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MAJOR ISAAC ROACH.

THE

PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE

OF

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

VOL. XVII. 1893. No. 2.

JOURNAL OF MAJOR ISAAC ROACH, 1812–1824.

CONTRIBUTED BY MARY ROACH ARCHER.

[Major Isaac Roach served throughout the war of 1812 and until April 1, 1824, when he retired to civil life. His father, Captain Isaac Roach, had distinguished himself during the War of the Revolution, in the operations in the Delaware River and lower bay, in command of the gunboat "Congress" and other vessels, being severely wounded several times in a very active series of operations against the enemy's vessels in the defence of the approaches to the city. Major Roach was elected mayor of Philadelphia in 1838. He also served as guardian of the poor, commissioner on the Almshouse purchase, vestryman of St. Peter's Church, Third and Pine Streets, manager of Christ Church Hospital, member of the Select Council of the city and Board of Health, and treasurer of the United States Mint at Philadelphia. He died December 30, 1848.]

My grandfather was a Scotchman and a sailing master in a British Fleet which was sent to ascertain the boundary between Maryland and Delaware, about 1740. He left the service and settled in Delaware near Rehoboth Bay, where my father was born in 1748, and where he continued until apprenticed to Mr. Fisher of Lewestown, Delaware, a pilot of the Bay and River Delaware. He became a skilful pilot

and much respected by the mercantile community. He was married in 1774, and at the commencement of the war between this and the mother country he promptly decided for his Country's Liberty, took up arms and fought till his country was free. He commanded the armed vessel or gun boat "Congress" which was actively engaged in the defence of the Delaware River and Bay. He was also an officer on board the brig "Charming Sally" which was in company with the "Hyder Ali" when she captured the British ship "General Monk." The "Charming Sally" was captured by the British, but my father succeeded in retaking her, and was badly wounded. He was put on shore and the brig went to sea.

He held commissions successively under the Proprietary of Pennsylvania, from Franklin, Washington, John Adams, Jefferson and Madison, and with the exception of a few years he continued in government service until his death in 1817. He was much respected as a brave and zealous officer.

I had from my infancy listened to my father's recitals of the injuries sustained by this country and the violation of every principle of justice by Great Britain, and now [1812] it had become a jest and byword in England that the country "could not be kicked into a war;" but we were kicked into it, and totally unprepared for such a contest. After a peace of thirty years, and entirely engrossed in trade, every means had been neglected to prepare for war. Our treasury poor, our arsenals empty, fortifications in ruin, our Navy neglected, Military Science unknown, our Army nominally about 6000 men, the country divided in opinion, one-half advocating British measures, the other French, and no national feeling or true patriotism until the Declaration of War, which was carried by that party called "Democrats," and opposed by those called "Federalist." Indeed with few exceptions the war was carried on to its termination by the "Democrats," and violently opposed by their own citizens who advocated the conduct of the British, even during the struggle.

I had some doubts of the propriety of leaving my aged parents, but I had heard my father's opinion relative to the duty of defending our beloved country, and I did not long hesitate but without any delay applied for a commission in the army as soon as the Bill for War passed Congress, and obtained the appointment of second lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment U. S. Artillery. As I had requested to be assigned to this Regiment of Artillery, I was obliged to accept of the lowest rank. This regiment was 2000 strong, and commanded by Col. George Izard, and Lt. Col. Winfield Scott, so long my immediate commanding officer and highly valued friend. On coming home to dinner one day my father said,—"Here is a package for you from the War Department"—which I opened, and taking from it my letter of appointment handed it to him to read. He said,—"why did you not consult me?" I replied, because I knew his opinion of the propriety of my conduct and wished to surprize him. He was well satisfied, and my beloved mother who seemed to hang on me as her last stay, said: "my dear son, you know your mother cannot spare you, but I trust the Almighty will protect you, and I hope you will always do your duty."

In July, 1812, I joined my regiment then forming on the east bank of the Schuylkill, under command of Lt. Col. Scott,—who applied to Col. Izard and I was appointed Adjutant. This to a young officer without family, friends or influence, was a good beginning. It introduced me more intimately to both those valuable officers, to whom I was subsequently indebted for many proofs of their regard, and I can truly say I endeavored faithfully to do my duty on all occasions as well towards them as to my country.

Early in September 1812, Col. Scott applied for orders to proceed to the Canadian frontier with the Companies of Capt. N. Towson and Capt. James N. Barker. Our Troops were very much disheartened at this period by the very disgraceful surrender which had been made by Genl. Hull of his Troops at Detroit, yet every officer and man in our little detachment seemed desirous to be in the field, and

proceeding through New Jersey to headquarters, then at Green Bush, near Albany, where we halted a few days and obtained Gen. Dearborn's orders for Buffalo, where we arrived with our field Artillery and about 160 men on the 5th October, and reported to Genl. Smyth who was subsequently famous for Proclamations threatening the British Army. From the best information obtained it was not likely the British would act offensively and from the tardy movements of several regiments we had passed on our route, we had not much to expect from our own Troops that season.

Not wishing to be idle I requested Col. Scott to offer my services to Lt. Elliott, of our Navy, who was fitting out a small vessel at Black Rock, for services on Lake Erie. When the Col. returned to our encampment, our Battalion was ordered down to Black Rock to protect our vessels, and I was informed that my desire to smell gunpowder was soon to be gratified. Lieut. Elliott thinking his outfit too tedious in movement, took a fancy to two of the Enemies vessels already equipped and riding at anchor in apparent Security close under the cannon of Fort Erie at the outlet of Lake Erie and directly in sight of us.

Lt. Elliott informed me that he intended to embark at night in two Row boats and cut out the Two Brigs,—both of them were armed. But we must have them, as they would add to our intended force on Lake Erie. He was much pleased with my offer to take 50 men from our Regiment. It was arranged that I was to go in the boat with him and to attack the largest vessel. She was called the "Detroit" and was well manned with small arms and Pikers and carrying 4 Iron 6 Pounder cannon, the other Brig was the "Caledonian" not so well armed. An incident occurred previous to embarkation very flattering to a young and untried officer but exemplifying the attachment of officers and men to an Adjutant who is zealous to do his duty. When Col. Scott paraded the Battalion and I read the order directing the detail of 50 men to be placed under the command of Adjt. Roach for the purpose of attacking the Enemy's vessels that were in sight and moored for safety under their

batteries—the Colonel informed the Battalion that no one could go without expecting a hard fight and advised that none but brave and discreet men should go, as so much depended on their coolness. He was disposed to give some of our lads an opportunity of tilting with our enemy and directed that the Volunteers at the word "march" should step four paces to the front of the line: When I ordered Volunteers to the front, "March!" I believe every man, officers and all rushed forward. This was a proud moment to me and I could not but feel that some of this burst of zeal arose as well from confidence in myself as patriotism. Turning round to Col. Scott I found him delighted with this evidence of spirit and said:—"drop your line, Sir, and select your volunteers"—and this was not easily done, for while going down the line with my Sergeant Major every face was pushed forward with "can I go, Sir?" "I'm a Philadelphia boy;" "don't forget McGee;" "take me Mr. Adjutant," and a great variety of such expressions, making it difficult to select where all deserved to go, and I was compelled to take 60 men.

The battalion was dismissed; volunteers to remain; then a new feeling was to be produced. My gallant friends, the officers, all gathered around me, Captain Towson and Barker, Lieutenants McDonough, Davis, Stewart, and Hook, and even our little surgeon Dr. Near,—one and all insisted on going under my command. Was not this enough to flatter one? Would not this make any one proud? Towson and Barker were so determined on going, I began to think our tea party would be broken up, as Col. Scott and Lt. Elliott both declared no one should go to rank me. Towson went to his tent and wrote his resignation, sent it to the Colonel, and volunteered as a citizen. This would not do. I begged for one of the Captains to go. The Colonel consented. Mr. Elliott said they should not go in the boat with him. Towson won the chance to go, and went with the Sailing Master, George Watts, in the 2nd boat, who had orders to board the smaller vessel.—Night came—every man ready,—arms in order,—and the boats prepared, oars

muffled and grappling irons at hand,—sailors skipping about as merry as crickets. A parcel of tars who had been marched from Albany, had just arrived, and were glad to see a vessel again. About 8 o'clock we hauled out of Skingaucite Creek and tracked our boats silently up against the rapid current of the Niagara to the mouth of Buffalo Creek. Here we were to embark, to row up into Lake Erie, where there was no current, and descend to the attack on the British side where we would be least expected. A detachment of the 5th Infantry here joined us under Ensign Preston, and the tide on the bar being low, we were obliged to wade up to our shoulders, and push the boats over the bar of Buffalo Creek. This was one of our cold sleety evenings in October, when the water of Lake Erie is too cool to bathe in, and we were obliged to sit in our wet clothes for three hours in a small boat, and not allowed to even laugh to keep ourselves warm.

We rowed very quietly up the Lake several miles before we crossed, and then came down upon friend "John Bull" in hopes to catch him napping; but when we neared him we found him wide awake. There was a fire on board the "Detroit" in the caboose which light we steered by. Our boats were steered like the whaleboat with a long oar. When within a half mile of the brig Lt. Elliott directed our men not to fire but to be silent. I told the sailor who was steering to give me the helm, and get ready his grapple. We were now within musket range when I headed for her fore foot and rounded too, so as to board her head to tide. They now hailed from the brig, and immediately fired all their musketry, and we received a second volley before we were alongside,—as I preferred laying alongside securely, and not to miss our game as the Sailing Master did in the other boat, which swung under the enemy's stern, lost several men, and undoubtedly would have sheered off, if Captain Towson had not ordered the men to haul up alongside, boarded and carried her.

In our boat we were no sooner alongside than well secured, and every one mounted on board. Lt. Elliott and myself

boarded in the main rigging, which brought us directly into conflict with the officers of the brig on the quarter-deck. The Captain aimed a severe blow at Elliott's head, but in the dark he struck on one side and knocked his hat overboard. In five minutes we were in possession, and our prisoners driven below, and the hatchways secured. Some hands were sent aloft to loose the topsails, whilst I examined the brig's guns and found them loaded; but we had surprised the crew and they had not had time to fire them. I ordered them all hauled over to the starboard side next Fort Erie, to be ready for an attack from the shore. But upon bringing up the Second Mate he denied having any ammunition on board, and not until he was brought to by some hard threats did he agree to show us where his chest was with 42 rounds of cartridges in.

Until this period the British on shore knew not which party had conquered, and they now hailed to know. Lt. Elliott ordered the fire on deck extinguished, and the topsails loosed, and when we were hailed again, said they would fire if we got under way; and I told Mr. Elliott my guns were all ready when they opened the ball; and all the quick match I had was a bundle of candles held by my guard in the companion way. Whiz! comes a shot over our heads;—"John Bull" always aims too high;—this went about 20 feet over us, ricochetted and as our shore was lined with friends anxiously waiting our movements, this first shot fired from Fort Erie after the Declaration of War, killed Major Cuyler of the New York militia whilst sitting on horseback. Bang! went my battery of 6-pounders;—"up helm, boys! Stand by that cable with the axe! Cut away!"—and now we get the battery guns on us;—our neighbors Watts and Towson in the other brig were under way, and this served to distract the enemy's fire; The day dawned, and with it came a light breeze of wind, and we had hopes of getting up against the current into Lake Erie. All my cartridges were expended, and now we had quietly to take the penetrating "arguments" of the Fort to stop us, every shot telling as we had to come nearer the shore.

These guns I fired were the first directed against the enemy on the Niagara. The wind became lighter, and in place of getting up into the Lake, out of the current and gunshot, we were compelled to sheer over to our shore, and in our attempt to get into the harbor, both our prizes grounded.

The prisoners were all sent on shore, the "Caledonian" which was full of furs was unloaded; and as every preparation was making by the enemy to burn her [the "Detroit"] that night, the General commanding ordered Major Chambers to set fire to her in the evening,—the policy of which I could not admire. The "Caledonian" was saved and added to our fleet and aided the gallant Perry in his victory on the Lake.

On mustering our forces we found two officers wounded, and about ten men killed and wounded. Our brother officers on shore praised us extravagantly, and we were well satisfied to have brought ourselves back with a whole skin. Now when it is remembered that our country had been at peace 30 years, and all her old soldiers dead or very aged, and scarcely a man in our expedition had ever faced an enemy, and that this was the attack of raw recruits on veterans; without flattery it may be said to have been a handsome affair. It had another good effect of giving to our men a little confidence, and inspiring the whole brigade with life and ardour.[1]

We now had at Buffalo a brigade of U. S. Infantry and volunteers, and at Queenstown 25 miles below, Major General Van Rensselaer had a large brigade of the neighboring Militia stationed.

At Fort Niagara there were stationed two companies of Artillery, and Captain Gibson's company of Light Artillery had just arrived at Lewistown.

It appears General Van Rensselaer contemplated an attack on the British 49th Infantry and part of the 41st, stationed at

[1] "The capture of the 'Detroit' and the 'Caledonia' (whether placed to our maritime or land account), for judgment, skill, and courage has never been surpassed."—Henry Clay, in Debate on Army Bill. Annals of Congress, 1813, p. 674.

