



"Dissolve the plans of war, delight in Peace,
"Unsway'd by party rage, to live like Brothers"

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26 1814.

No. 740

THE WAR.

GENERAL M'CLURE.

TO THE PUBLIC.

The late descent of the enemy on our frontier, and the horrid outrages committed on our defenceless inhabitants by British allies, being laid to my misconduct as commanding officer of the American forces on this frontier, and although my conduct has been approved by the Secretary at War, the Commander in chief of this state, and by Maj. Gen. Harrison, before his departure, still I deem it a duty which I owe to my own reputation, in order to put a stop to the evil reports which are propagated against me, without knowing my orders, or the means which I had in my power to execute them, to give a brief statement of my most prominent actions. I have had the honor of so important a command.

On my arrival at Fort George, and previous to the departure of General Wilkinson with his army from that post, I suggested to the General the necessity of marching out against the enemy at Cross Roads and Four Mile Creek; that his army, with the addition of my militia, were sufficient to take or destroy all the British forces in that neighborhood, which would leave nothing more for the militia to do than to protect and keep in order the inhabitants of that part of the Province, as otherwise our frontier would be liable to be invaded. This proposition, however, was not agreed to, as the General's instructions were of a different nature. The General left with me, Col. Scott and 600 regulars, who were to remain until I considered my force sufficient to hold the Fort without them, when they were to march to Sackett's Harbor.

About the 12th of October, the British army commenced their retreat towards the head of the Lake. I issued orders for my militia to pursue, which was promptly obeyed. We advanced as far as the Twelve Mile Creek, and within a short distance of the enemy's rear guard, when Col. Scott sent an express requesting me to return, and said that he would abandon the Fort the next day, and march with his troops to Sackett's Harbor, and at the same time detained my provision and ammunition waggons, which compelled me to abandon the further pursuit of the enemy, and induced them to make a stand on the heights of Burlington.

I was then left with about 1000 effective militia in Fort George, and 250 Indians, a force not more than sufficient to garrison that post. On the arrival of Gen. Harrison's army, I was elated with the prospect of uniting our forces, of driving the enemy from Burlington, taking possession of that place, and giving peace to the Upper Province and our frontier. We were prepared to march in 24 hours, when the arrival of Com. Chauncey, with orders for that excellent officer, Gen. Harrison, to repair immediately with his army to Sackett's Harbor. I remonstrated against his going off, as will be seen in a correspondence between the General and myself, but in vain. By which momentary expectations were blasted, and I foresaw the consequences, unless a reinforcement was immediately sent on to supply the place of the detached militia whose term of service would shortly expire. I considered my force which had become unmanageable as then insufficient to go against the enemy. The object of the last expedition to the Twenty Mile Creek is fully explained in the general order which I issued on my return.

Six weeks before the militia were discharged I wrote, and continued writing to the Secretary at War the necessity of sending on a detachment of militia or regular troops, that I found it impossible to retain the militia in service one day beyond their term; I also stated, from the

best information, the enemy's forces. I offered a bounty of two dollars per month, for one or two months, but without effect. Some few of Col. Bloom's regiment took the bounty, and immediately disappeared; and I was compelled, to grant a discharge to the militia and volunteers, which left me with about sixty effective regulars of the 24th U. S. Infantry under Capt. Rodgers, to garrison Fort George. I summoned a council of the officers, and put the question—"Is this Fort tenable with the present number of men?" They unanimously gave it as their opinion that it would be madness in the extreme to pretend to hold it, as the enemy's advance was then within eight miles. I accordingly gave orders for all the arms, ammunition and public stores of every description to be sent across the river, which was principally effected, though the enemy advanced so rapidly that ten of my men were made prisoners, and ordered the town of Newark to be burnt. This act, however, distressing to the inhabitants and to my feelings, was by an order of the Secretary at War, and I believe at the same time proper. The inhabitants had twelve hours notice to remove their effects, and such as chose to come across the river, were provided with all the necessaries of life.

I left Capt. Leonard in the command of Fort Niagara with about 160 effective regulars, and pointed out verbally and particularly in a general order how he should prepare for an attack, which would certainly take place. I stationed Col. Grievs' artillery, consisting of about 80 men with two pieces of artillery, at Lewistown, under the command of Maj. Bennet, and made them a present of 400 dollars for volunteering their services for three weeks; but before that place was attacked they nearly all deserted, except the officers, who bravely defended themselves and cut their way through the savages. The Canadian volunteers, about 40 in number, under Maj. Mallory, an officer of great merit, I stationed at Schlosser, & went myself to Buffalo, to provide for the safety of that place and Black Rock, which I trust is out of danger, having called out the militia of Niagara en masse.

