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AND

THE SURRENDER OF DETROIT

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A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

TAKEN, WITH A FEW OMISSIONS, FROM THE VOLUME "MEMORIAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES"

BY

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TOGETHER WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM THE APPENDIX IN THE VOLUME "GENERAL HULL'S MILITARY AND CIVIL LIFE"

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FOREWORD

I have in my possession two notes from John Fiske, the historian, from which I take the following extracts:—

Dear Mr. C——,—I am glad that you will write the article on General Hull, and do something in behalf of a sorely abused man. I, too, intend to do something in the same way when I come to him in my history, and I shall be especially glad to read your article.

AUGUST 25, 1886.

To another correspondent:—

JANUARY 19, 1893.

Pray accept my sincere thanks for the copy of "Life of General Hull," which I shall prize most highly. I look forward to treating of the War of 1812, and it has long been one of my cherished purposes to do full justice to the memory of General Hull.

John Fiske did not live to write the history of the War of 1812, but in two of his short histories, intended for schools and for young people, he makes a brief mention of the surrender of Detroit. In his "History of the United States for Schools" are these words:—

It has since been made clear that Hull, a man whose bravery and integrity were unimpeachable, acted with sound military judgment and deserved no blame.

In the still shorter history, "How the United States became a Nation," is the following passage:—

> Subsequent research has shown that the verdict was grossly unjust, and the reputation of this brave but unfortunate man is now redeemed.

W. C. Bryant, in his "History of the United States," gives a fair and accurate account of the surrender (vol. iv. pp. 187–190). In a footnote on page 190 he says:—

> Much of the obloquy which has been heaped upon him [Hull] is probably due to Lewis Cass, who hastened to Washington with the first news, and gave it a coloring largely supplied by his imagination. [General Hull was at this time a prisoner of war in Canada.] Cass's letters before and after the surrender flatly contradict each other as to the state of affairs at Detroit.

The facts, briefly stated, are these: General Hull, who had lived for some years at Detroit as governor of the Territory of Michigan, had warned the government at Washington of the absolute necessity of a fleet on Lake Erie, telling them that Detroit, a very important post, would inevitably fall into the hands of whichever party held possession of the lake, and that, unless his advice were followed, it would, in case of war, fall into the hands of the enemy. The government promised that it would heed this advice, and also that, if General Hull consented to receive the command of the army at Detroit, a remote outpost at that time, he should receive full support from the government. Neither of these promises was kept.

General Hull was very eager for the court-martial, having the simplicity to expect that his innocence would be

fully established. But the verdict was a foregone conclusion.

Madison was at this time looking for re-election, and it was all-important to him to find a scapegoat for the inefficiency of his administration. Dearborn, the man who of all others had a personal interest in the condemnation of Hull, was made president of the court-martial. Those witnesses who, under the influence of Cass, testified against Hull were all rewarded with promotion in the army, though many of them had never seen a battle. Those who testified in his favor received no promotion.

General Hull's own papers, containing his correspondence with the government, which would have helped to exonerate him, had been burned with the vessel in which they were sent from Detroit to Buffalo. After the trial he repeatedly asked for copies of these letters, but was refused. It was twelve years before he at last obtained them from John C. Calhoun. He then wrote a series of letters in the *Boston Statesman*, which entirely changed the feeling toward him. Letters and testimonials came to him from every part of the country, and a dinner was given to him in Boston, and another in his native town, Derby, Conn.

Unfortunately, during the twelve years that General Hull was unable to obtain copies of the papers from Washington, the garbled accounts of the surrender had gone into print, and few persons care to look up facts or to change a preconceived opinion.

Any one who desires a little fuller information on this subject will find it in the volume, "General Hull's Military and Civil Life," which may be procured from the Public Library in Boston and at the Boston Athenæum. In the

appendix are interesting letters received by General Hull at the time he wrote his papers in the *Boston Statesman*. Those who had been his companions-in-arms during the Revolution all testified to his gallant conduct during that war.