Queenstown directly opposite to Lewistown. But the General did not sufficiently estimate either the strength of his enemy or the inefficiency of his own undisciplined corps, and he appeared desirous to prevent the Regulars from engaging in the expedition. Our gallant Colonel had gained permission to descend the river to join the General, tho' it would seem as if he was not expected to get down, as the new roads were then so cut up that empty wagons were seen sticking in the road; therefore it was impossible to get on with Artillery, and baggage and ammunition wagons. The Colonel would not leave his cannon. I was the Adjutant and acting Quarter Master, and suggested to the Colonel that I could dismount our guns and take them and the battalion down by water. He was much pleased, and I went to work in a tremendous heavy rain, and taking the same boats with which we had just captured the "Detroit" and "Caledonian," I rigged a platform from the shore, and embarked our guns and ammunition, and reported to Col. Scott, who soon marched down his men; and off we pushed for Lewistown, halted that night above Schlosser, and next morning landed at Schlosser, 7 miles above Lewistown; and whilst my brother officers were breakfasting at the tavern, I went to work and had my guns remounted and ready for a march. Col. Scott then galloped over to head-quarters to obtain further orders; and in the evening we moved down the road, and arrived at General Van Rensselaer's camp about two hours before his troops embarked to the attack of Queenstown. But the General's jealousy would not permit any more Regulars to join him, and we were ordered to the bank of the Niagara to cover the boats in crossing; and as soon as daylight appeared we commenced firing on the British Artillery at a distance of 600 yards. Col. Scott and myself rode down to the shore to witness the embarkation; when Lt. Col. Christy who had been on the British side and returned to hasten the movements, told the Colonel he wanted a Lieutenant of Artillery to go with him; when I dismounted, left my horse tied to a fence, and jumped into a boat with Col. Christy and in a few minutes I was on

British ground for the first time, and climbing up the precipice, joined our troops, then under the command of Col. Christy. Our troops were now attacked by a reinforcement of British from Fort George under command of Col. Brock, of the 41st Infantry,—a very gallant officer who had served with distinction under Abercrombie in Egypt, and who had captured our troops under Hull at Detroit. This brave man was killed by our advance and his aid Major McDonald also. The enemy again retreated from the Heights, and in about an hour I was pleased to see Col. Scott, who had also succeeded in volunteering to cross the river with his battalion, but before he could make any movement of the troops, the "Old Patroon"—as General Van was called—sent over Brigadier General Wadsworth to take the command from Col. Scott, determined to keep the Militia officers in command.

The enemy again returned to the attack, and, aided by their Indians drove in our Albany volunteers, (who had fought very bravely,) and were received by Col. Scott with the 13th Infantry and repulsed.

In the attack I was severely wounded thro' the left arm whilst commanding a detachment of the 13th Infantry,—which formed our right,—and having for a week previous undergone much fatigue, and being half starved also, I was compelled to leave the line, and retire to the rear. At the moment I was wounded I was directing a soldier to take aim at an Indian hid under a small bush, and the same Indian was taking a good aim at me. Col. Scott and myself were in full dress Chapeau and plume, which made us a good mark. This is imprudent at all times, more especially when opposed to Savages, who always endeavor to kill officers, as well, to aid in the defeat as in expectation of plunder, and being able to boast in the number of their scalps, that of a chief warrior.

In an hour or two the surgeon who had the care of Captain John E. Wool of the 13th Infantry and myself, determined to take us over to our side of the river, as he had no means of dressing some of the wounds; and by crossing

to our own side, I escaped being made prisoner, as all our detachment was captured:—occasioned, no doubt, by the ignorance and obstinacy of our Militia General, in sending so small a detachment to retain possession of the post—so cut off from reinforcements and supplies by a deep and very rapid river—at that place full of whirlpools and rapids requiring much skill to cross it. As an evidence of the folly of placing any dependence on the Militia, I will relate what occurred after our defeat. On recrossing to Lewistown I found my horse where I had left him early in the morning, and being lifted on him I was enabled to find the 2nd Artillery, and right glad were my comrades to see me alive again. I found the troops all withdrawn a mile from the shore, and that night when it was reported the British and Indians had crossed at Five Mile Meadow, below, our gallant Militia began to think they had seen service enough, and walked off to the rear by companies; one Colonel whose name I never heard, recommending to his men "to make the best of their way into the Interior,"—and sure enough they did.

The day following General Van Rensselaer sent for Captain Towson, and gave him command of his camp, directing Majors, Colonels &c. all to obey his instructions.[1]

My wound, and fatigue of being up every night, bro't on a fever which confined me for two months, and I did not entirely recover for five months. Indeed, very few who were attacked with those fevers, ever recovered. It was called Typhus and Lake fever and was accompanied in my case by dysentery, and trying to the strength of my body, I was removed during illness five times in wagons and boats a distance of 30 miles, and suffering constantly for want of nourishment, and those kind attentions so requisite in sickness. In all my changes I found Captain Towson the same kind friend.

Col. Scott being kept a prisoner, and our battalion much weakened by deaths, and the campaign soon closing, I applied for orders to join Col. Izard in Philadelphia; and in

[1] See "Thompson's History of the War" for particulars of this affair.

the beginning of December I was able to be removed from Buffalo by placing my buffalo skin in the bottom of a Pennsylvania wagon, and the first day rode seven miles. By degrees I reached Batavia, when, the snows commencing, I obtained a sleigh and with three other officers, was enabled to travel comfortably,—strengthened with the reflection that I was travelling homeward, soon to meet my parents, who would be delighted to see me, and not less so for being informed that I had done my duty to my country.

I arrived at Philadelphia, December 26th, 1812, and found my parents in tolerable health, and all my friends delighted to see me again, and I not a little gratified to find all my brother officers disposed to do me more than justice for my exertions.

On my arrival in Philadelphia I joined Col. Izard, who was organizing his regiment for the ensuing campaign; and my friend Scott who had been carried a prisoner to Quebec, was paroled and arrived in Philadelphia in the Winter. In February, 1813, Col. Izard was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, and ordered to the command of New York and the defences near it, and I was ordered to accompany him. On our arrival in New York, we found the British fleet were off Sandy Hook, and the inhabitants of the city in the expectation of an attack. They were much pleased with the exchange of the command from old General Burbeck to General Izard.

The General visited all the posts down to Sandy Hook, where we found a 6 gun battery. There were large batteries on both sides of the Narrows, and works on the Heights on Long Island, on Governor's, Bedlow, and Ellis's Islands, and in the city circular batteries,—Forts Clinton, Gansevoort and North Batteries on the North River side.

The British fleet often threatened to enter the harbor, but as often declined, as our forces were too numerous. As the Spring advanced I began to look towards the frontier, where we expected the most active operations, and tho' I could have remained with General Izard in all the luxury of the city, I felt as if I was not doing my duty; and so

stated to the General, who ordered me on duty to the War Department with dispatches, and introducing me to General Armstrong, then Secretary, who received me very flatteringly. Having dined with him in company with my friend Wm. Jones, then Secretary of the Navy, I was next morning told by General Armstrong he had given me a Captain's commission in the 23rd Infantry, in which regiment he said he had two sons. This compliment I thanked him for but hesitated to accept it, as I could not think of leaving the 2nd Artillery where I had so many friends; but when I reflected I was jumping from a 2nd Lieutenancy to a Captaincy over all the Lieutenants in service, I soon determined to accept and posted off for the Niagara River to join my regiment in time for the attack on Fort George opposite Fort Niagara, which the Secretary said I would just have time enough to do, after remaining a week in Philadelphia with my parents, and changing my uniform from Artillery to Infantry.

I left Philadelphia the latter end of April, 1813, for the army, and without delay of an hour, hastened again to the field, passing in my route many officers who expressed much desire to get to the frontier, forgetting they had not applied for orders, which were seldom refused to those who asked for them.

In my memorandum of the movement of our battalion,—2nd Artillery, from Albany to Buffalo, N. Y. in September, 1812, it might possibly benefit some to know the many disadvantages to be incurred in going into a war so totally unprepared as we were in 1812.

The army was to be organized at Green Bush opposite Albany, N. Y. Major General Dearborn, who had served in the Revolution was to command.

When the 2nd Artillery arrived at Head-quarters we found about 1500 men, including the 3rd regiment Artillery, commanded by Col. Macomb (now [1836] Major General commanding the army). Col. A. Smyth, Adjutant and Inspector General was drilling the troops. He was standing *cross legged* reading the words of command from a book, he

said he had compiled from the French, and this book with "Toupard" for the Artillery was all the instruction we had aid us in our discipline. Col. Scott, thinking he had not much to learn at head-quarters, preferred taking some practical lessons from the enemy, and urged General Dearborn to order him to the Niagara; and we moved off in a day or two, leaving Col. Macomb to prepare his regiment for the next spring.

From the arsenal of the state near Albany, we received two iron 6 pounders, guns and implements, and from the Quarter Master 20 horses and harness. These horses had been purchased in the neighborhood, and sold by the owners —not for their many good qualities. They had not been tried at work; the harness had been made by contract,—which in those days meant that the Government was to be cheated by the agent and contractor together, as General Pike said to the Secretary of War, of Tench Coxe, the Purveyor; when to exhibit the gross impositions on the soldier, the General folded up very neatly one of Coxe's blankets in an envelope addressed to the War Department, to show in a stronger manner than language could, the covering 4 feet by three, intended for a Canadian winter. As to stockings, they would fit any sized foot; for if too short, the soldier had only to push his toes between the threads.

As I have said, our horses and harness were alike untried, and when ordered forward some pulled back, others jumped entirely out of their harness,—away went girths and traces and away went horses and thus every day several times was our line of march disordered in breaking horses and in breaking harness too. In a few days half our horses were galled and lamed by bad made harness, and by the time we came to the bad roads and swamps, our horses were broken down; and we had sometimes to take a double team to drag one 6 pounder out of the mire.

As to funds—"the sinews of war"—there was but one Pay Master in New York, Mr. Aiken, and he as usual without funds; and with a positive order from General Dearborn I was enabled to get 2 months' pay. As we had left

Philadelphia at 48 hours' notice, there was a plentiful scarcity of cash among the officers, and before we had marched 3 days, there were not $10 in the mess except my late acquisition of pay, which was to pay all the bills to the last shilling, and that shilling also. But none of us cared for money. We were as good to be shot at, poor as rich, and as merry as crickets. But seriously, it must be madness in the extreme in any Government to push an army into the field, without being in some degree prepared with the munitions of war, of which in 1812 we were entirely destitute; and when I now passed over the same route again in 1813, things looked no better as to the materials. There were more troops on the road, but no better supplied, no better disciplined. But I had to obey orders, and as I told General Armstrong I would be at Fort Niagara before the first spring fight, I arrived there May 9th, and reported to Col. Scott now Adjutant General of the army and also commanding the 2nd Artillery. My old comrades said they did not know whether to congratulate me on my promotion or not, as they did not like to see me in "pewter"—a nickname for Infantry uniform.

The 23rd regiment, to which I belonged, arrived in a few days, and I began to regret my promotion when I began to make comparisons with officers and men; for I sincerely think there could not be a nobler collection of warm hearts and willing hands than the officers of the 2nd Artillery then at head-quarters,—say Col. Scott, Captains N. Towson—J. Hindman—J. N. Barker—Thos. Biddle—Sam'l Archer—Spotswood Henry—Wm. Nicholas, and Lieutenants—Zantzinger—Kearsley—Tyler—McDonough—Fontaine—Davis—Hook and Stewart—not one individual of whom but is borne on the reports as having been distinguished;—Scott, Towson, Biddle and McDonough in every battle that was fought, and McDonough only was killed. I believe all the others were wounded, except Hindman.

Previous to this period an attack had been made on the British at Little York, U. C. The place was taken, but with much loss on both sides. Many of the enemy were killed

by our riflemen, and we lost several hundred, killed and wounded, by the treachery of the British blowing up their magazine after the white flag was hoisted by them and our troops marching into the battery. Brigadier General Pike was killed here. All the wounded were brought in Commodore Chauncey's fleet up to Fort Niagara.

We had now assembled about 6000 men, aided by Commodore Chauncey's fleet, and they were about 3000, and their fleet not on the Lake. We now had the experiment to repeat, of sending superannuated men of the Revolution to command. As the failure of the aged Patroon, General Van Rensselaer, lost us everything in 1812, so was the age and infirmity of General Dearborn the cause of many errors.

About the 10th May, a council of general officers was called, when it was asked by General Dearborn: "is it expedient that we attack the enemy?" "Yes," was the unanimous reply from Generals Lewis, Chandler, Boyd and Winder, and Quarter Master General Swartwout. "Then we do attack," said General Dearborn; and the council dismissed. *Nothing was done on our part for two weeks*, except the issuing of orders and counter-orders; at one time resigning the command to Genl. Lewis and the same hour ordering the internal arrangement of the Division, until confidence in our Commander was very much diminished. Not wishing to go into action with the raw recruits of the 23rd Infty. I volunteered as an aid to my old friend Col. M. Potter, in command of the Artillery and was offered the appointment of Aid to Brig. Genl. Winder. But I preferred going to the attack of Fort George with Col. Scott, who was appointed to command the advance, and although the 2nd Artly to compose the advance was to do duty as Infantry I as Captain of Inf'ty was permitted to join it with a light Field Piece. This was quite a compliment from the Col. commanding and it was followed by Towson and Biddle, Hindman and others, saying, "take what men you want for your gun from our Companies." On the night of the 24th, whilst I was yet remaining with Col. Porter on the right bank of Niagara, where his command ha ng in Fort

Niagara 6 12 prs., 2 nines, some 6s and a mortar; Battery No. 2 at the Graveyard one 12 pr. and a Mortar; No. 3 Lt. Murdoch 2 6 prs.; No. 4 or salt Battery named from furnishing it with barrels of salt covered with earth, 2 beautiful 18 prs. called rifles, 2 6 prs., 2 8 in. French Howitzers and 2 8 inch mortars, here we had Col. Porter, Capt. Totten, 11 Engineers, Capt. Archer and myself; No. 5 Lt. Davis 2 12 prs.; No. 6, or Fox point, Captain Gates, 2 12 prs.;—these batteries forming a crescent to the enemy's works, distant about 700 yards.

