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## Military.

FROM THE NATIONAL (DEMO.) ADVOCATE.  
THE LATE CAMPAIGN.

The documents relative to the causes of the failure of our arms upon the northern frontier, which we are now publishing, are so voluminous, that it is probable few readers will wade through them, and still fewer have the patience, deliberately and impartially, to examine them, with a view to form a correct judgment of this important subject. We will, therefore, submit to the public a few ideas by way of comment upon this text. In doing this we shall exercise the spirit of candour and justice.

The object and motives of the open denunciations and whispered attacks upon the Secretary of the War Department, on account of the failure, are too well appreciated by the public to render any animadversions upon them necessary from us. We have consequently preserved a perfect silence in relation to them, satisfied that these Documents, when laid before Congress, would show the utter want of foundation for the charges which have been so rashly made against the War Department. But the time may come, when we shall deem it our duty to show the malignant motives in which these attacks have originated, and point out how it was intended to injure, through the Secretary of War, deep and fatal wounds upon the Administration itself, and upon the Republican party. But there is a time for all things; and we forbear, at present, to touch a topic, the agitation of which, however much it might serve the cause of truth, could do no other good, and might do much harm.

In the examination of these Documents, three points present themselves. Is the failure of this campaign to be attributed to a defect in its plan, its means, or its execution?

1st. Was there a defect in the plan?

The answer to this question can only be obtained by ascertaining what that plan was, and inquiring whether it was adapted to the end in view. We throw out of view, in this examination, the abortive campaign in the beginning of the season, and will merely consider the subsequent plan of operation which was to be executed by the co-operation of the three corps under generals HARRISON, WILKINSON, and HAMPTON; the first forming the left, the second the centre, and the third the right of our line. The basis of this plan was, then, a movement by which the whole of the enemy's line from Malden to Montreal was to be destroyed, his posts captured, his garrisons cut up, and his naval power on the lakes extinguished forever. The end in view was consequently the conquest of the enemy's dominions to the gates of Quebec. This end was to be attained, in the first place, by a movement of gen. Harrison upon the British right under PROCTOR, and by a subsequent movement on his part upon the British centre, under DE ROTTEBURG. At the same time, our centre was to act against Kingston, either directly, by attacking that post itself, or indirectly, by cutting off its communication with the sea through the St. Lawrence; whilst our right, under gen. HAMPTON, supported the one of these movements which might be chosen, by an actual co-operation, or the other by a demonstration, towards Montreal. Such was the plan, and such the end to be attained by it.—That the plan was adapted to attain this end better than any other that could be devised, consistently with the nature and extent of our force, the military reader will be satisfied by an inspection of the map. That the object was as much as ought to have been grasped at in one campaign, the public are perfectly satisfied. Whether it was too much, depends upon the comparative forces of the belligerent parties.

2d. Was there, then, a defect in the means?

The quantum of forces assigned to gen. HARRISON for the execution of his part of this plan, was limited to 7000 men, and his movement against Malden was actually made with a force, little, if any, less than this.\* The enemy never were able to muster more than 2000 men for the defence of that post—and after the capture of PROCTOR's army, the British force at Burlington Heights did not exceed 1,500 effectives. WILKINSON's corps exceeded 8000 men. On the 12th October, general HAMPTON states his effective force at 4000. The force of the enemy, near him, he reports at 2100 men. WILKINSON states the garrison at Montreal, on the 4th November, as consisting solely, of 400 Marines and 200 sailors. He estimates the force which pursued him down the river at 1800; so that the whole force opposed to him and Hampton, after he (Wilkinson) had made his election to proceed against Montreal, did not exceed 4300 men, including incorporated militia.—The inference is, therefore, irresistible, that the military means were amply sufficient for the attainment of all the objects of the campaign.

\* See Gov. Shelby's statement of the militia force under him, given in his speech to the Legislature of Kentucky.

But were the naval means adequate to the same end?

From the documents we learn—

1st. That the command of the Lakes was expected to be obtained on the first day of June, but that Captain PERRY did not obtain that of Erie until the 10th of September. The effects of the loss of this period of three months upon general HARRISON's movements are obvious.