The biographical sketch of General Hull is taken, with a few omissions for brevity, from the volume, "Memorial and Biographical Sketches," by James Freeman Clarke; the extracts from letters at the end, from the appendix in the volume, "General Hull's Military and Civil Life."

L. F. C.

WILLIAM HULL

Among the beautiful situations which abound in the vicinity of Boston, that in Newton, lately occupied as the residence of Governor Claflin, is very attractive. The house stands on an elevation above an extensive lawn, through which winds a large brook, and where groups of graceful elms throw their shadows along the soft grass in the summer afternoons. In my childhood this was the home of my grandfather, William Hull, and one to which all of the grandchildren loved to go. He had been an officer in the American army during the whole Revolution, and had known Washington, Lafayette, and other leaders; had been for some years governor of Michigan Territory, and could tell numerous anecdotes of his early days, to entertain the children who collected around his hospitable hearth. He would narrate to us stories of the sufferings and exploits of the Revolutionary troops; of the terrors of the French Revolution which he saw in Paris in 1798; and wild Indians among whom he lived in Michigan. A kind and genial old man, disposed to be a friend to every one, his house was a rendezvous for many sorts of people, who made themselves at home in its parlors or its kitchen. After a youth of adventure and a manhood which had brought many distinctions and honors, his age had been

clouded by unmerited disgrace. Put in a position of command where success was impossible, deserted by his government and betrayed by his colleagues, he had been made the scapegoat of a blundering administration and of other commanders who knew how to throw on him the blame of their own mistakes. But his sweet temper remained unimbittered by this ill-treatment. He was always cheerful. He was never heard to complain, and was sure that his character would be finally vindicated. And thus he spent his last peaceful years in the pursuits of agriculture, on the farm which his wife had inherited from her ancestors and which supplied the modest expenses of his household.

William Hull was born in Derby, Connecticut, in 1753. His eldest brother, the father of Isaac Hull, who commanded the frigate "Constitution" in its battle with the "Guerrière," became, like William, an officer in the Revolutionary army.

William Hull, the fourth son, graduated at Yale College with honors; afterward entered Law School at Litchfield, Connecticut, and was admitted to the bar in 1775.

When the news of the battle of Lexington reached Derby, a company of soldiers was raised there, and William Hull was chosen their captain, very unexpectedly to himself. But, full of the enthusiasm of the hour, he at once accepted the appointment, and, joining Colonel Webb's regiment, of which his company made a part, marched to Cambridge to join the army of Washington. His father dying at this time, he resigned his share of the inheritance, saying, "I want only my sword and my uniform." From that time till the end of the American war he continued in the army, being present in many of the most important operations

and engagements, such as Dorchester Heights, White Plains, Trenton, Princeton, Ticonderoga, the surrender of Burgoyne, Fort Stanwix, Monmouth, Stony Point, and Morrisania. He was inspector under Baron Steuben, lieutenant-colonel in 1779, and commanded the escort of Washington when he bade farewell to the army.

His commander, Colonel Brooks (afterward governor of Massachusetts), wrote a letter in 1814, in which he says: "In September, 1776, at White Plains, General Hull (then captain) acted under my immediate orders, and was detached from the line to oppose a body of Light Infantry and Yagers advancing on the left flank of the American army. His orders were executed with promptitude, gallantry, and effect. Though more than double his number, the enemy was compelled to retreat, and the left of the American line enabled to pass the Bronx."

He was then hardly more than a boy, twenty-three years old, fresh from college and the study of law. . . . This was the first time that he had stood with his regiment to see a British army marching to attack them, and his MSS. glow for a moment with the admiration he felt as a young soldier for the splendid military equipments and discipline of the enemy. He speaks of "the magnificent appearance" of the British troops, of the glitter of their polished arms under the bright autumnal sun, of their rich uniforms and equipage. So the boy captain stood with his poorly dressed provincials to receive the volley of grape and chain shot from the advancing foe, looking down on them from Chatterton's Hill, till he was called to lead the body which was to oppose the force trying to turn the American left. All he says of this is, "It was promptly done, with much order

and regularity; and, after a sharp conflict, the object was completely attained"; merely adding that "his regiment had the honor of receiving the personal thanks of Washington after the engagement."