On the night of the 24th, when some of our boats were sent down from 5 Mile Meadow by Major Van DeVenter, Directing Quarter Master General, the enemy fired on them; when Col. Porter opened his battery on Fort George for about two hours. The British were now certain we were coming; but no orders for embarkation yet,—no enquiry from head-quarters, 4 miles off, to know why we fired. Next morning May 25th, Col. Porter again opened all his batteries with hot shot, and in one hour we had burnt the enemy's large block-house in Fort George, and by 8 A. M. we had burnt four large block-houses inside and three storehouses outside their works. But one building remained, and Col. Porter directed me to proceed to head-quarters and report to General Dearborn our operations. It was said the old General had not been seen to smile for a week previous, but he was delighted to hear what we had done. I returned to Col. Porter with instructions for him to use his own discretion in burning the remaining buildings in Fort George.

Now the venerable Col. Porter had from the first persisted, and even swore we could not burn a building at that distance; because when he was at Fort Mifflin, in the Revolution, the British fired heated shot for a week but could burn nothing. Our officers persuaded the Colonel, and he said to the officers of the batteries near him:—"Load all the guns, and I will give you one hour to burn the blockhouse." He gave the signal with his gold-headed cane. Bang! went the shot; and in less than ten minutes by my watch, the blockhouse was on fire. The old Colonel, leaning on his

cane with both hands, jumped off the ground, swearing he could set the world on fire, and said to me—"Stop the firing, and let us go in to breakfast."

I would here remark that altho' the British engineers and Artillery officers should have been so much our superiors, our shot and shell, did double the execution. Not one of their shells burst in our battery, whilst in Fort George we could see our shells burst in the most desirable places, and the weather boards of the buildings frequently flying when they burst.

On the 27th May, 1813, before daylight, we embarked to attack Fort George, and I was attached to Col. Scott's advance with a light piece of Artillery. I was shot in the right arm, and before night we were in quiet possession of Fort George.[1]

In the landing of our advance, 650 strong, after ascending the bank, which was a soft sandy soil, we formed in good order with my "grasshopper Artillery" on the left. The enemy now charged and drove us off the bank, where the officers of the old Second succeeded in making a stand, and with the bank for a cover, opened a severe fire on the enemy. They lost in killed and wounded nearly 300, and we only one-third the number. This shews the advantage which troops of inferior numbers may find in taking a position such as the above or covered by the edge of a ravine. Brush wood, a wall, or even a post and rail fence, affords shelter, gives confidence to undisciplined men, and disguises your actual number from a stronger enemy. When we took possession of Fort George, I had evidence enough of the effect of heated shot and shells. Every building had been burnt, and even the fire engine entirely destroyed; indeed, everything seemed destroyed or scattered in fragments. Every few yards was the mark of a shell, and the ploughing up of our heavy shot. Nothing was saved but those articles placed in detached magazines in the ramparts. I would suggest several small magazines in a garrison, to

[1] See a correct account in "Thompson's History of the War."

divide the risk of explosion, as well as to facilitate the serving of batteries in action.

I took up my quarters in Fort George with my veteran friend Porter, who was promoted to a Brigadier General; and being wounded I did not join my regiment for several weeks, but remained with my Artillery friends in Fort George.

From the confusion in crossing, marching and counter-marching there was some difficulty in obtaining my company, owing to my promotion and some others. Many of the First Lieutenants of Infantry resigned and left the army, but an order from General Armstrong accepting all their resignations soon stopped the affair, and about the 20th I obtained a full company in the 23rd Infantry, and tho' unable to do duty, proceeded to clothe and discipline my men, who altho' now in the enemy's country, were destitute of both.

From the day of taking Fort George there had been a constant marching and counter-marching of our troops, and either owing to the ill health or age of General Dearborn it must have been evident to the enemy we wanted discipline. Almost every night we were kept under arms, and for weeks it rained very hard, until more than half our men were on the sick list. Indeed for several nights I have known the officers generally to have to turn out with muskets at night to patrol. General Dearborn was sick and unable to command, and yet he would not permit General Lewis to do so,—who was in everything his superior.

It was the practice to send every day or two some of the battalions into the country to reconnoitre the enemy, who had taken a very strong position at Burlington Heights; and amongst the applicants for command was a Col. Boerstler, commanding the 14th Infantry, who had served the year before on the Niagara with but little credit.

On the afternoon of June 23rd, 1813, I was engaged in issuing clothing to my men, which I had obtained by the friendship of Col. Christie of the 13th Infantry. Captain Horatio Armstrong, son of my good friend the General,

had been relieved from guard and was sleeping in my tent, when the Adjutant, Lieutenant Burr came in saying Captain Armstrong was detailed for command. Knowing the hard duty of our Captains at that time, I volunteered to go in his place tho' I could scarcely draw my sword. In less than an hour I marched my company to the 2nd brigade. My friend Captain McChesney of the 6th, who had been with me in 1812, at the battle of Queenstown joined at this moment, and Captain McDowell of the Light Artillery. In a few minutes the 14th Infantry appeared, and then their Colonel Boerstler, who mounted and took command. My old friends,—General Porter, Towson, Hindman, Doctor Near, and Captain Totten—were standing in the rear of my company to see us move off, and who all knew we had no confidence in the Colonel of the 14th.

I stepped to the rear, and handing my pocket-book to Major Hindman, said:—"I have no doubt we shall get broken heads before we return, and if so, send my trunk and pocket-book to my family." My opinion of Col. Boerstler was verified. He was totally unfit to command. We moved off to Queenstown, where we halted that night, and next morning took the road through St. Davids, and to the Beaver Dams. The road now became bad, and our men were much fatigued.

The column was in files,—Chapin's 40 volunteers in front; next 14th Infantry; and then Captain McDowell's Light Artillery Company; then Captain McChesney's 6th Infantry; then Roach's 23rd Infantry; and sixteen men of Burn's Light Dragoons under Cornet Burd, forming a rear guard.

The column was halted to bring in a few men of the Canadian Embodied Militia, and the Dragoons were close to my company. A soldier said; "The Indians," and on turning to the rear, I observed a large and close body of Indians moving rapidly across the road. I instantly wheeled my company into platoons, and moved on the enemy, the Dragoons charging them. As soon as the Dragoons were close up with them, the Indians fired a smart volley. The

Cavalry horses wheeled round, and came plunging thro' the right of my platoons, knocking down and breaking about one-third of each platoon. I quickly formed in line and fired on the enemy, who broke from the road and took to the woods on each side. On the left of our line of march were four cultivated fields and a farm house, but in front and rear and right a close woods. At the moment the Indians broke Col. Boerstler rode up and ordered me to file my company into the open field; which bro't me into a close fire with that part of the Indians which had taken post in the woods. Captain McDowell now opened a 12 pounder down the road on which we had advanced. I pulled out my watch, and it wanted 15 minutes of nine A. M. Captain McChesney now took post on my right, and the main body of Indians, about 300, commenced a destructive fire on our two companies; a smaller part attacking the troops which continued in the road. I noticed how useless the fire of Artillery was, and requested Major Taylor to have the pieces depressed, showing him how Captain McDowell was cutting off the upper limbs of the trees.

All this time I saw but one Red Coat, but the Indians behaved with uncommon bravery, several times dashing out of the woods to within 30 or 40 yards, as tho' confident of their numbers, they would close on us, and old McChesney and myself were left to take care of ourselves. My men behaved very well. They had nearly emptied their cartridge boxes. Ammunition was bro't up, and while they were firing, my Lieutenant, Griswold, assisted me in filling up the boxes; the musicians being engaged in carrying the wounded to the rear, to prevent their falling into the hands of the Indians when we should move. It is also an advantage to remove from the line the wounded, to prevent making an impression on the others. Not one of my men, I believe, had ever been in a fight; my Lieutenant was direct from West Point Academy, yet he was cool and attentive.

From the division of the enemy into two parties, our detachment became divided for more than an hour. Several

movements were now made by Col. Boerstler to draw the Indians from the woods, but ineffectually. The enemy were now reinforcing, as we could observe, and now was the moment to have made a retreat. But the Colonel said that would never do, as we had beaten the enemy, and his orders were positive to proceed to De Con's house, which was yet 3 miles in advance.

The fire of the enemy was slackened, but he was busy in getting his Indians on our rear. Another attempt was made to draw him from cover, and we moved to a by-road near the farm house. Not being able to draw him out, our sapient Colonel now thought of looking towards retreat. A column of platoons was formed in a road perpendicular to the main road, and placing the 14th in front, next Artillery, then the wagons with wounded, then McChesney, and last, in the post of honor, my company. Now no doubt it was Col. Boerstler's object to retain his own regiment without loss, but it was decided injustice to compel my company to remain in the Rear-guard so long as he did; and Captain McChesney who ranked all of us, was remonstrating against the injustice done him, and as he was badly wounded in the wrist, we both were cross enough. We encouraged our men for a charge thro' the woods, and a retreating fight; and at the moment we expected the order to move on the enemy, Major Taylor whispered me, that he feared our Colonel was frightened, as a flag was received from the enemy, and in another half hour Col. Boerstler agreed to surrender his command, reporting to the Government that he held a council of his officers; which was not true, as Major Taylor, McChesney, and myself knew nothing of it.

It was now five minutes past twelve o'clock M., and a few of Dr Chapin's Forty Thieves, having deserted in the early part of the action, reported to General Dearborn, that Col. Boerstler had surrendered without firing a musket, and this the General reported to the Government. We were engaged three hours; twice my cartridge boxes were filled and expended. But fighting is not the hardest part of a soldier's life. Now came the tug of war.—We were sur-

rendered without discretion to a detachment of about 80 British Regulars under Lieutenant Fitzgibbon,—about 200 Embodied Militia under Lieutenant Colonel De Ham, who were equal to Regulars,—and a body of North Western Indians, about 550 in number, who had that morning arrived from the upper country under the direction of Ker the Indian agent. Lieutenant Colonel Bishop with 120 men joined them at the moment of surrender, and took the command. But instead of being received by the British, we were surrounded by the Indians, who commenced their business of plundering the officers. I slipped my sword under my coat, in hopes to save it; but one Indian demanded it, while another very significantly made a flourish of his gun over my head and took my sword.

I believe our wise Colonel now saw the snare he was in when too late, and how little dependence can at any time be placed on the promises of a British army officer. Col. Boerstler surrendered on condition that his wounded should be protected; his officers retain their side arms, and be paroled to return to Fort George immediately. Not one item of this was ever complied with. Nearly all our wounded were killed by the Indians that night. The officers were marched 7 miles to Col. Bishop's quarters, thro' various parties of Indians, and protected by 2 officers and 2 men, who were more afraid and less accustomed to the Indians than ourselves; my time was occupied in attending to my friend McChesney whose wound was very painful, as the ball passed through the wrist joint and cut off the blood vessel, when he was shot being near me. I had placed my field Tourniquet on his arm but he continued to bleed all that night and when quartered for the night we were surrounded by savages intoxicated by the Liquor found in our wagons. I barricaded the door and armed with McChesney's sword I watched him all night, at one time I expected the Indians to break into our room, as they were in the house and not thinking my comrade would live till morning as his arm continued bleeding and he did not expect to live but in the morning the bleeding stopped and

his arm was saved as the British were to have taken it off in the morning. Next day the 25th we were taken to Head Quarters at Burlington Heights and were again marched through several parties of Indians and insulted and plundered. The officers having us in charge not daring to oppose them. On our arrival at Head Quarters in the evening the officers signed a Parole except myself, who refused. We were then embarked on board the British Fleet, myself and two others went on board the Brig "Earl Moira," Capt. Dobbs, who was a kind gentlemanly officer. We were now told we could not be sent to Fort George as agreed upon but Sir James Yeo would run up to the Niagara and obtain our baggage and as I had intended when I refused to sign the Parole, if we run near the shore to take leave of them if possible; but about one o'clock next morning when within three miles of the river the wind headed us off and not wishing to meet our Fleet which had gone towards Sackett Harbor, we bore away for Kingston, where we arrived June 28th. Captain Dobbs was a well educated gentlemanly officer, but there was nothing like Man O' War regularity on board. There was much severity and roughness of conduct between the different grades without discipline; and tho' there appeared to me no want of personal bravery, there was wanting a confidence in and a respect for, the abilities of others, exhibited in every grade of officers on board *a la milice*, which I think must give our Regulars the advantage in a fight. I have known Captain Dobbs lecture his Lieutenant, McGee, in my presence, in terms not suited to a warrant officer for some trifling neglect.—McGee was afterwards killed.

On our arrival at Kingston, U. C., we were escorted to head-quarters and paroled by Lieutenant Colonel Drummond (subsequently of bayonet memory), and tho' paroled we were confined to our quarters, and occasionally visited by the loyal inhabitants, and insulted by the Indians, some of whom threatened to "skin our heads."

Kingston is situated at the head of the St. Lawrence River, on the left bank or north side, and opposite to Wolfe

Island. It occupies the site of our old Fort Frontinac. It has a barrack for troops; quarters,—hospital,—storehouses, —an Episcopal church,—courthouse and gaol. The cove affords a good harbor for shipping.

The town is defended by a blockhouse in front, and on Wolfe Island by a blockhouse and a water battery of 10 guns; and on the right of the town is a strong battery, and in the rear another blockhouse. The navy yard is on Wolfe Island. Large vessels seldom go below Kingston, tho' it is navigable 70 miles downward.

July 1, 1813, the American officers, prisoners on parole, departed for Quebec under escort of Lieutenant Colonel Boucherville, of the militia, aid to Sir George Prevost, and from whom we received many kind attentions,—and whose treatment, like that of nearly all the Canadian officers, was kind, and very different from the abusive and unfeeling conduct of the British officers generally. Colonel Drummond knew we were to have been paroled and sent back to our army by the terms of the capitulation,—not one article of which was ever complied with; and we were not allowed to remain even for our baggage, to obtain a change of clothing for which we were suffering.

The passage from Kingston to La Chine in boats was very pleasant, and served to amuse us in our trouble, and having been placed under the care of Canadians who were disposed to feel for us, we now began to shake off some of the melancholy and moroseness consequent on our capture, as we most of us felt it a disgraceful surrender on the part of our Bobadil Colonel. We now began to look pleasantly on the scenery around us, and occasionally jested with each other on our appearance, and the smart looks of some one who had obtained the sight of a mirror on shore and beautified his appearance by turning out the least dirty part of his cravat for the seventh time;—or some one remarked on the comforts of clean linen, who said he had just turned his shirt and would do for another week.