2. That commodore CHAUNCEY obtained the ascendancy of Ontario in the latter part of April, and lost it about the beginning of June. In the latter part of July he again sailed, and, as is well known, continued throughout the remainder of the campaign to contest with the enemy the mastery of the lake. The effects of this ambiguous state of things upon the movements of the army, appear throughout the correspondence. Thus, on the 20th June, general DEARBORN writes from Fort George, "that the enemy will endeavor to keep up such a force at or near the head of the lake, as to prevent any part of our force, in this quarter, from joining or proceeding to Sackett's Harbor, for the purpose of attacking Kingston; and such is the state of the roads in this flat country, in consequence of continual rains, as to render any operations against the enemy extremely difficult without the aid of a fleet for the transportation of provisions, ammunition, and other necessary supplies. The whole of these embarrassments have resulted from a temporary loss of the command of the lake. The enemy has availed himself of the advantage, and forwarded reinforcements and supplies." The Secretary of War writes, on the 30th July, to Gen. BOYD—"The restriction put upon you with regard to the enemy was but commensurate with their command of the Lake. So long as they had wings, and you had only feet; so long as they could be transported, supplied and reinforced, by water, and at will, common sense, as well as military principles, put you on the defensive." On the 15th August, general BOYD writes from Fort George, that "the enemy have now so far the ascendancy as to render the proposed enterprise against his land force impracticable." In the Secretary of War's note submitted to, and approved by the President, on the 23d July, it is stated, that—"The time at which we have reason to expect an ascendancy on Lake Ontario, has arrived. If our hopes on that head be fulfilled, though but for a short period, we must avail ourselves of the circumstance, to give to the campaign a new and increased activity." On the 26th August, general WILKINSON writes from Sackett's Harbor—"I see the necessity of settling the point of naval superiority, before we commit ourselves, and therefore, the decision cannot be had too soon. I fear YEO will avoid a contest, to spin out the campaign, and gain time for reinforcements, and the organization of militia." On the 18th September, general WILKINSON writes from Fort George, to the Secretary of War—"Not a word more of CHAUNCEY! what has become of him? I pray you to decide whether I am to move with or without any further knowledge of the squadron." On the same day the Secretary writes to the general, from Sackett's Harbor—"The commodore was brought back to us yesterday by adverse winds. He goes this morning—let not the object of the campaign be hazarded by running after YEO: these accomplished, his race is run." On the 27th Sept. the general writes to the Secretary from Niagara—"Here is one drawback; the tantalizing sir J. Yeo was in shore with his fleet on the evening of the 24th, about 28 miles east of York. What may be the views of the knight? to gasconade—to retard my movement, or to enable De Rottenburg to follow me? I am unable to divine, but will not be long delayed." On the 4th October he reached Sackett's Harbor. On the 1st Sept. the Secretary writes to gen. HAMPTON—"Prevost has gone up to the head of the Lake; YEO has followed him. If Chauncey beats Yeo, sir George's case will be desperate. This is the pivot on which the issue of the campaign turns." On the 19th Sept. the Secretary writes to the same from Sackett's Harbor—"Chauncey has chased Yeo round the Lake, and obliged him to take shelter in Kingston. The commodore has now gone up to Fort George to bring down the troops. We are ready at this point to embark. It may, perhaps, be the 30th before our forces will be assembled and in motion. Your movements may, of course, be somewhat delayed." On the 25th Sept. he writes to the same—"Com. Chauncey left this place on the 18th, in the intention of running up to Fort George and covering the transportation of the troops from that point to this. On the 21st he had not arrived there; the effect, as I suppose, of adverse winds. This circumstance will, necessarily, bring after it, a delay in our joint operations."

3. As to Lake Champlain. On the 7th Sept. general Hampton writes from his camp, near Burlington, to the Secretary of War—that "A descent by water, and direct attack on Isle aux Noix, is out of the question. It is a place of immense strength, and cannot be approached but by a decided superiority of naval strength. This com. McDonough does not pretend to assume, in the narrow waters. Our approach must be by the plains of Acadia." On the 13th of the same month, the Secretary writes to the General—"It is much to be regretted, that our naval means on Lake Champlain should have fallen so far short of their object. To our operations an ascendancy in the narrow parts of the Lake, is of infinite moment. A well chosen position on the plains is the alternative of most promise."