The next little touch of reality which breaks out from his memoir is concerning the fatigues of the soldiers at Trenton and Princeton. He was one of those commanders who made the sufferings of his soldiers his own. On leaving the Highlands of New York to join General Washington in Pennsylvania, he says he found that his company, then reduced to fifty men, had only one poor blanket to two men; many had no shoes or stockings; those which were in the company were nearly worn out; their clothes were wretched; they had not been paid, yet they were patient, patriotic, and willing to serve on without compensation. During their march they slept on the cold ground, though it was December, and that without covering. It was a bitterly cold Christmas night when Washington crossed the Delaware to Trenton. There was a driving storm of snow and sleet, and the ice was running in the river. The storm continued all night, and, when the troops were halted, they were so fatigued that they fell asleep as they stood in their ranks, and could with difficulty be awakened. In the action which followed, Captain Hull acted as lieutenant-colonel. As soon as the battle had been fought and won, the army marched back with their prisoners and the artillery and military stores they had taken. Nearly all that night was spent in recrossing the Delaware. After gaining the other side, our young captain marched his troops to a farmer's house to get them some refreshment and rest. "After my men had been accommodated,"

says he, "I went into a room where a number of officers were sitting around a table, with a large dish of hasty pudding in its centre. I sat down, procured a spoon, and began to eat. While eating I fell from my chair to the floor, overcome with sleep; and in the morning, when I awoke, the spoon was fast clinched in my hand." Happy days of youth, when no hardship nor fatigue can prevent blessed sleep from coming to seal up the eye and give rest to the brain!

The waking of the boy soldier from this sleep on the floor was followed two days after by an agreeable incident. Washington, whose eye was everywhere, had probably noticed Hull's good behavior in this action.

The day before the march to Princeton one of General Washington's aides came to Captain Hull's tent, and said, "Captain, the Commander-in-chief wishes to see you."

The young soldier went, we may suppose, with some trepidation, to the general's quarters. Washington looked at him, and said, "Captain Hull, you are an officer, I believe, in the Connecticut line?"

Hull bowed, and General Washington went on: "I wish to promote you, and I have the power to do so. But for that purpose I must transfer you to the Massachusetts line, since there is no vacancy in yours. If you are willing, I will appoint you major in the Eighth Massachusetts."

Hull thanked his general warmly for this mark of favor, and said, "All I wish, general, is to serve my country where I can do it best, and I accept the promotion gratefully."

He was then appointed to command a detachment to watch the approach of Cornwallis, and to detain him as

long as possible while Washington was fortifying himself beyond the little creek, behind which he concealed his rapid night march to Princeton. After serving in these two battles, he was sent to Massachusetts to recruit his regiment. Having recruited three hundred men, he was then ordered to join General St. Clair's army at Ticonderoga. When General St. Clair evacuated that post, an outcry of reproach went up against him from all quarters, though this event probably caused the final surrender of Burgoyne. Major Hull, satisfied of the injustice of these censures on his commander, wrote a letter to a friend in Connecticut during the retreat,—the stump of a tree serving him for a table,—defending the course of St. Clair. Major Hull was then sent with his regiment under General Arnold to relieve Fort Stanwix on the Mohawk River. After this work had been accomplished, Arnold and his troops rejoined the army of Gates at Saratoga, and Major Hull commanded detachments in the battles which compelled the surrender of Burgoyne. In one of these battles, when he drove the enemy from their post with the bayonet, his detachment lost one hundred and fifty men out of three hundred. He commanded the rear-guard in Schuyler's retreat from Fort Edward, and was constantly engaged with the advanced troops of Burgoyne. He commanded a volunteer corps on the 19th of September. His detachment, by charging the enemy with the bayonet at a critical moment, aided in the repulse of Burgoyne on that day. In the battle of the 7th of October Major Hull commanded the advanced guard. At the final surrender of Burgoyne, he says: "I was present when they marched into our camp, and no words can express the deep interest felt by

every American heart. Nor could we help feeling sympathy for those who had so bravely opposed us."