The public are now in possession of some of the leading facts which have governed my conduct in the discharge of the trust assigned to me, and I appeal to the candor of every dispassionate man to determine with what justice my feelings as a citizen, and pride as a soldier, have been wounded, and my character aspersed. If in subordination to the orders of superiors are justifiable, then possibly I may have failed in my defence. If to have suppressed the rising of mutiny is reprehensible, then am I not justified. If to have enforced the disciplinary laws of a camp is a proceeding unwarranted, then have I been in error. But, fellow citizens, I do not think so meanly of you, as to credit the monstrous supposition, that you will deliberately advocate such hypotheses. Your prejudices against me have been the result of your feelings, misled by the acts of my enemies, and not the result of your sober judgment, operating upon facts and principles. Those facts are now before you. On those facts, judge me in your candor and I will abide the decision.

GEORGE M'CLURE.

The following is the correspondence which passed between Gen. M'Clure and Gen. Harrison alluded to in the defence of Gen. M'Clure.

From Gen. M'Clure to Gen. Harrison.

Fort George, Nov. 15 1813.

Dear Sir—The subject of our conversation this morning has occupied my most serious reflections. The deadly blow heretofore given to the patriotism of our citizens on this frontier, has prepared them for murmurs and complaints; those who are now on their march, have left their homes and their business; under great sacrifices, with the moral

certainty of being brought into action. The last address which I issued under your directions, and which I am happy to find has met your approbation, gives them reasons for indulging the expectation of service, and they are anxious to drive the enemy from their borders forever. The high character of Gen. Harrison, combined with these circumstances, has excited strong interest in the public mind relative to our operations.

In this peculiar situation of affairs, I feel it to be due to the gallant volunteers and militia, who are assembled and collecting; and to my own reputation, most respectfully to solicit, that if it is not incompatible with your instructions and your better judgement, you will not abandon our projected expedition against Burlington Heights. Such is the anxious wish of the militia, and I have no doubt the soldiers under your command are equally if not more desirous of the employment.

My anxiety on the subject, I trust will excuse the appearance of any disrespect in making this communication, which certainly is far from my feelings. The confidence in the valor, ability and prudence of Gen. Harrison, will dispose me most cheerfully to submit to any arrangements he may be bound to make, however great may be my disappointment in their result.

I have the honor to be &c.

GEORGE M'CLURE.

Maj. Gen. Harrison.

Head Quarters, Newark,
Nov. 15, 1813.

Dear Sir—Your letter to me of this morning, has been received. I feel most severely the weight of the reasons which you urge for the prosecution of the intended expedition to Burlington. The disappointment, however, to the brave and patriotic men, who have turned out under the expectation of serving their country effectually in the field at this inclement season, is the most painful circumstance attending it, as I am well convinced from the information received this morning and last evening, that the enemy are removing as fast as possible from the head of the lake to Kingston, which has been left with a very small part of the force that was lately there, and it is more than probable, that should we advance in force, the enemy having now but a few effective men at Burlington, would destroy the stores which they have remaining there, and retreat too rapidly to be overtaken; there are considerations, however, which would make it extremely desirable to make an exhibition of force in that quarter, but the orders I have received from the Secretary at War, leave me no alternative. Com. Chauncey, is extremely pressing that the troops should immediately embark, declaring that the navigation at this season to small vessels is very dangerous. The force at Sackett's Harbor is—The troops at York are all hastening down to Kingston.—Sackett's Harbor may be endangered by even a few days delay; and should the troops that are here, not get down before the lake is frozen, our fleet may be destroyed for the want of their aid. I cannot therefore take upon myself the responsibility of delaying their going down a day. Will you be so good at a proper time as to explain the above circumstances to the patriots who left their homes with the intention of assisting me to drive the enemy far from our borders, and assure them that I shall ever recollect with the warmest gratitude, the partiality they have been pleased to express for me and their preference of serving under my command?

I will direct payment to be made to the volunteers for rations and forage and coming out.

Accept my best wishes for your health and happiness, and believe me sincerely your friend.

WM. HENRY HARRISON.

General M'Clure.

Head Quarters, Newark,
Nov. 15, 1813.

Dear Sir—Being ordered to return to the westward, you will be pleased to resume the command, which you received previously to my arrival at this place. The orders which you heretofore have received will govern you. It will be necessary that you keep a vigilant eye over the dissatisfied part of the inhabitants and I recommend that you make use of the zeal, activity and local knowledge which Col. Willocks certainly possesses, to counteract the machinations of our enemy and ensure the confidence of our friends amongst the inhabitants. It will however, I am persuaded, be your wish as it is your duty, to guard the latter as much as possible from oppression.

The volunteers which were lately called out, will be retained as long as you consider their services necessary; the drafted militia until further orders are received from the secretary of war.