The 3d. and last question is, Was there defect in the execution of the campaign?

In the first place, then, as to that part, the execution of which was confided to Gen. Harrison. His movement against Proctor was successful; but the delay occasioned by not having the complete naval ascendancy on Erie, as early as the partial superiority was acquired on Lake Ontario, procrastinated that movement and his passage down the lake for Niagara, and he did not arrive at Buffalo until the 24th October. As to the part of the operations allotted to Gen. HAMPTON, it will have been seen, that the whole responsibility of the failure of the campaign is attempted to be placed on his shoulders by Gen. WILKINSON, and is attributed to a disobedience of orders. We are no apologists for this officer's conduct. We even think it wrong in many particulars; but we do not think him exclusively blameable. Gen. WILKINSON's letter to him of the 6th November is not in the language of a military order; it commanded nothing; it has no mandatory expressions in it. It left to Gen. HAMPTON, the exercise of a fair discretion—but to what purpose? That of a junction.—Could it, then, authorise a movement on Gen. Hampton's part which made a junction impossible? which turned his back upon the army with which he was to co-operate? which carried him 50 or 60 miles directly from the enemy he was to attack? But, says the General, I had not the means of transportation, and therefore could not go on to St. Regis.—And why not the means of transportation? Because he had sent them away, crippled himself, and then makes that a reason for not going on. He assumes the right of terminating the campaign, so far as he had a concern in it, without the concert or privity of his commanding general.—His excuses for this are, 1. That the country was deprived of forage. 2. That the roads were too hard to transport it.—But if his magazines at Plattsburg were abundant, why not foresee the effect of winter? Why not carry them when the road was "a perfect turnpike," as the General says? Why not keep his eyes on the main object of the campaign, and employ all the means necessary to secure it? But if the roads were such as permitted the possibility of his getting to the St. Lawrence by the Tortue route, with all his apparatus, and with supplies enough to keep Wilkinson from starving, why not permit him, even then, to carry his supplies to Chateaugay, and thence to St. Regis? Of these roads one was obstructed by fallen timber—the other was open—One was defiled by the enemy—the other was protected in its whole length.—With these opinions of misconduct on the part of Gen. HAMPTON, we return to where we set out. Blameable as he may be he is not alone blameable. Gen. WILKINSON's language, and what is more, his conduct satisfies us that he neither intended or expected to do any thing this campaign. We do not pretend to penetrate his motives, and far less to condemn them. He may have thought the plan of campaign impracticable—his body may have been too much indisposed to have favored the operations of his mind—the task may have appeared too mighty for his powers; and to save the army in the country, and himself to the army, he may have thought it his paramount duty to do nothing. But with conjectures, we are done—we come to facts.

On the 11th Sept. the general writes to the Secretary from Fort George—"I reached this place on the evening of the 4th." On the 10th he writes to the same from the same place—"Shall I leave the enemy within 4 miles of this place, making a wide investiture of it from Queenstown, to 4 mile creek? or shall I break him up? With our prospects the decision is embarrassing. Change them to the abandonment of the chief design, (the capture of Kingston) and our course is direct, &c.

Here is the first direct evidence of his inclination to give up the execution of a plan he had not himself formed.

On the 18th Sept. the Secretary writes to the gen. from Sackett's Harbor—"The whole regular force in Kingston consists of ten companies of De Watteville's regiment, that of Prescott of two companies of the same corps, and about 400 artificers. De W's regiment was made up in Spain, is composed of Poles, Germans, Spaniards and Portuguese, and completely disaffected. The means of transportation are now with you, hasten your march." On the 4th Oct. the general reached Sackett's Harbor and remonstrated freely and warmly against making an attack on Kingston—arguing the propriety of passing that post and going directly to Montreal, Documents p. 25. Here we have an open avowal of his wish to abandon the chief design of the campaign. This wish is, however controlled, and it is decided—"That if the British fleet shall not escape Com. Chauncey and get into Kingston Harbor; if the garrison of that place be not largely reinforced; and if the weather be such as will allow us to navigate the lake securely, Kingston shall be our first object, otherwise, we shall go directly to Montreal." On the 19th Oct. the Secretary writes to the general—"A reinforcement of 1500 men has been thrown into Kingston; the British fleet has got into port there." On the 19th the general writes to the Secretary—"personal considerations would make me prefer a visit to Montreal to the attack of Kingston; but before I abandon this attack, which, by my instructions, I am ordered to make, it is necessary to my justification, that you should, by the authority of the President, direct the operations of the army under my command particularly against Montreal." To which the Secretary replies on the 20th—"You appear to have written under an impression, that your instructions of August last made a

