season, when immense fields of ice overspread

the surface ; and when the intensity of the cold can scarcely be endured by the hardiest frame. On the 18th of May, after a boisterous passage of 25 days, 19 of them a continued struggle with the elements, the little expedition, with the loss of one batteaux only, but not of her crew or lading, arrived in safety at Michilimacinac. ; The conduct of both officers and men, in this hazardous enterprise, of which the difficulties and dangers were of the most discouraging kind, cannot be sufficiently praised. Their arrival was greeted by the garrison with the liveliest joy ; and colonel ANDonall instantly set about strengthening his post, in order to meet the expected attack from the formidable fleet of Lake Erie.

Soon after colonel M'Douall's arrival, a body of western Indians, under Mr. Dixon, joined the garrison ; and others kept flocking to the fort, in sufficient numbers by the end of June, to warrant an expedition against the late Indian post of Prairie du Chien, on the Mississippi, distant about 1400 miles from its mouth, and 450 from Michilimacinac ; and which had, since the 2d of the month, been taken possession of by an American force, under general Clark, from St. Louis, on the Missouri. A St. Louis newspaper-editor, after declaring the seizure of this defenceless post to have been a " hazardous

enterprise," proceeds thus : " Every attention was directed to the erection of a temporary place calculated for defence: 60 rank and file of major Taylor's company of the 7th regiment, under command of lieutenant Perkins, took possession of the house formerly occupied by the old Mac-kinaw company, and a new fort was progressing, on a most commanding spot, when the governor left the Prairie. The farms of Prairie du Chien are in high cultivation, 2 or 300 barrels of flour may be made this season, besides a quantity of corn. Horses and cattle are in abundance. Two of the largest boats were left under the command of aide de camp Kennely, and captains Sullivan and Vieser, whose force amounts to 135 dauntless young fellows from this country. The regulars, under lieutenant Perkins, are stationed on shore; and are assisted by the volunteers, in the erection of the *new* fort." All this preparation proves the post of Prairie du Chien to have been of some consequence, and gives proportionate importance to the expedition sent to attempt its reduction. The detachment for that service consisted of Michigan fencibles, Canadian volunteers, and officers of the Indian detachment, numbering, altogether, 150 ; one serjeant of artillery with a 3-pounder field-piece, and 500 Indians, the whole commanded by lieutenant-colonel M'Kay, of the Michigan fencibles.

The route was down Green bay and Fox river ; near to the confluence of which with the Mississippi, the post of Prairie du Chien was situate.

On the 17th of July the barges arrived in front of the village, behind which, on a commanding eminence, was the fort, containing two block-houses, and mounting, besides swivels, one 3 and one 6-pounder. In the middle of the river was stationed a very large gun-boat, of 70 feet keel, named the Governor Clark, mounting 14 pieces of cannon, some 6 and 3-pounders, the remainder cohorns ; and manned with 70 or 80 men, fully armed. This floating block-house is described to have been so constructed, as to be rowed in any direction, and to enable the crew to use their own small-arms, while they remain perfectly sheltered from those of an enemy.* Against this formidable gun-boat, colonel M'Kay, on the afternoon of his arrival, having in vain summoned the fort to surrender, directed his 3-pounder ; which was so ably served, that, in three hours, the " dauntless fellows" on board the Governor Clark cut the cable, and dropped down the current, out of reach of further annoyance. Colonel M'Kay had now to reduce the fort, with his remaining six round shot, (including three of the enemy's, which had been picked up,) and with such leaden bullets as his party- could make. Having pre-

* App. No. 39.

pared every thing, and being about to put the first ball into the 3-pounder, a flag was hung out from the fort ; and the American garrison, numbering 61 combatants, each possessed of a stand of arms, surrendered as prisoners of war.* Great credit is due to colonel M'Kay, and the whole of the white persons with him, as well for their proceedings against the enemy, as for their active and successful exertions, in preventing the Indians, although so numerous, from plundering the prisoners, or the inhabitants of the place. Neither the dislodgement of the Americans from Prairie du Chien, nor the affair between the Indians and the American armed barges, ascending the Mississippi, detailed in colonel M'Kay's letter,* is noticed in any American history that we have seen.

