

* The plan for creating a Revolution in the West, by the release of prisoners, was first presented by me to the Authorities at Richmond in the month of February 1864. In the following month I was commissioned for this purpose, and furnished with every thing deemed necessary for carrying the plan into execution. The military arrangements and commands were exclusively vested in my hands, as my Commission as Major General 'for temporary' will fully prove.

Most of things here are wholly false, many others entirely omitted. The only point in which the truth is closely approached is in reference to the magnitude of the undertaking.

The Chicago Conspiracy.

[July,

Aug. 27th 1866. Toronto O. W.

THE CHICAGO CONSPIRACY.*

ON the eve of the last general election, the country was startled by the publication of a Report from the Judge Advocate of the United States, disclosing the existence of a widespread conspiracy at the West, which had for its object the overthrow of the Union. This conspiracy, the Report stated, had a military organization, with a commander-in-chief, general and subordinate officers, and five hundred thousand enrolled members, all bound to a blind obedience to the orders of their superiors, and pledged to "take up arms against any government found waging war against a people endeavoring to establish a government of their own choice."

The organization, it was said, was in every way hostile to the Union, and friendly to the so-called Confederacy; and its ultimate objects were "a general rising in Missouri," and a similar "rising in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky, in coöperation with a Rebel force which was to invade the last-named State."

Startling and incredible as the Report seemed, it told nothing but the truth, and it did not tell the whole truth. It omitted to state that the organization was planned in Richmond; that its operations were directed by Jacob Thompson, who was in Canada for that purpose; and that wholesale robbery, arson, and midnight assassination were among its designs.

The point marked out for the first attack was Camp Douglas, at Chicago. The eight thousand Rebel soldiers confined there, being liberated and armed, were to be joined by the Canadian refugees and Missouri "Butternuts" engaged in their release, and the five thousand and more members of the treasonable order resident in Chicago. This force, of nearly twenty thousand men, would be a nucleus about which the conspirators in other parts of Illinois could gather; and, being joined by the

prisoners liberated from other camps, and members of the order from other States, would form an army a hundred thousand strong. So fully had everything been foreseen and provided for, that the leaders expected to gather and organize this vast body of men within the space of a fortnight! The United States could bring into the field no force capable of withstanding the progress of such an army. The consequences would be, that the whole character of the war would be changed; its theatre would be shifted from the Border to the heart of the Free States; and Southern independence, and the beginning at the North of that process of disintegration so confidently counted on by the Rebel leaders at the outbreak of hostilities, would have followed.

What saved the nation from being drawn into this whirlpool of ruin? Nothing but the cool brain, sleepless vigilance, and wonderful sagacity of one man, — a young officer never read of in the newspapers, — removed from field-duty because of disability, but commissioned, I verily believe, by Providence itself to ferret out and foil this deeper-laid, wider-spread, and more diabolical conspiracy than any that darkens the page of history. Other men — and women, too — were instrumental in dragging the dark iniquity to light; but they failed to fathom its full enormity, and to discover its point of outbreak. He did that; and he throttled the tiger when about to spring, and so deserves the lasting gratitude of his country. How he did it I propose to tell in this paper. It is a marvellous tale; it will read more like romance than history; but, calling to mind what a good man once said to me, "Write the truth; let people doubt, if they will," I shall narrate the facts.

There is nothing remarkable in the appearance of this young man. Nearly six feet high, he has an erect, military carriage, a frank, manly face, and looks every inch a soldier, — such a soldier as

** B. J. Lenoir, Page 119.

* This article written by Edmund Kirk, for which he received one hundred dollars. The usual price paid for articles is 50 per page in this periodical.

Nov. 24th 1867, H. W.