The passage down the St. Lawrence is very pleasant and in many places very interesting. The current is generally

six miles an hour, and the rapidity with which the traveller passes from one scene to another cannot fail to amuse. On the afternoon of the first of July we passed an immense number of islands, called "Mille Isle," and truly of a thousand different shapes and sizes. It is here one begins to feel and observe the rapidity of the current, when, passing so swiftly from one view of the scenery to another, it appeared as if the scenery was truly being changed, instead of our moving past it; and it was as pleasing as varied. Our boatmen (who knew no will but their master's) rowed all night singing their Canadian boat songs, and by sunrise next morning (the second) we were at Prescot, 60 miles from Kingston. Prescot is a place of military importance, well defended, and with works to contain a thousand men; and commanding the passage down the river, and the main road. It is opposite Ogdensburg on the American side, where Messrs. Parrish & Ogden have extensive iron works, and which was protected by the British during the war, as Mr. Parrish was a British subject and had made a declaration that he had not loaned money to the U. S. Government but as an agent for others.

On the 2nd Instant we passed "the Cedars" where the passage is very dangerous. The best channel is on the Canadian side, and close to the shore. We passed over a fall about 6 feet high, which is not perceived in descending the fall until directly on it, and requires much skill in steering thro' it. In the early conquest of Canada, forty bateaux filled with soldiers were lost in passing over this fall. Here is a lock for upward navigation and some remains of field fortification.

In a few minutes after passing "the Cedars" we come to "the Long Sault" or Rapids, the length of which is three miles.

The passage thro' the Rapids, tho' somewhat dangerous, is indeed beautiful,—the rocks in many places appearing above the surface, against which the rapid current threatens to dash the boat, and must alarm the passenger, until, when within a few feet of them by the pilot's skilful hand, the

boat is turned in another direction, and one could almost step on the rock. At every turn the scene varies; becomes more beautiful and less dangerous; until having passed the Rapids in safety, the Canadian boatman crosses himself, returns thanks to his Heavenly Preserver, and again resumes his song, the subject of which is some brunette, whom he extols in even more extravagant terms than Don Quixotte did his Dulcinea Del Tobosa,—and perhaps they were equally deserving of praise.

This day—July 2nd—we reached Coté Du Sac, a village situate on a small stream, both sides of which are fortified. The principal works are on the north side, and consist of three blockhouses and a field work of masonry,—a heptagon with a large ditch. Here is also a lock in the passage.

July 3rd at 12 M., we arrived at La Chine, about 9 miles above Montreal, and the nearest navigable point, owing to rocks and falls. Opposite to La Chine is a very fine Indian village, probably the best in the country, of about 150 houses and a large church. The tribe is called Cockinawa, and are Catholics.

It is here that the great Council Fire of all the northern tribes is lighted. There is another tribe, whose village joins the Cockinawa's and tho' they have lived thus neighbors for many years, not one instance of intermarriage has occurred, nor do they speak the same language.

At 2 P. M. we arrived at Montreal, and were quartered in Dillon's Hotel Place Des Armes and ordered not to leave the house. Indeed we were not desirous of appearing abroad, as we were without our baggage and destitute of even a change of linen until we sent to a store and purchased it on the evening of our arrival.

Montreal is situated on an island of this name, and was formerly enclosed by a wall. But this has been taken down and the city extended. The houses are of stone, well built, and mostly with iron covered shutters. The inhabitants are mostly natives of Scotland and the United States.

July 4, 1813. I had the honor to be born under a free Republican Government, and from my earliest youth I had

been taught and accustomed to welcome the anniversary of my country's freedom with thankfulness for this blessing which was purchased so dearly. This was a sad reverse to all of us, smarting as we were from our recent capture. But the most of us were young, and looking at the fair side of things, we were enabled to spend this day with some satisfaction, remembering that some of our comrades were in arms, and we might ere long be enabled to join them.

July 6th. Left Montreal for Quebec. One observes nothing interesting on the passage. The river is generally about 1½ miles wide passing thro' Lake St. Peter. The banks are low and regular until one arrives near Quebec, when they become very high and rough. About 30 miles above Quebec are considerable falls, which are dangerous to pass in the night. The channel is in the middle of the river—the current rapid and cannot be ascended but with a fair wind or steam. The River Chaudine empties into the St. Lawrence about 3 miles above Quebec on the south side.

July 7th. At daybreak arrived at Quebec, when our amiable and attentive escort—Colonel Boucherville—waited on Major General Glasgow, Commanding, to report our arrival, and about 8 A. M. an officer in naval dress came alongside and ordered us on board the prison ship to be paroled. On our arrival here we were paraded in the presence of about 480 of our men, who had been taken previously to ourselves.

We were now examined as to age, height, &c. &c. by a clerk, and paroled by Captain Kempt of His Majesty's Royal Navy, who was very offensive in his enquiries; but from further acquaintance it was found to proceed from weakness of intellect. Our parole enjoined on us not to do any violence, to conform to the laws, &c., not to leave our quarters after sunset, and to keep within two miles of the church of Beauport, 5 miles north of Quebec, on the left bank of the St. Lawrence.

About noon we landed at Beauport, and were turned loose among a people with whose language we were unacquainted (except Col. Boerstler, who spoke French). The

inhabitants received us very kindly. We had no other guide than to keep within 2 miles of the church steeple. Here we found on parole Brigadier Generals—Winchester of Tennessee, Chandler of Massachusetts, and Winder of Maryland, Colonel Lewis and Major Madison of Kentucky, and Major Van de Venter, Directing Quarter Master General, and Lieutenant S. Smith of the U. S. Navy, and about a dozen others, which with our addition of about twenty, made a sad collection of long faces. The village extends along the road about 3 miles, and from its commencement at the southern limit 3 miles from Quebec, the ground gradually ascends to the northern boundary at the falls of Montmorency. The inhabitants or "habiton," as it is pronounced in French, are native Canadians, with the exception of a few families, who at this time, 1813, were Col. Du Bon, Col. Lewis, Col. Lewis De Sallibury, and Col. Du Chesney of the militia, Col. Touch a retired Colonel of the army, and S. Ryland Secretary of State for the L. Province, and who was active in the affair of Henry's conspiracy to gull the U. S. Government in 1810.

From Colonels Touch, De Sallibury, and Du Chesney, most of our officers received continued kindness, and to those of us who properly appreciated such attentions, their kindness was unremitting and continued to the last day of our sojourn among them. But to Colonel De Sallibury and family I cannot do justice for the delicacy with which the Colonel evinced his sympathy for our misfortune. Having taken a fancy that Van De Venter, Randall of the 14th, and myself either could speak French or would soon learn to do so, not many days passed without an invitation of some kind being received from the family.

The Colonel was of the "anciene Régime," born in France. His father had been a Colonel in the army of Louis XVI, and our Colonel entered the French army before or about the period of the conquest, and came to Canada. He served many years in the Canadian Militia, and now has two sons, who are very gallant officers in the Embodied Militia.

Some of our officers messed together, others boarded with the "habiton," and some who were disposed to be dissipated went to a tavern. Every one took his own course for amusement.

From the elevated part of the village one has a beautiful view of the north side of Quebec, abruptly arising from the margin of the point where the River St. Charles enters the St. Lawrence. The city rises to a great height, the houses at a little distance appearing to stand on each other, and as most of them are covered with tin, they look very gay. I could not learn whether this tin was in manner prepared for roofing, but it did not corrode any. The air is remarkably pure, and nothing seems to rust, for even the old men and women did not seem to fall off their hinges. As a humorsome midshipman of our Navy used to say—they had shelves near the stoves where they laid old people during the winter, and in the spring they became animated and sallied forth again. The appearance of these old Canadians at their church on Sunday was interesting. For here everybody who is able to leave home goes to church in the morning, but as in all Catholic countries, each one seeks his own amusement in the afternoon and even thinks it no sin to take down his violin; and the family soon begin to foot it away, but with sobriety and apparently with "pious mirth." And such is the force of example, good or bad, that I have known some persons from the land of steady habits, after looking on this picture of domestic happiness for a while, at length stand up, and after a few awkward looks and turns of the man, begin to shuffle away as if they were Canadians born.

(To be continued.)

BRITISH AND AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR, 1778.

CONTRIBUTED BY WORTHINGTON C. FORD.

Among a collection of Revolutionary papers—a very small part of the correspondence of Colonel Samuel Blachley Webb, of the Connecticut line—I found two lists of officers, prisoners of war, one prepared at the request of the commissary-general of prisoners in the Royal army. Colonel Webb, after serving at Bunker Hill in Colonel Chester's regiment, became an aide to Major-General Putnam, and later entered the military family of Washington. He was an aide to the Commander-in-chief for six months, and received an appointment to command one of the "additional regiments" authorized in 1777. For a year he was occupied in raising his regiment, and in active service in the Highlands under Putnam, George Clinton, and Parsons; but had the misfortune to be taken prisoner while making a descent upon the British outposts at Setauket, on Long Island. He at once sought to secure his exchange, but unfortunately political questions prevented its consummation. The British general would not enter into a formal cartel, of binding force, as such an act would compromise the claims of Great Britain over the rebellious colonies. He was willing to make an exchange as a personal act, but was forbidden by his instructions from pledging the faith of the King or of Parliament to such a measure. Partial exchanges were discountenanced by the commanders of both armies, and so there was nothing for the Colonel to do but keep alive the question of a cartel, until some agreement could be reached, and a regular course of exchanges entered into.

In this his connections greatly assisted him. His brother, Joseph Webb, was the Connecticut commissary of prisoners, and passed freely to and from the island. He had thus established relations with many British prisoners in Con-

"BALTIMORE, MD., April 9, 1893.

"DEAR SIR,

"I will with pleasure give you an account of the Washington letter which you refer to.

"From letters which I have received from my aunt in Sweden I gather the following: In the spring of 1800 a Swedish sea-captain, then a young man, by the name of John Schall, visited Norfolk, Va., in his vessel. At this place Mr. James Anderson, the person to whom General Washington had written the letter, made Captain Schall a present of it. When he returned to his native land, where he was engaged to a lady (Eva Charlotta Wallin, *b.* 1771, *d.* 1844, in Gällared socken, Sweden), he left with her a writing portfolio containing letters, papers, etc. For some reason or other they were never married, and as John Schall never turned up, she kept the portfolio, which was found to contain this last letter of General Washington. At this lady's death it descended to her niece, Mrs. Charlotta Kuylenstjerna, *née* Bagge, of Sotanäs socken, Sweden. This Mrs. Kuylenstjerna, who died eight years ago at a good old age, gave this letter two years before her death to her daughter Anna, who is the mother of the Rev. Carl Adolf Carlsson, in Gällared socken, Sweden.

"About two years ago she made a present of it to her daughter-in-law, who is my aunt (my mother's sister), because, as she told her, 'you are so fond of everything that is antique.' Until then nobody had an idea of the real value of the letter. My aunt told her she would try to dispose of it to somebody in the United States, and sent it over to me about a year ago for that purpose. After several unsuccessful attempts to sell it, I finally turned it over to Mr. Henkels, manager of the autograph department of Messrs. Thomas Birch's Sons, to be sold at public auction, with what result you know.

"I am, sir,

"Very respectfully,

"ARTHUR APPELTOFFT."

JOURNAL OF MAJOR ISAAC ROACH, 1812–1824.

CONTRIBUTED BY MARY ROACH ARCHER.

(Continued from p. 158.)

We soon became great favorites with the natives, not only from their sympathy for us, but from the contrast between our behaviour to them and that of haughty John Bull of their own army, who always considers them as a conquered people, and several scales beneath him in society; and very unjustly so, for in all the good offices of society, they were their superiors. The Canadian retains all the simplicity of manners and habits of the early settlers.

The lands were granted by the kings of France in seigniories of several miles in extent to settlers of good families, and are yet held by their descendants; the peasantry holding small farms on lease by paying tithe rent, and their seignior owns mills at which they must have their grain ground and pay toll. Each one is compelled to give a portion to feed the curé and keep the church in repair, and to keep the highroads opposite to his or their bounds in good order, and to serve in the Militia when called on for defence; and this is all the burden placed on the Canadian. He pays no taxes, and the expenses of the country are borne by the British Government, costing them many pounds sterling per annum, and it is by this system only they have been able to retain possession of their provinces.

About three miles north of Beauport are the falls of Montmorency,—a beautiful perpendicular fall of about 240 feet in height. The stream is about of the same width. We were occasionally allowed to visit the falls, and tho' one finds none of the grandeur of Niagara, yet the falls and the neighboring scenery are beautiful. The mountains in the east, Isle D'Orleans in the west, Quebec to the south,—with the milky whiteness of the fall contrasted

with the dark slate of its banks, together are very interesting. Below the falls the stream quietly enters the St. Lawrence opposite the south end of Isle D'Orleans. The stream may be ascended to within a few yards of the sheet of water, and stepping on some rocks one may stand so near that the spray soon wets the clothes, and if about noon or after, you appear encircled by a miniature rainbow of brilliant colors beautiful and interesting at all times, but yet more so when, by being placed in the centre of it, as if by magic one seems to ride on it, and the cataract of milky whiteness falling in all its grandeur at your feet.