Unexpected difficulties in ascending the straits of St. Clair, with large vessels, had delayed, until the 12th of July, the arrival, at Fort Gattroit, near the foot of Lake Huron, of the American expedition against Michilimacinac. The vessels were the Niagara, St. Lawrence, and Caledonia brigs, and the Scorpion and Tigress, schooners, measuring, altogether, 1170 tons ; And whose united strength, when employed as part of the force against captain Barclay's fleet, amounted to 46 heavy guns, and 420 men. The troops that were at present on board, con-

sisted, as far as we can gather from the American accounts, of 740 rank and file, under the command of lieutenant-colonel Croghan.

On the 20th of July, the American fleet cast anchor off the old, and then abandoned, military post at the island of St. Joseph ; the few houses upon which, a party was sent on shore to destroy. That service performed, a detachment of infantry and artillery, numbering about 280 rank and file, and commanded by major Holmes, of the 32d regiment, embarked in the barges of the fleet, under the directions of lieutenant Turner, of the United States' navy ; and proceeded up the St. Mary's strait, to the north-west company's settlement at the falls ; where, as neither troops nor Indians were present, the Americans landed, on the 23d, without the slightest opposition.

The few inhabitants of the place were, at this time, employed in fishing, or in haymaking, and other husbandry concerns ; but their peaceable demeanor and innocent avocations only exposed them the more to the brutal rage of major Holmes and his party. Some of the acts of the Americans at St. Mary's will not bear recital : suffice it, that they not only destroyed the whole of the property belonging to the north-west company which had not been previously removed, including their houses, stores, and vessels ; but killed their cattle, carried off ;

* App. No. 39.

† James's Nay. Occur. p. 286-95.

as prisoners, several of the engagees, tore down the defences, destroyed the gardens, pilfered the furniture, and, in some instances, the cloaths from even the childrens' backs.

Mr. Thomson is very brief, and doctor Smith quite silent, upon the business at St. Mary's: not so Mr. O'Connor. He admits the seizure of the north-west company's property, but agrees with major Holmes, in considering, that "it was good prize, by the maritime law of nations, as recognized in the English courts;" as well as because the company's agent, "Johnson, acted the infamous part of a traitor; having been a citizen and magistrate of the MicMac territory, before the war, and at its commencement, and now discharging the functions of magistrate under the British government." The proprietors of the tobacco, captured by the British in the Chesapeake, will not thank Mr. O'Connor, for thus admitting, that *merchandise*, on shore as well as afloat, is "good prize;" nor will the American government be well pleased with his unqualified avowal, that the "part of a traitor" can be at all "infamous." Lieutenant Turner, in a letter to captain Sinclair, follows up his account of the destruction of the north-west company's goods, "amounting in value to from 50 to 100000 dollars," with "All private property was, according to your orders, respected." He thus, cleverly enough, marks

* History of the War. p. 304.

the distinction between the "company's," or "Indian goods," and "private property;" and, at the same time, hopes to free the naval part of the expedition to St. Mary's, from any concern in the enormities that were committed there.

The absence of the detachment of militia and Indians under colonel M'Ilroy, and of lieutenant-lieutenant and his seamen, who had proceeded to Nattawassaga in the north-west, company's schooner Nancy, for a fresh supply of provisions for the garrison, reduced colonel M'Douall's force to 190 regulars, militia, and Indians, with a 3 and 6-pounder, but artillery-officer to direct the use of them. On the 26th of July, commodore Sinclair's fleet, appeared off the island to reconnoitre but no attempt was made to disembark the troops. **A**bout morning of the 4th of August. Three vessels, then anchored close to the beach, at Rowsina's farm, situated at the back of the island; a spot that had been pointed out by one of the old residents of the place. The ground was cleared in front, and formed a gentle slope, which enabled the vessels, by their grape and canister, to cover the landing of the troops, in the most effectual manner. Colonel M'Douall posted his little force in a very masterly manner, and repulsed every effort of the Americans to approach the fort.* Cap-

* App. No. 40. u. 43u,



tain Sinclair gives the following account of his reception :--" Michilimacinac is, by nature, a perfect Gibraltar, being a high inaccessible rock on every side, except the west ; from which, to the heights, you have nearly two miles to pass through a wood, so thick, that our men were shot in every direction, and within a few yards of them, without being able to see the Indians who did it ; and a height was scarcely gained, before there was another within 50 or 100 yards commanding it, where breastworks were erected and cannon opened on them. Several of these were charged, and the enemy driven from them; but it was soon found, the further our troops advanced, the stronger the enemy became, and the weaker and more bewildered our force were, Several of the commanding officers were picked out, and killed or wounded by the savages, Without seeing any of them. The men were getting lost, and falling into confusion, natural under such circumstances ; which demanded an immediate retreat, or a total defeat and general massacre must have ensued. Thing was conducted in a masterly manner by colonel Croghan, who had lost the aid of that valuable, and ever-to-be lamented officer, major Holmes, who, with captain Van Horn, was killed by the Indians." Mr. O'Connor informs us, that it was the death of major Holmes and captain Desha, that " threw that part of the line into confusion, from which