There can be little doubt of its being the intention of the enemy to send the greater part of the troops which they have at Burlington and York to Kingston and to make York the right of their line. They may however, have a small command at Burlington and these may be so securely posted as to render them safe from any desultory expedition you may set on foot; but it is desirable to have any supplies which they may have collected at ———, in the neighborhood destroyed; and should the success below be not such as to promise possession of the whole of the Upper Province, ——— may be destroyed.

Captains Leopard and Reed, or either of them, are appointed to muster your troops when and where you may think proper.

In closing this communication, I should not do justice to my feelings, if I were not to acknowledge the zeal and talents with which you have managed your command. Your conduct appears to me to have been extremely judicious and proper throughout; and your troops exhibit a state of improvement and subordination which is at once honorable to your officers and themselves.

I am, very sincerely your friend

and obedient servant,
WM. H. HARRISON.

Brig. Gen. George M'Clure.

Fort George, Nov. 16.

MY DEAR SIR—I cannot suffer you to depart from this post without expressing to you the great satisfaction I have received from our intercourse, and my extreme regret that its continuance has been so short.—You carry with you, sir, the highest esteem and the warmest admiration of every officer and soldier under my command who has had an opportunity of forming an acquaintance with you.

Your recommendation will meet with every attention and respect in my power, and I shall only regret, that you are not here yourself to execute them.

For the terms of approbation you have been pleased to use in speaking of my conduct, I can tender you only my thanks.

With the warmest wishes for your health and prosperity, and that of your officers, with whom I have had the pleasure of an acquaintance, I remain with the utmost respect, your friend and servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

Maj. Gen. Wm. H. Harrison.

GENERAL ORDER.

Head Quarters, Newark, Nov. 30.

The general commanding feels it a duty to himself and his patriotic troops to develop to them his views and feelings, as regards their late excursion, and what may yet be expected from them. Those who have rendered willing obedience to orders, by turning out at this inclement season, and pursuing the march till it was deemed necessary to return, are entitled to the General's thanks, and who

is a richer reward than the thanks of their country. The General cannot, however, withhold his censure from those, who, without cause refused to join in the expedition, nor from those still more inexcusable, who made a pretence of patriotism by going with him a part of the way and then deserting their ranks.

At this season of the year, it would have been rashness in the extreme to have attempted with to dislodge twice our numbers from a strongly fortified position, which nature has rendered still more impregnable. Such was not the expectation of the General, nor of his principal officers. He never intended to expose the brave troops who went with him, to certain disaster, to have forfeited the security of our frontier inhabitants, and most probably lost the possession of Fort George, by attempting that which was under all circumstances physically impossible. There were other objects in view, worthy the expedition, which the general trusts have been in part accomplished; one in particular not improper to mention: The citizens of Canada, who look to us for protection, have seen once more that you are not afraid to march into the interior of their country; upwards of 400 bbls. of flour have been secured at the Twenty Mile Creek and on this side; and it is nearly certain that the enemy have drawn up all their force from York to receive us, and consequently left Kingston the more liable to capture, should it be attempted by our northern army. It may not also at this time be improper to state, that Gen. P. B. Porter has been authorized to command an expedition against ———; It was, therefore, important that the attention of the British should be drawn off also from that quarter.

The General has no doubt the troops might have advanced farther with perfect safety, and it would have been his pride to have gone with them, had there been any advantage to gain by it, but there was none.—'Tis certain the roads were cut up in such a manner, and obstructed by fallen timber, that the cannon could not have been taken along. The enemy's force was increasing whilst ours was growing less. The opinions and advice of every colonel, and all the principal officers of the different regiments and corps, were reasons which imperatively bound the general to acquiesce in the necessity of returning.

The militia will soon be discharged. In the mean time they may yet have an opportunity of meeting the enemy on equal grounds. Be always prepared and ready to meet them; you will by that means strengthen your claims upon the gratitude of your country by nobly volunteering to defend a garrison which our regular army were on the point of evacuating and giving up to the British army without a struggle.

The general cannot conclude this order without addressing a few words to the independent and enterprising volunteers who form so respectable a part of his command; their promptitude in obeying the call of their country, the willingness to be engaged in enterprises of the most dangerous description, the sacrifices they have made on the altar of patriotism, define the character of freemen and Americans, who will never shrink in the hour of danger, from defending the standard which has been consecrated by the deeds of their forefathers. Although there are some, doubtless, whose business requires their immediate return to their homes, the General yet flatters himself there are many who will consent to remain on this frontier for a further term of service; the situation of this garrison will be truly precarious, if left to be defended by a small force. The General therefore invites the further co-operation for a short time, of all those whose domestic concerns are not of too urgent a nature, in a cause which involves the security of their persons,