It was on the seventh of July, 1813, we arrived at Quebec. I was told the snow had only disappeared from Beauport about three weeks—say the 15th of June, and by the 1st of September harvest began. I have seen very fine strawberries, peas, wheat, oats and corn, all ripe at once and on the 1st of October everything is cut and secured and winter again notifies its approach. Thus in three months Nature furnishes a supply (such as it is) for the year. Severe as is their winter, the Canadian looks with pleasure to its approach. His labor is over; his wants are few and provided for. He prepares his covering of fur, and mounting his cariol, (or light sleigh) and accompanied by his brunette, who has borne with him the heat and labor of the harvest, his spirited horse dashes off with him on a visit to a neighboring "habiton" sure of a kind reception, which is encouraged by the tenets of their religion, teaching them hospitality as an important duty. The stranger, rich or poor, is always sure of a kind reception from the Canadian, more especially from the kind and charitable curé of the village,—forming a striking contrast with surly John Bull, who bears the sway in Quebec.

On September 13, 1813, Major Taylor and twenty-four captains and subalterns were sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The general officers and the balance of us kept within hailing distance of "his Excellency," Sir George Prevost &c.

On the 12th of October we were told to prepare for a trip by water. It was at this time I had an opportunity to read

the correspondence of the British and American agents for prisoners, accusing each other of their prisoners having taken up arms when paroled previous to being exchanged. The British allegation was unfounded, and I am satisfied not an instance occurred during the war of an American officer having violated his parole, tho' many were the violations of British pledges. A battalion of Royal Scots, taken in the transport ships Samuel and Sarah, tho' on parole were in the field under Sir George, and fighting, four months before they were exchanged. This, no doubt, was considered "coming old soldier over us," as was the pledge of the Governor General to General Scott to release me for Captain Fitzgerald of the 49th Infantry, who was sent in to Sir George, and immediately I was placed in close confinement, supposing from my being named as an act of friendship only, that my return was in some way important, and therefore the honor of the British Governor General was made pliable.

On the 29th of October, 1813, whilst sitting at dinner with General Winchester's mess, our quarters were surrounded by a troop of Cavalry, and Brigadier Major Dennis —a worthy officer whom I had met before—presented an order for the close confinement of 23 commissioned and 23 non-commissioned officers as hostages. This was afterwards explained by a general order of October 27th at Montreal, and which was produced by General Dearborn's having imprisoned some British non-commissioned officers and men as hostages for 23 Americans who were captured at Queenstown in 1812, and sent to England as being British subjects,—this producing the hostage question which occasioned more trouble and torment than half a dozen battles, and which when abandoned, proved of no advantage to either country—like most other quarrels national or private. As I had before determined, when John Bull placed a guard over me I should not be bound by my parole, when I was called into the General's private room and informed of my name being the second on the list of hostages, I immediately turned to Major Dennis and

said—"Major, I am your prisoner, and from this moment released from my parole." For now I had to set my wits to work, and going thro' the dining-room to my chamber, I called my old friend Major Madison of Kentucky into my chamber, and said—"now I shall escape from prison if possible," and then took paper and hastily wrote a number of sentences having double meanings, by which I could correspond with him on my intended escape. For instance this phrase —"present my regards to General Winchester"—meant "I have determined to escape;" "my friends Major V—— and Captain S—— are well," meant "they were to join me in the attempt;" "present my respects to our kind friends in Beauport" meant "obtain a guide and a boat to cross the St. Lawrence;" and other sentences I do not now remember. In a few minutes I copied this paper and handed it to the Major, who appeared alarmed at the idea of an attempt to escape from such a strong place as Quebec, but said he would do all in his power to aid me.

A soldier's trunk is soon packed, and in an hour I was ready to march; but it occupied several hours to collect the officers through the village extending two miles, and it was near sunset before we reached our prison house, which was not the citadel of Cape Diamond as we expected, or any other part of the military defences,—but the common prison of the city:—as tho' insult was to be added to all the other evils of captivity. This prison was a new stone building on the south side of the city, between St. John's and the Port Louis Gates, and built on a declivity, on one side three stories high and on the other I believe five stories, and as we found when we intended to burrow our way out of it "it was built on a rock."

Major Van De Venter, Quarter Master General, Lieutenant Sydney Smith and myself had often conversed on the subject, and determined if practicable to make our escape, and after some time of cool reflection and survey of the strength of our prison house many obstacles presented themselves. The building was of stone and when we directed our servants to dig in the cellar to try the foundation it was a solid rock.

A strong guard was quartered a hundred yards on the left; five sentinels were posted at the prison; arms loaded day and night; and most of them much enraged against us,—for when we had been much annoyed by aggravating orders relative to looking out the dormer windows, and burning candles after 9 o'clock in the evening, some of our officers had amused themselves in throwing missiles from the windows at the sentinels.

The garrison in Quebec at this time was filled with the arrival every week of troops from the victorious army of Wellington in Spain, and without doubt the best soldiers in the world. As one regiment arrived a preceding one moved off to their army in the upper Canada, always having about 4000 men,—the local militia no doubt fearing a sudden attack from the United States.

After waiting a sufficient time for the notice of our imprisonment as hostages to reach Washington, and no measures being taken for our release, our trio determined to change their quarters. The officers were confined on the upper floor of the building, having the garrets paved with flagstones, in which we used to walk for exercise. The north wing was so high from the ground that it had been considered useless to defend the windows with iron bars as all the other rooms were. Whilst we were waiting to hear from Washington, I amused myself in taking the mainspring out of my watch, and having procured a small file I made a saw, with which in a few evenings' work, I cut off a bar in one of the windows in a lower room. This room was on the second floor, and by application to the Major, Ross Cuthbert (who married a daughter of Doctor Rush of Philadelphia), we were permitted to furnish this room for Major Van and myself to read in. I measured the room and purchased an ingrain carpet, double the size of the room, determined to use it in our escape. I now made saws for the officers in several other rooms, and the bars of their windows were cut also.

Major Van's plan of escape was to undermine the walls of the prison, which, when our servants attempted in the

cellar, was found to be a "house built on a rock" as indeed is the whole city. Lieutenant Smith's plan was to bribe the guard, and escape by the front door. This was not attempted as the garrison was changed so often that it would be impracticable. My plan was urged as being least liable to suspicion, altho' attended with personal danger. Each advocated his own plan, and most of the day was thus occupied, whilst we were walking in the long attic rooms of our prison house.

Innumerable difficulties presented themselves to deter us. We were closely confined as hostages and under circumstances unprecedented in modern warfare. Our every look was watched by the enemy. We were surrounded by guards and sentinels, inside as well as outside the prison, and visited often during day and night by the commanding officer,—then by his aids; now by the Town Major "Rissleweller," again by the officer of the day, Sergeant of the Guard, Keepers, Turnkeys, &c. We were in a fortress second only to Gibraltar in strength, and at this time garrisoned by 4000 of Wellington's veteran troops,—the conquerors of the French army in Spain. Every precaution was taken to keep us secure. The city was strongly walled. At every gate was a guard, and as our prison was near St. Louis and St. John Gates, we could plainly hear of a quiet morning the challenge of the sentinel—"Who goes there?" and the answer "A friend," as the inhabitants passed from the city. We were in an enemy's country where not one in ten spoke English except in the towns. We were ignorant of the road, and when one adds the near approach of dreary winter (the thermometer is not often higher than 18 below zero at Quebec), I think it may be inferred our prospect was not very bright. On the other side when we turned our eyes to our present degraded situation, and the duty we owed our country to leave no exertions untried to escape; and I think we may add, a little malicious disposition in each of us, to annoy John Bull on all occasions;—the attempt was to be made.

As a conclusive argument in favor of my plan to go from

the roof of the building, I promised to make all the arrangements, tie all the knots, and then descend first myself. This was agreed to. Now came into operation my plan of corresponding with Major Madison at Beauport, and all my notes except one were sent thro' the hands of Major General Glasgow, Commanding, by which a boat was prepared to cross the St. Lawrence, and a guide was obtained to go with us, intending to take Craigs Road, which leads direct to the United States. Van De Venter said, if I could effect our escape from the garrison, he would get us out of the country, and to him was given the direction. Indeed my part of the drama was certainly the star if it succeeded, and if it did not we neither of us would have a "benefit"—unless it might be the benefit of clergy.

Our greatest difficulty was to avoid the sentinels, one of whom walked at night under the window that we were to descend from. But I was fixed on trying it. By dropping a thread with a piece of lead to the ground the height was found. My hip joint was three feet, and as we measured the number of yards we were likely to tumble, many jokes were exchanged; and it was concluded that as Smith was a sailor, and I a piece of one, if any tumbling was to be done, it must be by Van De Venter, that, as his name indicated, he could bear it best.

The almanac was consulted to avoid the moonlight, and Saturday evening fixed on, as on that evening many arrangements were required for supplies for Sunday, of food, books, clothing, &c., and we were locked up an hour later on that evening, say 9 o'clock, when the sentinel was removed from inside, and posted with the others outside. My washerwoman from Beauport, Mademoiselle Poullin, bro't me a note from the mess, begging me not to attempt what to them seemed a mad and visionary project, but says the good Madison, "I am ready to do all I can for you." My answer was in these words, "to prevent any mistake, we will be at your quarters, Beauport, at 9 o'clock on Saturday evening next." I gave the note to the woman, a few minutes afterwards informed my comrades, and went to work in

earnest. We had not only the enemy to deceive but our own friends, for if any of the others knew of our plan, it must produce confusion. Our trunks and papers were arranged, each of us provided with a haversack filled with biscuit, cheese, loaf sugar, &c. A letter was written to the Major thanking him for civilities received, and exonerating all his Majesty's subjects from having aided us. We were yet in hopes of hearing of some arrangement of Government for our release, but none came.

On Saturday morning, November 27, 1813, we met each other with much anxiety, but went to work destroying our public papers, and leaving orders with our servants, who were now entrusted with our plan. They were told to get the keys of the wing, as the attic was called, and to keep them till evening. Our favorite carpet had been taken up the day before on pretence of cleaning our room, and hung up to the collar beams of the roof, and as often as I could, unobserved, had been ripping the seams, even whilst others were eating, and when I had to be on the look out the servants finished it. Towards evening we became very sociable with the keeper of the prison, whom we had heretofore kept very distant from us, and as we began to try the effects of brandy, he became very obliging.

I had now double duty to do, for as the time approached, the other conspirators looked cool, tho' Van said "call me when you are ready." Smith said:—"Roach, it won't do. Van De Venter thinks he ought to drop out of it. We must be caught." We were in the upper entry, and the moon appeared to me to be very lazy in retiring, and no anxious lover ever watched her with more interest than I at that moment.

The moon shone on the path of the sentinel, and must be down before I could lower the carpet from the roof. In this moment of intense excitement the rattling of keys announced the keeper's approach, and we imagined we were discovered, for the first person he asked for was Sydney Smith, as he called the Lieutenant. We came from our hiding places looking queer enough. The keeper went with

his Sergeant of the Guard into one of the rooms, and I asked what he wanted with Mr. Smith, for I was afraid to trust Smith to say a word. He had a letter for him only. Smith took the letter, but could not read it, and giving it to me said:—"Read it whilst Read (the keeper) and I take some grog,"—and mixing a real Man O' War's dose handed it to Read who swallowed it very kindly, and said to my servant Cornelius:—"Where are the keys of the wing?" "O! by Gosh!" says my fellow, scratching his pate, "I lef' 'em down stairs." I affecting to be angry with him, said:—"How dare you take their keys or have anything to do with them?"

Now for a jump. I gave Smith and Van a sign to be ready, and turning to Read, said:—"I want something out of our room below. Light me down there before you lock up." "Yes, sir!" and down we went. At the room below I heard some one calling for water, and said:—"Read, you would not be so cruel as to keep those poor creatures all night without water! Go and give them a bucket of water, and then I will be ready for you." He was now pretty tolerably drunk, and off he went with his Sergeant, and as they descended the next flight of stone stairs, I closed my room and locked it, put the key in my pocket, ran up to the wing, where all was ready; lashed the one end of our carpet to a rafter, threw the other end over the roof, and it was scarcely down before I was on it and wending, or rather, sliding my way to the earth. Where the carpet was tied together sufficed for a momentary resting place. On my alighting on the ground I was not a little alarmed to find the sentinel posted and walking near to me, when he turned again and walked a distance. I now shook the carpet which was the signal of my being down, and next in order comes Sir Sydney Smith, and when down I pushed him behind me, and held the carpet before me, until the sentinel came up to within a few yards of us, and turned, without seeing us, to the opposite direction. Now I can only account for our not being seen from the weather being cold, there was snow on the ground, and it was a very different climate from

Spain, where these men had served. The carpet was shaken again, and it shook as if it was loaded again, when, before my good friend, the Quarter Master General had reached the ground in safety, he came to the conclusion that as he had been descending so long he must be near the ground, and disdained holding on to the carpet for the last ten feet, and as he touched the ground his feet instantly flew off to make room for his weightier parts. He said he was not much hurt, and we all started in an instant before our good friend the sentinel came back. As it appeared afterwards, he had to walk a long distance to look at a storehouse.

Now, as we knew we must be missed in the prison in a few minutes, we pushed for St. John's Gate, and as it lay much below our prison, and not having been on the ground for one month, and the declivity being very steep, we had several falls before we reached St. John's Street. I was ahead, and as I came near the sentinel at the gate, I walked very leisurely past him. He challenged. I answered, and the others followed close behind, and we walked thro' the several gates hung in the wall, until we reached the bridge over the ditch. We had scarcely dared to breathe for the last fifteen minutes. We now made off in fine style for Beauport by the St. Charles Bridge. The road was frozen and rough. Smith was no great traveller, and Van felt sore from his fall. I therefore gained the bridge first, and taking out a shilling to pay our toll ran over the bridge to the north end where the gates were, which I found shut, and it occurred to me, if possible, to get thro' unobserved, as it might confuse our pursuers. For we had not gained but a few hundred yards from the city, when we heard the alarm,—bugles and drums, and heavy rattling of the chained gates shutting and a great uproar,—and expected to be followed on the Beauport Road. On examining the gates of the bridge, which were of oak shingling lath, I found them made close to the floor and roof, and that they were locked. On going to the side which was a considerable height from the water, I found the lath fence extended over the water 8 or 10 feet; but jumping up on the bridge

rail, and shaking the lath to try them, I swung hand over hand around the wing and landed on the ground t'other side of the fence before my friends came up, whom I hushed to be silent, and showed Smith the way round, and then Van De Venter. I now walked up to the toll-house and looking in the window, saw the gate keeper asleep in his chair before the fire. Away we went delighted with our ruse and with our success so far. We had gone near a mile when we heard the clattering of horses on the bridge. Not wishing to see company that evening, we jumped the fence and travelled thro' the meadow expecting every moment to hear the cavalry alongside of us. But see the effect of our Yankeeism. I was told afterwards by Dr. Clark who directed this troop, that as soon as they could get thro' the gates, he reined up his horse, and enquired who had gone thro' since dusk. The keeper, half awake, said "no one." "It is false," said the Doctor, "The American officers, Hostages, have escaped from prison, and they have gone thro'." For he was certain we would go to our friends at Beauport. The keeper, finding his veracity and his allegiance thus called in question, replied with an oath, that no one had passed thro' since dark; and my friend, the Doctor, called back his troop, and walked their horses to Garrison.