it was found impossible to recover it ;" and that lieutenant Morgan brought up a light piece, to relieve the left, which was suffering from a galling fire. The Americans retreated to their shipping, on the same evening, in the utmost haste and confusion ;* which, as all that were alive and well got clear off, was certainly " in a masterly manlier." Seventeen of their dead were left on the ground ; and the loss, on our part, was only one Indian killed. As there were but **50** Indians upon the island; and, as few, if any, could approach from the main, while the American shipping lay off, captain Sinclair paid no very high compliment to the " hero of Sandusky," and his 5 or **600** troops, in ascribing the retreat to the dread of " a general massacre." Mr. Thompson, however, declares that the Indians alone " exceeded the strength of colonel Croghan's detachment ;" and that this " intrepid young officer" was compelled to withdraw his forces, after having sustained a loss of **66** killed, wounded, and missing.

Having obtained intelligence that lieutenant Worseley, with the Nancy schooner, was at Nat-tawassaga, captain Sinclair, first despatching the St. Lawrence and Caledonia brigs, with a portion of the troops, to co-operate with the

* App. No. 40.

+ Sketches of the War, p. 330.

American army at Fort-Erie, proceeded with the remainder, amounting, including the crew of the Niagara, to " 450 souls," to attack a post deemed far less difficult . of reduction, than the " Gibraltar," from which he and colonel Croghan had just been repulsed. The Nancy was lying about two miles up the Nattawassaga, under the protection of a block-house, situate on the south-east side of the river, which here runs parallel to, and forms a narrow peninsula with, the shore of Gloucester bay. This enabled captain Sinclair to anchor his vessels within good battering distance of the block-house. A spirited cannonade was kept up between the latter, where a 6-pounder was mounted, (besides two 24-pound carronades on the ground,) and the three American vessels outside, composed of the Niagara, mounting eighteen 32-pound carronades, and two long 12-pounders, and the Tigress and Scorpion, mounting, between them, one long 12, and two long 24-pounders. In addition to this force, a 5 inch howitzer, with a suitable detachment of artillery, had been landed on the peninsula. Against these 24 pieces of ,cannon, and upwards of 500 men, were opposed, one piece of cannon, and 23 officers and seamen. Further resistance was in vain ; and, just as lieutenant Worseley had prepared a train, leading to the Nancy from the block-house, one of the enemy's shells burst

* Captain Sinclair's letter, of date, September 3.

in the latter, and both the block-house and the vessel were presently blown up. Lieutenant Worseley and his men escaped in their boat up the river ; and, fortunately, the whole of the north-west company's richly laden canoes, bound across the lake, escaped, also, into French river. After having thus led to the destruction of a vessel, which the American commander had the modesty to describe as—" his Britannic majesty's schooner Nancy,"— captain Sinclair departed for Lake Erie; leaving the Tigress and Scorpion to blockade the Nattawassaga, and, as that was the only route by which supplies could be readily forwarded, starve the garrison of ti ichilitnacinac into a surrender. •

After remaining at their station for a few days, the two American schooners took a trip to the neighbourhood of St. Joseph's. :Here they were discovered, on the - 25th of August, by some Indians on their way to Michilimacinac. On the 31st, lieutenant Worseley and his men arrived at the garrison ; bringing intelligence that the two schooners were five leagues apart. ..An immediate attempt to effect their capture was, therefore, resolved upon ; and, on the evening of the 1st of September, lieutenant Worseley, and his party, composed of midshipman Dobson, one gunner's mate, and 17 seamen, re-embarked in their boat ; and lieutenant Bulger, of the royal Newfoundland regiment, along with