The Massachusetts regiment, of which young Hull was major, had now earned the right to some short period of rest. It had marched from Boston to Ticonderoga, had retreated through the wilderness to Saratoga, had thence marched to Fort Stanwix on the Mohawk and back, and had been engaged in all the battles with Burgoyne. But it was now ordered to Pennsylvania to join the army of Washington, and was in the winter quarters during the cruel winter passed at Valley Forge. Major Hull and Lieutenant-colonel Brooks had a hut together. It contained but one room, with shelves on one side for books, and on the other for a row of Derby cheeses sent to Hull by his mother. Here they passed the dreary days of the winter. The men wanted provisions, blankets, and shoes. The officers were scarcely better off than the men. Discontent, approaching to mutiny, was the natural result. Terrible diseases broke out in the camp. Long years after these trials had passed by, my grandfather Hull could scarcely allude to them without emotion.

The army was fading away by disease and desertion and by the expiration of the term of enlistment. A little vigor on the part of indolent Sir William Howe would have driven this shadow of an army back into the mountains of Pennsylvania. Fortunately for Washington, General Howe was incapable of any such enterprise. He preferred feasts and games in Philadelphia.

One attempt, however, he made. He tried to surround a detachment of twenty-five hundred men under Lafayette, but failed in this from the superior alertness and vigor of

the young French general. Hull was with the body sent to meet and assist Lafayette on this occasion.

After the battle of Monmouth, in which Major Hull served under Lord Stirling, taking part in the successful resistance to the attack of the right wing of the British, he was ordered to march his regiment to Poughkeepsie, and then to Kingsbridge, in front of the enemy's lines near New York. Hull had the command of the corps of observation at this place, which faced the whole British army, and was eighteen miles in advance of any other body of American troops. Great circumspection and constant watchfulness was necessary. He moved his troops from spot to spot, about White Plains above and below Dobbs Ferry, patrolling to the right and left, and watching every movement of the British army. This was the region ravaged by the Cowboys and Skinners, and is the scene of Cooper's novel, "The Spy." Major Hull commanded here during three winters, trying to repress the cruelty of these lawless marauders, so far as his small force would allow. He was then about twenty-five years old and in excellent health. "In a command so responsible," says he, "I adopted a system to which I steadfastly adhered; nor did storms, cold, or the darkness of the night ever interfere with its performance. Early in the evening, without taking off my clothes, with my arms by my side, I lay down before the fire wrapped in my blanket, and gave directions to the sentinel to awaken me at one in the morning. My adjutant, or some other officer, was with me, and one or two of the faithful guides from among the loyal inhabitants of the region. The troops were ordered to be paraded at the same hour, and to remain on parade until my return.

After the whole were assembled, one-half were allowed to go to rest, and the other half were formed into strong guards, which patrolled in front and on the flanks of the detachment until sunrise. This force was in addition to the small parties which were constantly patrolling with the guides. After making this arrangement, I rode with my adjutant and one or two guides across to the North River, and then back, on the line of my patrols, toward the East River, and then rode thus in different directions until sunrise. I commonly rode about twenty miles at night, and as many during the day. I was directed to preserve peace and good order among the inhabitants, and cautioned not to allow supplies to be carried to the enemy. The enemy made many attempts to surprise and destroy my detachment, but by the precautions taken his plans were invariably defeated. I selected a number of families on whose fidelity I could rely, and formed a line of them, extending from Kingsbridge to my most advanced guards. I requested them to come to me at night, and gave them my instructions. The man who lived nearest to Kingsbridge, whenever he noticed any extraordinary movement among the enemy, was to take a mug or pitcher in his hand, and in a careless manner go to his next neighbor on this line for some cider, beer, or milk, give him notice, and return home. His neighbor was to do the same, and so on, until the information reached my station. Thus the enemy could make no movement without my being informed of it. I rewarded these good people for their services, which they could not perform without much personal risk. Not one was faithless to his trust, though surrounded by hardship and danger. The State of New York required them

to take the oath of fidelity, and, if they refused, their property might be confiscated. Those who did not take the oath were plundered by the Skinners, and those who did by the Cowboys."

