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MAJOR ISAAC ROACH.

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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 untied 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 Adj. 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 already 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, ricocheted 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 without 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 to 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—Zant-zinger—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 Inf'ty. 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 Bidle, 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 had 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 store-houses 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 Prescott, 60 miles from Kingston. Prescott 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 Côté 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 $1\frac{1}{2}$ 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 "ancienne 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 humorous 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-