direct attack upon Kingston unavoidable. A copy of these instructions is before me, and in the last paragraph of them we find a contrary exposition of their substance. It is as follows: "After the exposition it is unnecessary to add, that in conducting the present campaign, you will make Kingston your principal object, and that you will choose, as circumstances may indicate, between a direct and an indirect attack on that post." Both modes of attack are slightly detailed in these orders, and a preference given to the latter; but without at all infringing your right of choice, or in any degree lessening your responsibility. Nor am I now at liberty to change the ground of these instructions, since the only effect of this would be, to substitute my opinion for yours."

On the 3d November the General writes to the Secretary—"The troops and equipment, as last in the month, excepting March's regiment, with which I shall join them by to-morrow, at the water of propitious. We shall be conveyed at French Creek to-night, will take to-morrow for land organization and arrangements, and the next day either pass or prepare to take Prescott. On the 12th Nov. he arrived at Burlington, on the St. Lawrence, opposite to French Mills, having been overtaken by the British garrison of Kingston and Prescott, marching by land, and his rear guard brought to action. On the 13th he went into winter quarters at French Mills, on Salmon river.

So much for the facts. The arguments from them shall be left.

On the 16th of October, when all the contingencies had occurred which forbade an attack on Kingston, then it was the general Wilkinson became angry and ordered for attacking that place—for taking a position, and fortifying 4000 men! Then it was, that his instructions, of the 25 August, became both positive and imperative, leaving him no choice.—Then it was, that he demanded from the Secretary a Presidential mandate for going to Montreal! If the Secretary had not sent the draft of all this stuff, he would have been ill suited to manage such a business maneuver; but he sent it in a moment—he found the general looking only a simple forage and he had, therefore, wisely determined, to leave him none. The orders you have received, and he, leave you a choice between going to Kingston or Montreal—you, alone, are responsible for choosing rightly, and I will not see, and the tenor of these orders. And why, because to do so, would be to substitute my opinion for yours? The general found himself committed in his own mind, and therefore, in order to proceed to Montreal. He retreated off in this direction, what is his next step? He calls a council of war, and decides in the name of his provisions, and wishes to terminate the campaign even before he gets to Prescott. This fact is stated in his letter of the 10th Nov. to gen. Hampton—let him again be struck failed, his "general orders" manifestly agreed, that it should not prevent the progress of the expedition." His "general orders" were such as to bring the enemy upon his back—and after some previous marching, he had lost him on the 12th Nov. as to the "general orders" but after all, he had no choice, and an order was given, commanding the retreat of government, that after being overtaken, he would have been the attack of Prescott, and left to the enemy the field of battle, he would not have been a piece of writing. The general will distinctly perceive, that he was very ready to prosecute the plan of a junction that prevented him from swiftness up three days long. Fortune was not always in his way the success of coming to Kingston, or he would, he would have been in possession of leaves to his discretion the choice of the plan of junction. This was the condition of the plan—after he had done so, he would be held that should have been the way he would be held.—If St. Regis was in danger, the point at which a junction might be made, was very likely to be in danger. He knew Hampton's general orders, and that if any thing was left to himself, he would employ the tactics he had chosen. The general's instructions were not unconditional, and he was not ordered to attack the enemy, and the impulse of personal feelings, he was ordered to do this office as he saw fit, and he was completely the slave of Wilkinson's will. The general's instructions were not unconditional, and he was not ordered to attack the enemy, and the impulse of personal feelings, he was ordered to do this office as he saw fit, and he was completely the slave of Wilkinson's will. The general's instructions were not unconditional, and he was not ordered to attack the enemy, and the impulse of personal feelings, he was ordered to do this office as he saw fit, and he was completely the slave of Wilkinson's will.

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