Doctor Clark had attended Doctor Rush's lectures in Philadelphia, and I had a good laugh at him, when I told him he did not study long enough with us to outwit a Philadelphian.

We now trotted along over hedges and ditches, and fearing every bush an officer, till panting and perspiring, we reached the gate in front of General Winchester's quarters, where we found a trusty negro, (Christie), Smith's servant, who had been left by Major Madison to look out for us, yet little dreaming that we would be at his quarters within fifteen minutes of the time I had promised. Not having the remotest expectation of our succeeding, General Winchester, Lewis and Madison had gone half a mile to sup with Colonel Zooch of the British army, and when the black (probably

now nearly white) slipped into the room and whispered in Madison's ear "Captain Roach and Mr. Smith are at your quarters," Madison said he apologised to Colonel Zooch, and came to us in a few minutes. We now went into the barn, yet expecting to be pursued, and where we could converse freely with "old Kentuck," as we called the Major. The other gentlemen came home, but not wishing to implicate or get them into trouble, we would not see them. We remained in the barn until near 11 o'clock, preparing for another start. The good old Major bro't us two bottles of wine, "a barley loaf and a few small fishes," and we moved quietly down to the shore of the St. Lawrence, where the Quarter Master General, Van De Venter, intended crossing, and to whom was now given the command; as he had promised if I would effect our escape from the Garrison of Quebec, he could get us out of the country, and his plan was to cross the St. Lawrence, gain Craig Road, which was open to the United States line, and thus avoid the suspicion of going towards the army,—which was very prudent.

On reaching the river shore, we found our guide, who was an old Canadian and apparently very timid, with an old log canoe, which he had hid under the ice, which now bordered the shore. But before we could embark, the noise made by a boat's crew in pursuit of us, compelled us to hide our boat, and ourselves with it among the shore ice. We are at length embarked in our frail gondola, yclept a log canoe, which from long use,—and abuse,—had been so broken at the bows, that when we three gallant knights, with our squire, essayed to move on the waters, it was evident we should not exhibit a large object for the enemy to fire at, for the water ran over the bows so fast that it was doubtful whether we were going over or under the water; and as in a canoe every one is obliged to sit flat on the bottom, we looked rather too flat with our bottom covered in freezing cold water; but tho' we were cooled, our ardor was not, and I being placed to steer, Van taking his hat to bail out the water. Smith and our guide, each with a paddle, we made our way from among the ice into the rapid St. Lawrence, which at this place is from 4 to 5 miles wide, and with strong arms and stout hearts, we made considerable progress. We had proceeded a few hundred yards when we heard a great noise of men in a boat, doubtless in pursuit of us; and by their orders and counter orders, to row and to back-water, &c., which we were so near as to hear distinctly, we knew they were not sailors, and quietly keeping our little canoe head to tide, the enemy went blustering down the stream and we pursued our course. In a few minutes the noise of oars again struck our watchful ears, and another pursuer came rushing down the tide, but we could easily avoid them by their noise; and after a very hard and fatigueing voyage, we gained the southern bank of the river, tho' carried down several miles below Point Levi by the strong current of ebb tide, and avoiding the guard boats.

When our boat reached the shore half full of water,—ourselves wet, and having sat in the cold water more than an hour,—and with the water splashed on us in paddling, frozen all over our clothes—we could with difficulty stand on our feet, especially Van whose fall from the prison now caused him much pain. We found our provisions all destroyed by the water, one bottle of wine broken, and the prospect rather dreary. But we kicked our canoe adrift, and, with her we kicked care behind, and helping our wounded Major along we gained the high bank, and headed up the road toward Point Levi. The Major now asked us to leave him near some house, and we might then travel much faster, as he could with difficulty get along, but we reminded him of promises made before we were placed in prison not to leave each other, and we were determined to escape or be taken together.

Our progress was slow indeed, and it was one o'clock A.M. when we reached a piece of woods back of Point Levi,—fatigued,—our clothes frozen on us,—our guide begging us to go into some farm house, or, as he said, we must perish. But our hearts were warm. We were cheerful, and telling him to go to the Point, and ascertain what pursuit was

making for us, and in the morning to bring us some bread, —we commended ourselves to the protection of our Heavenly Father, and scraping away a bed in the snow, which was now falling fast, we lay down, spoon fashion, placing our wounded comrade between Smith and myself. With no other covering than our frozen great coats and the snow, we actually slept soundly! until sunrise of a clear and cold Canadian Sabbath morning, November 28th; and with grateful hearts for preservation thro' the night, we commenced jumping to circulate our almost frozen blood, and when our guide returned, no doubt expecting to enjoy the benefit of emptying the pockets of three dead men, he found us as merry as could be, and he seriously declared no Canadian would have borne such exposure. He now begged us not to attempt to proceed, as he said all the militia of the country were ordered out in pursuit of us, and large rewards offered for us, and reminding us if he were taken with us his life would of course be forfeited. He said the ferry over which we must cross the Chaudière River was already occupied by a famous Captain of the Militia, &c.

Van De Venter said that if he could reach a farm house now in sight, and get his hip bathed, he would be ready to march, and we would be too much for the Captain of Militia when we reached the ferry. We now demolished a large loaf of brown or rather black bread our guide had bro't us, and instructing him to obtain the best information of the enemy he could get, and to meet us on the other side of the Chaudière ferry the next day, we dismissed him; and taking Van between us we moved for the farm house with a story—or lie, ready manufactured for the *maitre de maison*, and after much pain and exertion of the Major we reached the house. We found only a young girl, 10 or 12 years old, who was busied in preparing dinner for her parents, whom she said were gone to church. Van was now so ill as to be obliged to lie down on a bed, whilst Smith and myself thawed ourselves at the stove, and endeavored to dry our clothes. In drying my clothes I had opened my great coat, and the little girl, young as she was,

noticed my uniform buttons on an inner coat. Now we had agreed to pass for merchants passing up the river, who had lost our boat in the night, and wanted to purchase horses to go up by land. And to gain any information only I was to understand or speak any French. Now the good man and his wife came home from church, and there was any quantity of bowing and scraping on finding his house thus occupied. But the Canadian never forgets his politeness and hospitality.

Our story—or lie—was soon told, and I went with Monsieur to the stable to chaffer for his horses, leaving Van and Smith in the house. The little girl, who it seems, had heard of our escape that morning, and not knowing that Van De Venter understood her, told her mother we were officers, for she had seen my buttons, and we might be the American officers; and Van crept out to tell me, and to "damn my buttons." But we were not daunted. The man had one horse and a grey mare, which, no doubt, was his wife's, for she protested against his selling her, until she got a sight of some guineas I held carelessly to her view, when the bargain was made. We took some dinner, and mounting Smith and Van on horseback, we moved off towards our piece of woods, where we again found our guide, much frightened, who told us the whole country was in arms in pursuit of us, and begged us to surrender, as if he were taken he must be executed, and begged us to allow him to return to his family. We again said everything to encourage him, and told him to go on before us, and we would follow him as soon as it became dark, as we had before arranged to meet him beyond the ferry. We now saw one of the young men from the farm house passing the wood in great haste toward Quebec, and we had reason to believe we were suspected by the people. He was most likely on his way to inform some one of our being there. The snow now fell very fast. We pushed off, our guide ahead, and then took the main road, intending, if possible, to cross the Chaudière and gain the Craig Road,—cut by Sir James Craig when Governor of Canada. Our guide was to give us notice, if

he could do so, of the condition of the guard at the next ferry. In an hour or two we again met our Sancho, who trembling now told us we must give up, as at every house in which he had been, the inhabitants were looking out for us; and a troop had passed him towards the ferry where the guard was waiting for us. Thus at every step new difficulties met us; and we had also to encourage and spur on this timid Canadian.

We were now entering a village about three miles from the ferry, and telling our avant courrier to cross the ferry and keep a good lookout for us, he began to think us deranged, and repeating his *Pater Noster* he obeyed our direction. We were obliged to halt occasionally and proceed slowly, as in my haste to buy our horses, I had not discovered that one of them had no shoes on the hind feet and the frozen road not yet covered enough with snow, made him go lame. This village, like all others in Lower Canada, reached a long way on either side of the road, and we moved on cautiously looking for the road to the ferry until we must have gone five miles, and having passed the village and seeing a light at a distance from the main road and a path leading towards it, we turned into it, and soon found ourselves at a farm house near the river, and knocking we heard the usual "entre." Entering in the dark we asked for lodging and feed for our horses which was readily promised, when the *bonne homme*, striking a light, there was mutual surprise,—on his part at our appearance in dress so different from their own and from wet and dirt not very genteel, and our French none of the best. We were no less surprised to find ourselves in the midst of men women and children in bed in one large room *en masse*, and on enquiry we found ourselves on the bank of the river near the falls of Chaudière—and having passed the ferry we intended crossing five miles below. We supped on *soup meagre*, and lay down on the floor, adding three more to the grotesque assembly,—the women and children not appearing to notice our joining them. We were thankful for escaping the enemy so far, and promised ourselves a warm lodging

by the stove, and very different from the previous night in the snow. Warm it was! for we were soon attacked by an army of fleas, and again we suffered and bled in the good cause, but we were determined to sleep, and it was not a little thing that could prevent us.

At daybreak we were up, when the "habiton" said he could put us over the river but the rapids were too strong for our horses, and they would be drowned. We insisted on making the attempt, and by showing some money, he agreed upon making the attempt. We found the river rapid and rocky, but narrow, and we crossed in a small boat towing over the horses, who seemed as much alarmed as the Canadians were. As for ourselves we had made up our minds to consider nothing impracticable until proven to be so. Having crossed the river, paid the host, and received his directions to gain the road, and with the "adieu" and "bon voyage" we left him. The Major mounted on the grey mare, and Smith and myself, taking it ride and tie with the small grey horse, which appeared to grow more lame for want of shoes. As soon as we emmerged from a piece of wood about 8 A.M., we passed in front of a farm house where the Militia appeared to be collecting to go in pursuit of us, but did not appear to notice us,—or perhaps did not like to attack us, as there were not more than twenty-five of them!

Presently we met an officer with a sword under his arm going to the muster. We now expected he would stop us and call to his men to secure us. But it is said one never loses by politeness. In this case we did not. I was walking by the horses and as soon as our officer came near us, I commenced with "salut! Bonjour. Il fait beautemp," &c., and passing on really convinced this "man of war" that we were too polite to be prisoners, by which mistake he lost some three or four hundred dollars reward, and promotion to be a Major of his Majesty's Militia. After turning to the right, as the man at the river told us, we were much pleased again to see our Monsieur Tonson, who putting up both hands and with some pious ejaculation at our having got

over the river, told us we were now on the highway back to Quebec via that identical ferry we so much desired to avoid.

"Ah! Monsieur, attendez voila!" said he, "Here is Le Major Francis De Le Marie de—something else—parading his men to pursue you, and every man is under orders to take you. How impossible for you to proceed!"

"Courage!" we replied,—"Put us in the right road again;" and agreeing on a rendezvous at night, away we went until we came near a village, and thinking it not prudent to pass another detachment of Militia in daylight, we turned our horses into a wood to wait till evening, and here our guide promised to meet us. But the enemy were increasing so fast, and the certain destruction consequent on his detection drove him from us and we never saw him again.

After standing quiet a while we found a peasant was hauling logs from this wood to build a house; and having with him a small dog, every time he passed us this little rascal would run in and come to a dead set at us. And thus did we three stand from 10 A.M. till 4 P.M., in the snow, fearing to move sufficiently to circulate the blood, lest we or our horses might be seen. Poor Van De Venter was much crippled from his fall at the prison, and Smith complained of his feet having been frozen in sleeping out the first night, and I felt too cross to give either of them much comfort, and we were almost frozen and very hungry. Now considering we were volunteers on this expedition we took it very coolly and went ahead in spite of wind and weather.

At 4 P.M. it was growing dark, and as usual toward evening the snow began to fall very fast. We made another move on the road, and at dusk entered the village without meeting more than one or two *habitons.* Now our *petit Cheval* became quite lame, and I mounted him to urge him whilst Smith and Van jogged along on the grey mare,—and truly "the grey mare was now the best horse."

After much exertion to spur on my beast and finding I made slow progress, I had to dismount and seizing a piece of fence rail, drove him on before me, and it amused my comrades to hear me imitating the natives in driving, which

was requisite to avoid suspicion; and tho' I made great noise, not one of the villagers came out; therefore my imitation must have been a good one. Now as a further proof of my true Canadian French,—on our return we lodged in this village with Major Verault, who said that when we had passed thro' the village he was changing his clothes, and had orders to go in pursuit. He heard me singing out "marche donc"—"marche tu"—and "le diable paresseux," &c., but did not imagine it was any other than some neighbor going home from work.