two lieutenants, two serjeants, six corporals, and 50 rank and file, of his own corps, one hospital-mate, one bombardier and one gunner of the royal artillery, with a 3 and 6-pounder ; major Dickson, superintendent of Indian affairs, four others of the Indian department, and three Indian chiefs, making a total of 92 persons, embarked on board three other boats. It was sun-down on the 2d, before the boats arrived at the Detour, or entrance of St. Mary's strait; and not till the next day, that the exact situation of the enemy's vessels became known. At six o'clock that evening, the boats pulled for the nearest vessel, ascertained to be at anchor about six miles off. A body of Indians, which had accompanied the expedition from Michilimacinnac, remained three miles in the rear ; and, at nine o'clock, the schooner appeared in sight. The latter, as soon as she discovered the boats, which was not till they had approached within 100 yards of her, opened a smart fire from her long 24-pounder and musketry. The boats, however, advanced rapidly ; and, two boarding her on each side, carried, in five minutes, the United States' schooner Tigress, of one long 24-pounder, on a pivot-carriage, and 28 officers and men. * The British loss was, two seamen killed ; lieutenant Bulger, and four or five soldiers and seamen, wounded. The American

* National Intelligencer, July 29, 1815.

loss, three men, including one or two officers, wounded.

On the morning of the 4th, the prisoners were sent in one of the boats, under a guard, to Nlichilimacinac ; and preparations were made to attack the other schooner, which was understood to be at anchor 15 miles further down. Lieutenant Bulger, in his letter,* describes the arrangement that was made; and which resulted in the capture of the United States' schooner Scorpion, manned with 30 officers and men ;* and carrying one long 24, and, in her hold, one long 12-pounder. Her loss amounted to two killed, and two wounded ; ours to one or two soldiers wounded ; making the total British loss, in capturing the two vessels, amount to three killed, and eight wounded. It is a singular, and somewhat ludicrous fact, that the account of the loss of these vessels had reached Washington, a week, at least, before Mr. Madison said: " A part of the squadron of Lake Erie has been extended to Lake Huron, and has produced the advantage of displaying our command of that lake also." -

The Scorpion measured 684 feet upon deck, and 184 feet extreme breadth ; the Tigress 604 feet upon deck, and TT:- feet extreme breadth : so that these two American " gun-boats "

* App. No. 41.

t President's Speech, Sept. 20, 1814.

averaged, according to British measurement; 100 tons. They had on board abundance of shot, including' some 32-pounders ; and in small-arms, between them, 64 muskets, and 104 cutlasses and boarding-Tikes. - As a proof of the value Orthese two schooners, now that they were a-float upon Lake Huron, their hulls and stores were appraised, by the proper officers, at upwards of 16000/. sterling. In another point of view; they were still more valuable . Commodore Perry's victory left the Americans without an enemy-to' fear upon the lakes Erie and Huron; and yet do we find," still on :board of the fourt 'smallest of his nine'vessels, three times as many Seamen, as were on board *all* the " very superior British fleet," 1: which that " illustrious" American commodore. after an obstinate struggle, had succeeded in capturing.

The loss of the schooners 'Digress and Scorpion necessarily underwent, as soon as the officers were disCharged• from imprisonment, the inves• tigatiOfi of a court of inquiry. The British force is there made,-----" about 300 sailors, soldiers, and Indians ;" which, had the latter been present, was no great eXaggeration. Mr. Thomson, not wishing to shock his readers with an account' :o near akin to truth, says " Lieutenant-colonel M'Dowall supplied:lieutenant illorsley, of

+ Including the Somers and•Ohio ; seep. 168.
James's Naval Occurrences, p. 294

the navy, with 250 Indians; and a detachment of the Newfoundland regiment, with whom, and 150 sailors, he attacked the schooners, on the 9th of September. •:After a severe struggle, in which he lost a very disproportionate: number of killed and wounded, he carried the vessels, and proceeded with them to Michilimacinac."* Mr. O'Connor, having a story at hand, which, he thinks, will afford ten times as much gratification as Mr. Thomson's, omits the force on either side, in order to insert the following :- " Captain Arthur Sinclair, commanding the United States' naval force on the upper lakes, states, in a letter to the secretary of the navy, on the authority of sailing-master Champlin, that ' the conduct of the enemy to our prisoners, (the crew of the Tigress,) thus captured, and *the* inhuman butchery of those who fell into their hands, at the attack of Mackinack, has been barbarous beyond a parallel. The former have been plundered of almost every article of clothing they possessed ; the latter had their hearts and livers taken out, which were actually cooked and feasted on by the savages ; and that too, in the quarters of the British officers, sanctioned by colonel M'Dougall.' " * Not to keep the reader a moment in suspense, let him be assured, that this " heart and liver" story is not

* Sketches of the War, p. 331.
f History of the War. p. 266.