About the end of May, 1779, Sir Henry Clinton moved up the Hudson from New York, the American army retreating before him. The British troops took possession of the two strong positions of Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, and put garrisons in them. Major Hull was ordered to West Point, where his detachment erected a fort overlooking and commanding the other works at that place.

Stony Point and Verplanck's Point were the keys of the Highlands, and formed the eastern and western termini of King's Ferry, an important line of communication. They were just at the head of the Tappan Sea. General Washington, whose headquarters were just above West Point, determined to attack Stony Point and retake it. He intrusted the enterprise to General Wayne. On this occasion Major Hull commanded a column, and received the commendation of his commander for his conduct. Hull had two narrow escapes, one ball passing through the crown of his hat and another striking his boot.

For his conduct on this occasion Major Hull received promotion, and was made a lieutenant-colonel. He was also much gratified by an invitation from General Washington to enter his family as one of his aides. But he was obliged to decline this, as General Steuben, who was introducing a new system of discipline into the army, was very desirous to have Hull as one of his assistants, as inspector, in which position he remained for some time. He was afterward ordered to West Chester to his old position before

New York, where he commanded a detachment of four hundred troops. In this position he offered to make an attack on the British post of Morrisania, which was garrisoned by a partisan corps who were constantly plundering in the neutral ground and in the State of Connecticut. General Washington gave his permission rather reluctantly in a letter printed by Sparks, and dated January 7, 1781. Washington doubted of the success of the enterprise on account of the long distance the Americans would have to march to attack fresh troops, and because they would leave fortified British posts in their rear. He added that "success depends absolutely upon the secrecy and rapidity of the movement." Hull was accustomed to this watchfulness and caution from his long command in this exposed vicinity. He marched past the enemy's posts unperceived. with six hundred troops, and succeeded in dispersing the enemy, taking prisoners and cattle and the horses of the British cavalry. They then burned the barracks and stores, and he returned without rest and amid frequent attacks on the rear from an ever-increasing foe, and at last brought off his prisoners and his troops in safety. He received the thanks of Washington and Congress for this service. Having served six years without having asked for leave of absence, he now obtained permission to spend the rest of the winter in Boston, where he was married to the only child of Judge Fuller at her father's house in Newton.

At the close of the war, William Hull, then thirty years old, having had all this experience behind him, full of energy, health, and talent, began to practise law in Newton. He must have been successful, for during the next twenty years he built a large house at Newton Corner and

travelled extensively in America and Europe. He went to France during the French Revolution, and, I believe, took a cargo of some sort to England.

Meantime he was very happy when at home in Newton, where he had a large family growing up around him. Of his eight children seven were daughters, all lively and agreeable, and drawing many visitors to the hospitable house. It must have been a very pleasant place to visit; at least so I was told by Governor Levi Lincoln, who, when ninety years old, still remembered the gayeties of the place, where he and others had visited seventy years before. All the seven daughters were married, one going to live in New York, two to Georgia, one to Michigan, one to Maine, and two making their homes in Boston.

During these years he was a leading man in the State, and was frequently elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. In Shays's insurrection he commanded a column of Lincoln's force, which surprised and dispersed the insurgents. He was made major-general of the militia in 1796. In 1793 he was commissioner to Canada to treat with the Indians.