My lame horse was for stopping at every house we came to, and after getting thro' the village about 11 o'clock P.M. and not finding our guide, we turned off the road some distance to a light we observed, intending to purchase a small sleigh, or exchange our lame horse for one. We had now determined to pass ourselves for graziers going towards the United States to purchase cattle.

Knocking at the door, the farmer opened it and received us kindly, gave us some soup, and we told our story—or rather lies. Now they say liars should have good memories, and I had not, for when the man asked me if I knew the butcher in Quebec I said "no,"—and the man told the priest afterwards he then began to suspect we were not true men. For if we were graziers, we must know the principal butcher in Quebec, and he thought we must be the American officers who had escaped. However, he was cunning enough to keep his suspicions from us, lest perchance we might have put him and his son out of the way of informing. Long before daylight I called up the old man to renew our dealings of the preceding night for a sleigh or other vehicle. It was too near Winter, he would not sell his cariole, but he had a "*bien beau charette*"—a light cart—he would dispose of, and as soon as he said his prayers he sent his son with a lantern to the barn to show me the charette. I preferred the sleigh, but he would not sell it, and telling him as our horse was lame we would be obliged to take the cart, and paying him more than its value in addition to the lame horse, we hastily geared up the grey mare, and before it

was light moved off at a rapid pace, and took the road up the bank of the Chaudière. We were yet on the lookout for our guide, and hoping to gain the wilderness, as we had every reason to think that some one who had seen us would aid in our pursuit, and to gain the mountains was our only safety, as there was no byeroad and our guide had said if we could reach the last house in this last settlement, kept by Monsieur Jean Jacques Charledeauluce, who was not only a good hunter and guide but very friendly to the Americans, and no doubt he would secrete us. And now we urged on our *grise*, worthy of—not a more respectable employment—but a more stylish equipage and not used to as severe driving as we were compelled to give her. Now I was the jehu, and to avoid suspicion, when we came near a house or met anyone—(we might have been tho't anything else but gallant officers,—from the preceding days of our march being much exposed and clothing abused and torn, we did not look too genteel, and I was seated in the bottom of the cart with a Canadian cap on, and only wanted a short piece of pipe in my mouth to complete the figure; but using tobacco in any form was a practice I never could comply with)—whenever we approached a house or person, we drove slow until out of their view. Having as we supposed, travelled about 40 miles, at noon we found ourselves near the last of the settlements of St. Famine on the Chaudière, and on the route which Generals Arnold and Montgomery took in 1775 to attack Quebec, and where General Montgomery was killed.

With some assistance from a peasant we crossed the river to the house of Charledeauluce, who spoke English, and the first we had heard except that of our guide, since leaving our friends at Beauport. Our only hope now was to procure this man to guide us, as we almost despaired of again seeing our Sancho, whose neck was in too much danger to meet us after all the detachments of Militia he had passed,—for we had passed several of them ourselves. We told the hunter our story of expecting to meet some cattle near the lines of the United States, and wanted a guide to go with us. He

said his brother was ill, and he must go for a physician. We used many arguments to persuade him to go direct into the woods with us, but without effect. We afterwards overheard him conversing with his brother, and found he suspected who we were. He then came and told us he was our friend, and would do all he dare for us; but he had already been imprisoned by the Mayor of Quebec for only bringing in some newspapers from the United States, and if he was now detected he would forfeit his property and perhaps his life. He promised if we were not pursued that night, he would procure an Indian to guide us, and as we could not proceed without one we had now to submit.

We were now at the foot of a mountain,—the country covered with snow,—the winter set in, and this the last house in Canada and sixty miles from an American settlement. Smith now found his feet so badly swollen and frozen, we had to cut his boots in pieces, and found large black spots of frost bite on his feet, and he could march no further. Van De Venter, tho' lame, was in good spirits, and willing to take to the woods; but as we had before refused to separate, we now refused to leave Smith, as he proposed. Indeed a beneficent Providence directed us otherwise, for our best friends in Canada all agreed if we had gone into the mountain, we must have perished with cold.

We were compelled to halt for the night, and we did all halt and hobble enough, but Charley gave Smith and Van something to bathe with, and cooked us an excellent supper of spare ribs, which we did not spare—tho' I never liked much to hear of spare ribs afterward—and we went to bed not much satisfied with the appearance of things.

A word here on the subject of exposure to frost. In crossing the river St. Lawrence, we had all been equally exposed, all equally wet, and all slept together in the snow. Previous to lying down, I persuaded Van to take off his boots, and doing the same, I tied both our feet close together in two silk handkerchiefs, having from a child dreaded frosted feet. Smith refused to take off his boots. Our feet

were uninjured,—his badly frosted. My head and that of the Major's was covered with a cotton cap and hat, and yet both our heads were injured by frost, as well as Smith's, and I am convinced a silk covering would have been a great protection.

Thus far, in our attempt to escape, the fickle Goddess, Fortune, had been unusually kind, and led us with smiles, but coquette like, she now withdrew, to make our disappointment greater, and left us—perhaps thinking it too cold to go any further with us. I am sure we deserved better treatment at her hands, for never did any of her votaries more faithfully labor in her service, or court her smiles, than we three gallant knights. But turning from us, we were left to a fate which our daring and perseverance had not deserved.

About 4 A.M. December 1st, we heard the trampling of steeds, and soon found the house surrounded. I turned to Van, who was in bed with me, and asked him what he thought of our chance now. In a minute we heard them post sentinels at each window. The room door was opened, and about 20 armed men entered to make a desperate charge on us, and frightened our poor host very much. Smith slept in the next room, and we could not but laugh to hear the sailor abusing them in English, whilst they in French demanded his surrender, and not understanding a word each other said. They next charged on Van and myself, and in the name of His Majesty demanded our surrender, whilst their muskets were pointed at us over the shoulder of their officer. We told them not to be uneasy, that we did not feel disposed just then for a fight, especially as we were unarmed, and they ten to one in numbers,—tho' looking at the time, I really thought I could have managed three of them. For after we had surrendered, and were getting something to eat previous to our journey "bock agen," they begged their officers to tie us, supposing no doubt as we had escaped from the Regulars at Quebec, and given them such a chase, we must be dangerous fellows. Now as the country and climate presented so many difficulties to any further attempt at that

time, we did not hesitate to assure the officer in command, Major Verault, that we would give him no further trouble to Quebec. And whilst under his charge, this gentleman treated us with every kindness, in opposition to the urgent desire of his men to tie us, who, poor fellows, did not know how much more secure our promise given to the officer made us.

About sunrise, sleigh and sled were in readiness, and surrounded by our guard, we began to retrograde towards Quebec. Our feelings were not to be envied. After so much daring, so much exposure and suffering, we thought we were entitled to better luck; yet such is the elasticity of the youthful mind,—and more so that of a soldier, who when he enters on the Military career, and his country demands from him his entire devotion, must make up his mind to take the smiles and frowns of War as they may chance to come,—and we were young, we had done what was our duty to attempt an escape, and having persevered to the utmost, we were now content, and when our eyes met occasionally on the road, could jest each other on our grotesque appearance. Smith was told he expected promotion soon, as he appeared to be making a chapeau of his hat by sleeping on it. Van was told he looked like his ancestor, Rip Van Winkle, just awakened. I was reminded I need not mind the *rips*, as I had enough of them in my clothes, tho' they might serve me till we reached Quebec, when Jack Ketch would be entitled to them. Now this was no joke, for we had been threatened with execution as hostages;—but my friend, Tom Randall, told a British Colonel,—"Just you hang us now, and it will be dear hanging to you." To return—we stopped at the house of Captain Chiquet of Militia, who had formerly commanded a vessel on Lake Erie and who spoke good English. The Captain told us when we passed within a hundred yards of his house in our charette, he held in his hand the order for our arrest, and was directing his Lieutenant to muster his Company, and supposing we were some of the civil authority, jogging along so leisurely, he commenced abusing our want of zeal in His

Majesty's service, little dreaming that we were the veritable men that he was displaying so much military skill in pursuit of. Then Major Verault told him how I had made so much noise in passing his house, with my "marche donc" &c., and we had a good laugh.

We were soon joined by a Lt. Marinault of Quebec Embodied Militia in pursuit, and with orders, if retaken, to receive us from any detachment of Militia, and return with us to Quebec. Lt. Marinault was very polite also, and that evening we reached the house of Major Verault, where we were entertained sumptuously, and rested all night, and on the next, left for Quebec where we arrived at 7 o'clock P.M., December 2nd, and went with Lt. Marinault, at our request, to the quarters of Major Muir of Embodied Militia, then on duty, whom Van was acquainted with,—a Scotch gentleman who always evinced much kindness to all of us. The Major went with us to the prison, and gave orders that we should be treated with kindness; that we had only done our duty in endeavoring to escape.

On our return to Quebec we found the whole garrison in confusion. A general order had been issued by the Commander in Chief, Sir George Prevost, severely reprimanding Major General Glasgow, Commanding, for permitting three prisoners of war, and hostages also, to escape from such a fortress as Quebec, garrisoned with 4000 of veteran troops, and the country full of Militia. For the British as well as our friends thought we were clear. On our return to prison, what a scene of confusion! Our companions had been treated very badly, and more closely confined. Yet they were almost in tears at seeing us again, and said they would rather suffer ten fold more than see us retaken.

The keeper of the prison, Sergeant of the Guard and sentinel in close confinement, the officer of the Guard under arrest, the officers of the garrison generally much censured, and even the Mayor of the city suspected of having aided in our escape, because he had been kind enough to let us buy a carpet for our room, or perhaps because he had married a Philadelphia lady (daughter of Dr. Rush), but

Mr. Ross Cuthbert soon repelled the base accusation, and frowned into silence these John Bulls, who were anxious to blame anyone but themselves, and not disposed to give us three Yankees the credit of outwitting them. For they ever after scouted the idea of our having escaped from the roof of the prison. Altho' we had written to the Mayor, when we left, to assure him of the innocence of those persons in charge of us, they told us that hanging a carpet from the roof was a Yankee *ruse de guerre* to cover our movements, and they continued to try, and to punish innocent soldiers for our escape.

We had been advertised as deserters from His Majesty's kind protection, and a large reward offered for us. Our friends soon collected around us, and various and amusing were their expressions of regret. They told us that when we escaped, we had not been gone more than ten minutes, when Read the keeper came up, and missing us began a search. The brandy we had given him was operating, when a mischievous Midshipman, Monteith, who had suspected our movements, undertook to show Read in which room we were; and led him occasionally against the edge of an iron door, until he ran down stairs, crying:—"Murder! Sergeant of the Guard,—Major Van De Venter,—Sydney Smith,"—&c.

The prison was soon filled with British officers. The second in command, Colonel Parry of the 103rd Infantry, examined each of our companions, and heaped insult on those who dared to express their satisfaction at our escape, calling us by abusive names for daring to elude his vigilance. He confined two officers in the same dungeon with a murderer for defending us. My servant was called up, and as he could give no information, the redoubtable Colonel of His Majesty's 103rd Foot pulled the poor fellow by the ear, where he had been wounded in battle until the blood ran down his neck. This poor fellow's suffering distressed me much more than my own, and I sent a message to Colonel Parry by an officer, and tho' he was in Quebec some days after our return, he did not come near us. Yet we were visited by many officers who expressed their sympathy for us.

The next day after our return we three were separated from our comrades, and placed in separate rooms, with positive orders for no person to be allowed to visit, except the Aids of the Commanding General. Even our good friends, the Catholic priests, were denied admittance to us. But when my friend, the Rev. Mr. Mignault, was stopped at the threshold,—"What," said he,—"the minister of God forbidden to visit the sick and prisoner! Open that door instantly, and let Sir George Prevost dare to prevent my entrance here again." And he continued almost daily to visit us whilst we remained in prison.

The first night of our separation by order, I managed the Sergeant who had the keys,—for since our escape poor Read the keeper was a prisoner in his own castle, and the officers and men were more vigilant. But I had always treated the Sergeant well; and every night, after all was quiet, my door was unlocked, and I spent most of the night with Van De Venter, and in a few days we had planned another escape. The bars of our windows already sawed off, an entirely new mode of travel was marked out, and poor Smith was to be left behind. He now appeared to be quite contented to while away his time between his violin, a walk of ten feet across his room, and his glass of grog,—and no doubt thinking, as most others placed in our situation have supposed, that having made so much exertion to escape, and been defeated, they had done enough. But no, a soldier should be stimulated by defeat to renewed exertions, and to use increased vigilance, and Van and myself, trusting to Providence, were nearly ready to cut and run,—when down comes an order from Sir George Prevost in the field, to take those three troublesome officers out of prison, and place them on parole.

What a compliment to a Yankee officer, thus to acknowledge that his hostages were to be better secured by our word, than by the massive walls of his prison and fortress, and by the bristling bayonets of his Wellington veterans! Van De Venter and myself were not desirous again to risk our lives opposed to the attacks of our guards, or the intense

severity of the winter (which was yet severe), but we never would have relaxed our exertions to escape from a loathsome prison. Van De Venter, Smith and myself were now (March 1814) paroled, after being closely confined five months, and removed to quarters in Port Louis Street, near the gate of that name, and in view of the grand parade ground. Here we found Generals Winchester Chandler and Winder, Colonel Wm. Lewis, Major Madison, and a dozen Captains, Lieutenants, and Sailing Masters, who, tho' not closely confined, were not allowed to go beyond the house and garden, and even this was a liberty that we who had been closely confined, estimated a great blessing. We had greater advantages of conversation and books; we could send into the city for anything we wanted, and had more frequent opportunities of hearing from our army and from home. A mess was established, and as I had evinced some ingenuity in doing without food, I was appointed caterer and major domo, and we lived very comfortably thro' the remainder of a long Canadian winter; my mind being about equally divided between my housekeeping duties, reading and reflection, and—looking at the girls, more especially at the daughter of Lord Jacob Mountain, Bishop of Quebec, whom I had selected for my Dulcina Del Toboso, and from my observation across the narrow street of Port Louis, I fancied the young lady was everything that that damsel should be. I further had reason to think the young lady knew of my profound devotion, and if like Sancho, in describing the manner of the lady's mounting, I did not see her vault on horseback in exactly the same style, I had evidence of her horsemanship, and tho' I lived all winter in regrets of having no means of introduction to this scion of the church,—when we removed the following summer to Beauport, I met her by entire accident in the road, and I almost feel tempted to carry out honest Sancho's description of his master's mistress. I never sought an introduction, but in the society of our estimable friends Colonel Salibury and family, we enjoyed much pleasure and seldom met with any of the English ladies. It may be readily seen our situation

was far from being pleasant or even comfortable, altho' so far preferable to a prison house. We were mostly young men, who had cheerfully perilled our lives for the honor of our country, and felt very sensibly our being deprived of the opportunities of serving with our comrades in the field, but we cheered each other.

We amused ourselves in the various ways of riding, walking, fishing &c., occasionally getting up a cat fight to the utter horror of some half dozen spinsters of Beauport, who had prepared a remonstrance to the Governor General, to be presented by a committee of old maids, until they were induced to suspend this delegation by the good Colonel De Salibury showing them that—as the English officers were in the practice of cock fighting, it no doubt was the custom in the United States to fight cats; and it would seem hard to prevent their amusements,—advising Mamselle Le Blanc, who appeared on behalf of the cats, to endeavor to keep them at home, until the Americans should leave the village. I believe this cat question was greatly aggravated by the mischief of Tom Randall, who affected to sympathize very much with the tom cats, and in a feigned French hand wrote to Mamselle Le Blanc, condoling with her on the insult to her bel-chat, and urging her to revenge. Now this Mademoiselle Le Blanc was a very dignified lady of the *ancien régime*, and Van and myself took tea with her a few days after the battle of the tom cats, when the lady recounted to us minutely all the damage actual and supposed her poor cat had sustained, whilst puss sat at a distance laboring to wash off the effects of the battle, and evidently afraid to approach the tea table,—altho' Van and myself were in no manner concerned in this offence to the single ladies of Beauport.

Lt. Gregory of the Navy acted as Mischief Master General on those occasions, and he deserved Provost rank. Our mischief was not always harmless. It extended to practising on each other the burning of gunpowder, lest we might forget the use of it,—but no more on this subject.

After being prisoners a year, our time became very unpleasant, and our desire to be of use to our country increased. The British officers endeavored to keep from us all intelligence of a cheering nature, and gave us their own version of every battle fought. Our letters from home, if they contained any unfavorable opinions of John Bull, were not delivered to us. The capture and burning of Washington City was speedily handed to us; and on the same day that we were lamenting over the fallen honor of our country, some kind friend gave us the account of the defeat of the British at Baltimore and at Plattsburgh. What a glorious contrast was here! Thus were we agitated by hopes and fears until the close of the campaign of 1814. At length both Governments became heartily tired of the hostage question, and this war of words was ended by an exchange of prisoners on both sides; and after much ceremony and preparation, all the American officers, prisoners at Beauport, took their departure from Quebec for the United States in sleighs, December 14th, 1814, and arrived at Plattsburgh, New York, in a few days. We were here welcomed by our brother officers, and we received many attentions from Colonel Smith, Commanding, and brother of our companion in trouble, Lt. Sydney Smith, who was now at home. Remaining two days at Plattsburgh, we had an opportunity of examining the defences of the place, and when the rude and hastily built batteries were examined; the small number of guns placed in them; the want of men and ammunition and the totally unprepared condition of our army at that period to oppose the veterans of Britain; it was matter of utter astonishment how Sir George Prevost—with the best troops in the world, and in number fifty to one, having taken a position within gunshot on ground commanding the place, having attacked and partly carried the bridge over the Saranac, and the stream itself fordable,—yet when the British fleet was defeated, without a moment's delay retreated in utter confusion, to the dishonor of not only himself, but thousands of as gallant officers and men as ever lived. I subsequently met many officers who served with Sir George in that disgraceful campaign, and I verily be-

lieve better troops never lived than they were, and 14,000 strong.[1]

As to the battle of Lake Champlain, it was truly characteristic of the brave tars of both countries and was literally an affair of "hard knocks," in which McDonough fought until one side of his vessel was cut entirely out, then sprung his cable and turned the other side, which proved too hard for John Bull.

On leaving Plattsburgh, our detachment of officers crossed thro' the ice in a packet boat to Burlington, Vermont, and next day reached only Vergennes, and left next morning and arrived at Whitehall. Here we found several officers of the Navy with the remains of McDonough's fleet, which we went on board of in the evening, and left next morning, and on the second day, December 24th, 1814, arrived at Albany. Having travelled from Quebec all the distance, 350 miles, except 50 in sleighs, we were right glad to exchange for a good warm post coach, and the rattle of its wheels. We left for New York, and after an absence of nearly two years, I once again reached Philadelphia, and was heartily welcomed by my parents, and I felt thankful to the Almighty who had preserved me thro' many dangers and much suffering, and bro't me in safety to my home.

Our party of officers was diminished at every halt we made, but we did not separate without mutual kind feelings and professions of lasting friendships, which had formed in scenes of danger, and cemented by mutual suffering; and to this day those who live are yet endeared to each other.

Altho' I had suffered much and long, I knew it was for my country, and with youth and a yet unbroken constitution, and the solace of having at all times endeavored to do my duty, enabled me to push dull care away, and prepare myself for the next campaign, which was likely to be a severe one, as our country was becoming more disposed to support the Government, which had thus far carried on the war by the Democratic citizens alone, but now every one found it was requisite to defend his home and country.

[1] See "Thompson's History of the War."

On the other side the British had defeated and driven back the French, and every exertion was making to strike the Yankees a hard blow in 1815.

Our Government received their prisoners home with much kindness, and in a day or two after my arrival, I received a very affectionate congratulation from my friend General Scott, to welcome me home; and as he commanded the department, I was handed by his Inspector, General J. Hare Powell, at Baltimore, a furlough to remain quiet at home as long as I wished. The General knew that that would not be long. It was soon known that Lt. Col. Boerstler was to have a Court of Enquiry on his conduct, and I among others was summoned to Baltimore to give testimony. But the Court and everyone else thought the Colonel had suffered enough for his ignorance and folly, and therefore acquitted him.

I spent two or three weeks in Baltimore very pleasantly surrounded by military friends,—for General Scott (commanding a large department, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) had his headquarters here, and the patriotic citizens of Baltimore were devoted to their military friends. General Scott was preparing to go to the Canadian frontier in the Spring, and said I must join his staff as Assistant Adjutant General, with the rank of Major, for which he applied to the War Department to commission me. Immediately every preparation was making by both countries to prosecute the next campaign most vigorously.

It was now the middle of February, and we expected to move to the frontier. I had dined with General Scott, when he directed me not to wait for my commission, but to go on duty next morning as Assistant Adjutant General at headquarters. I was awakened about midnight with a great noise and shouting in the streets, and on enquiry found an express was passing thro' to Washington with the news of peace with Great Britain. This was undoubtedly blessed news for thousands of the inhabitants of both countries, but to many military men it was a sad disappointment, and to none more so than myself,—who retired at night a Cap-

tain of the line in full expectation of appearing next morning in General orders, as a Major on the staff of a favorite General; and in place of sending my first order to announce my promotion to the troops, I was directed to order—a salute to be fired at Fort McHenry for the news of peace. Alas! Alas! I thought I was most unfortunate that I should have no other chance of running my head in the way of an enemy's shot.

What an uproar and confusion now took place! In a few days came orders to stop recruiting; to recall all troops under marching orders; and officers and soldiers now thought they had nothing to do but go to sleep. No more expresses—no more videttes—no more patroling all night. And now we saw the merchant with animated face and brisk step, moving towards his former scene of operations; making a hasty visit to the Exchange; then with bundles of keys opening his ware-house and counting-room, which had for nearly three years been deserted. Then came on the fever of trade and speculation, with its mistakes and failures, &c.

To no one, I believe, was the news of the blessings of peace more heartily welcome than my aged parents; and I was not unmindful of my duty to them, and at the latter part of February, 1815, resumed my furlough and returned to Philadelphia.

Various were the opinions as to the fate of the army, but orders were soon issued to discharge all the officers of the Regiment from number 42 down to 10, reserving the men to fill up the remaining corps. A board of officers was convened at Washington, and the army reduced to 10000 men; and as my friend Scott was one of the board, I was retained and assigned to the Corps of Artillery. In June I received orders to take command of about 250 men at Judge Peters Farm near Fairmount, and in a few days I marched them to Fort Mifflin, filled up Major T. Biddle's company, then moved to Fort McHenry, filled up the garrison there, and finding that the Corps of Artillery was apportioned in two divisions, North and South, and all the old Captains claiming the North, I went on to Washington, and obtained

an order to remain at Fort McHenry on duty, not wishing to go far from my parents. Colonel George Armistead who had defended Fort McHenry, going on a furlough, I was placed in command of this favorite garrison all summer and autumn, till by exposure I was attacked with intermittent fever, and the Colonel returning, I returned to Philadelphia to recruit men for the Colonel, great numbers of men having been discharged. Whilst on this duty in Philadelphia, my father was violently attacked, October, 1815, with paralysis of the entire left side; and it was a blessing that I was near to attend on him, as he continued sick and lame till his death nearly three years after. My dear mother's health was also failing very fast.

In the spring of 1816, Captain Boyle died at New York, and I was kept in the North division, and his company was ordered to join Major T. Biddle, and I obtained the company. I was this year stationed at Fort Mifflin, tho' I spent much of my time in the city, and enjoyed many advantages from having endeavored zealously to do my duty during the war. Every one I found willing to accommodate me,—the Government as well as my friends in the army. This year Major T. Biddle went on an exploring tour to the Rocky Mountains with Major Long, and I was several months in command of Fort Mifflin.

I had for some time wished to become settled in life and to get married, but the sickness of my parents prevented me; tho' many of my leisure hours were passed very pleasantly among my female friends, who received me very kindly after the hard rubs I had suffered during the war.

Early in 1817 my company was ordered to Fort Washington, a large new work being built on the Potomac River, nearly opposite Mount Vernon. Now for many reasons I disliked this change, for I had other attachments in Philadelphia than its being my home and that of my parents; and when this order came I found this attachment very personal, and I never obeyed a marching order more reluctantly. But I was now an experienced soldier and understood manœuvring, for in the three following years I was

ordered away from Philadelphia about twenty times, but soon managed to get back. I marched my company to Fort Washington and reported to Colonel Roger Jones, Commanding, and in a few days I was allowed to return to Philadelphia to recruit, but I must confess I would rather have enlisted one female than one hundred soldiers. I now passed my time very happily, recruiting by day and courting by night, until the close of the year, when Colonel Jones applied to go into Virginia—recruiting too. I, poor fellow, had to move off to the Potomac, and spend a dreary winter, worse by far than a Canadian climate to me; for now I found that no other latitude than that of Philadelphia would suit my constitution.

In the spring of 1818, Colonel Jones returned, and I was allowed to return to Philadelphia to recruit, but in the summer had to return for a short time, and left Fort Washington again for Philadelphia in November, 1818. June 25, 1819, I left Philadelphia for Fort Washington to remove my company to Fort Columbus, New York Harbor; June 30th, embarked with my company on board Schooner Dash, and arrived at Fort Columbus July 8, 1819. July 11th, left New York for Philadelphia, and returned with some recruits. I omitted to mention the death of my mother in November, 1817, and that of my father in August, 1818,—both of them having been sick a long time; and I was now left alone in the world, having no near relatives. September 21, 1819, returned to Philadelphia, and on the 4th of October, 1819, was married to Mary, daughter of Joseph and Rebecca Huddell, and obtained leave of absence several times to come to Philadelphia, on account of the illness of Mr. Huddell, who was very old and much enfeebled. I find from my memorandums I passed very often between the cities, as Mrs. Roach could not leave her father, and in January, 1820, Mr. Huddell died at the 82nd year of his age. I now could not think of asking Mrs. Roach to leave her mother, who had but her two daughters left to her, having in a few years lost her husband and four children; and as I was in favor at head-quarters, I could be in Philadelphia every week almost, and I looked forward with delight when I should bring my beloved wife to garrison,—and a more delightful spot cannot be found in this country than Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, was at that time. The garrison consisted of four companies U. S. Artillery, and one of the Infantry, one company at Bedloe's Island, and one company at Ellis Island.

Thursday, June 19, 1820, I arrived at Fort Columbus with my beloved wife, where we were welcomed by all our military friends and families. I was now happy indeed, and the more so in finding Mrs. Roach soon became accustomed to garrison life—indeed all ladies do. Miss West of Philadelphia soon joined our family; then Mrs. R——'s sister; then her mother; and on July 18, 1820, another blessing was added in the birth of a son, and an uncommon fine child. But this perhaps made us too selfish, and the next year the Almighty removed from us this inestimable gift, and we were left childless.

The following winter of '20–'21, Mrs. Roach spent in Philadelphia with her mother; and in May, 1821, the army having undergone a third filtration and reorganization, I was ordered to the command of Fort Mifflin near Philadelphia, intended, no doubt, as a compliment to me, being near my home; but it was a sad reverse, as I believe our beloved child contracted a disease here which tended much to his death.

I remained in command of Fort Mifflin until December 21, 1823, when I received a furlough till April 1, 1824, at which time I resigned my commission in the army of the United States, having entered a Second Lieutenant in July, 1812, and retiring a Major,—zealously striving at all times to do my duty,—serving near twelve years without once having been tried or arrested, and never having once been censured by any commanding officer for the slightest neglect of duty,—having served two severe campaigns on the Niagara Frontier,—been twice wounded,—eighteen months a prisoner of war at Quebec,—and closely shut up in prison for five months of that period.