In 1805 William Hull received from Thomas Jefferson the appointment of Governor of Michigan Territory and also that of Indian agent. All the white inhabitants of the Territory amounted to less than five thousand; but the Indian tribes were numerous, warlike, and needed to be treated with much wisdom. The object of Governor Hull was to civilize them, and to turn them, if possible, into citizens.

Detroit, where the governor lived during his seven years' administration of the Territory, was then more difficult to

reach from New York than it is now to go to China. It was necessary to traverse Lake Ontario and Lake Erie on small sailing vessels, which sailed only occasionally from Buffalo and from the other ports. He was asked, as war with England and with the Indians seemed imminent, to accept a commission of brigadier-general in the United States army, and lead a body of troops to Detroit to protect the inhabitants. He refused the commission, and Colonel Kingsbury was appointed in his place; but, this officer falling ill, Hull at last consented to take the command. He collected his troops in Ohio, and cut a military road through the wilderness, and on reaching Detroit found that war had already been declared against Great Britain. Everything had been mismanaged at Washington. So dilatory was the Secretary of War in sending him notice that the British at Malden heard first that war had been declared, and captured a vessel in which General Hull had sent his stores to Detroit. General Dearborn, who was to have co-operated with him by invading Canada from the east, instead of doing this made an armistice with General Brock, the British commander, which enabled him to concentrate all his troops against Detroit. Although General Hull had, during several years, urged again and again on the government the importance of building a fleet on Lake Erie, nothing had been done, and the lake was in the possession of the British fleet. Provisions soon became scarce; the woods were filled with hostile Indians; his supplies were stopped, his communications cut off. Under these conditions his post became not tenable, and he surrendered,—for the same reasons which had compelled Burgoyne to surrender at Saratoga and Cornwallis at

Yorktown. But these two British generals had put themselves voluntarily into a position where they were surrounded and cut off from their supplies. General Hull went, in obedience to orders, to Detroit, depending on the support which had been promised him by his government, and which was never given. Burgoyne and Cornwallis returned to England, and, instead of being condemned for their surrender, were rewarded with other and higher positions. General Hull was punished by the government which had deserted and betrayed him, by being made the scapegoat for their own mistakes and their own incapacity. A victim was necessary to appease the disappointed hopes of the nation, which had been taught to believe that Canada was to fall an easy prey to our arms. The anger of the people must be diverted from the government which had plunged into a war without preparation. At this juncture they found a serviceable tool in Colonel Cass. He went directly to Washington after the surrender of Detroit, while General Hull was prisoner of war in Canada, and wrote a letter September 10, 1812, in which he threw all the blame of the disaster on his general. In this letter he informed the government "that, if Malden had been immediately attacked, it would have fallen an easy victory." But Colonel Cass himself had voted in a council of war, with a majority of officers, *against* such an attack. In this letter he states that there was no difficulty in procuring provisions for the army. But a month before this was written, and four days before the surrender, this same Colonel Cass wrote to the Governor of Ohio that the communication with Ohio must be kept open, as the very existence of the army depended upon it, and that the supplies must come from

that State. And on August 3 he wrote to his brother-in-law that "both men and provisions were wanted for the very existence of the troops." Yet Cass's letter and testimony was what diverted the anger of the people from the government upon General Hull. It was published as an official account of the surrender in all the newspapers of the Union. Its author, Colonel Cass, was immediately rewarded for this service (for he had performed no other which could explain such advancement) by being promoted from his position of colonel in the Ohio militia to that of brigadier-general in the army of the United States. He also was appointed Governor of Michigan in place of his old commander.

At the time when General Hull surrendered Detroit, the condition of affairs was as follows: His provisions were nearly exhausted. Communication by the lake was impossible, that being in the hands of the British, and remaining so until Perry's victory. His communications through the woods by land were entirely cut off, and two efforts to reopen them, made by strong detachments, failed. The Territory itself could furnish no supplies, as it depended on Ohio and Indiana for its own. By the fall of the American forts on the upper lakes all the hostile Indians* were set free to attack Detroit. Brock had more troops, numerous Indian allies, ample supplies behind him, and the lake in his possession. Hull might have fought a battle, but, if he had won it, his position would have remained nearly the same. A victory would not have opened the woods or given him the lake; but a defeat would have caused the massacre by the Indians of the white inhabi-

* The British had made allies of these Indians.

tants of the Territory. General Harrison, well acquainted with the country, foresaw and foretold the coming disaster. That it was inevitable that Detroit must belong to whichever nation held command of the lake appears from the fact that General Harrison, after the surrender, advanced to within a short distance of Detroit and was obliged to remain there a whole year, unable to move upon that place until Perry's victory gave the lake to the Americans, when the British commander evacuated at once both Detroit and Malden, without waiting for the American forces to appear.

When the court-martial was summoned to try General Hull, the officer whose neglect of orders had caused the whole disaster was appointed its president. This was General Dearborn, who was to have co-operated with General Hull by invading Canada on the east, and who, instead of this, had committed a gross military blunder by signing an armistice which enabled the British troops to be concentrated against General Hull. The acquittal of Hull would have been the condemnation of Dearborn. And thus a man was made judge of the case who had a personal interest in the conviction of the accused.*

The charge of treason was abandoned by the court as being wholly untenable. They found that General Hull was guilty of cowardice in surrendering Detroit, sentenced him to be shot, and told him to go home from Albany to Boston, and wait there for the execution of the sentence.

*The Secretary of War, who with General Dearborn was responsible for signing the armistice, expected at that time to bear the blame of the misfortunes of the campaign. He wrote to General Dearborn, "Fortunately for you, the want of success which has attended the campaign will be attributed to the Secretary of War" (Records of the War Office, vol. vi. p. 253).

Of course, it was not intended that the sentence should be inflicted. All they wanted was a victim, and to put him to death might make him a martyr.

Public opinion has long since reversed this sentence. The charge of cowardice has been abandoned by all well-informed writers. It was indeed absurd in itself. Physical courage, in a soldier, is very much a matter of habit. Most soldiers are alarmed in their first battle: few but show courage in their tenth. Now General Hull was the only man in the army who was accustomed to war. He had been in the thick of many battles, had led charges at the point of the bayonet, had received again and again the thanks of Congress and of General Washington for his bravery. Against this man's courage, evidence was received on his trial from militia officers who had never heard a gun fired in battle.

William Hull had the one never-failing support,—the consciousness of having done his duty. On this point he never expressed a doubt. He maintained to the last, and repeated on his death-bed, his conviction that he had done right in this act, which had brought him so much unmerited misfortune. As a boy, I used often to visit his home, and nothing could be more cheerful, kindly, and attractive than his whole manner. I never saw a cloud on his brow, I never heard a harsh word from his lips. All his grandchildren loved him, and it was a holiday when they could go to the old place in Newton. Nothing in his whole manner indicated that there was any cloud on his mind or heart.

Before his death there came a little sunshine from without also, in addition to the peace which reigned within. In 1824, by the kindness of John C. Calhoun, then Sec-

retary of War, he was able to procure documents from Washington, by the help of which he wrote an appeal to the people of the United States from the sentence of court-martial. This series of letters, in the *Boston Statesman*, were read with interest all over the country. Public testimonials of esteem were offered to him by men of all parties; and a marked change took place from that time in the opinion of the community concerning his character and conduct, and a dinner in his honor was given in Boston, and another in Derby, Connecticut, his native town.

This favorable opinion has been more and more confirmed by the conclusions of the best historians. Benson J. Lossing, in a monograph published on the surrender of Detroit in *Potter's American Monthly* for August, 1875, calls the trial a disgraceful one, its sentence unjust, and says that the court was evidently constituted in order to offer Hull as a sacrifice to appease public indignation and to preserve the administration from disgrace and contempt. "The conception of the campaign against Canada," says Lossing, "was a huge blunder. Hull saw it, and protested against it. The failure to put in vigorous motion for his support auxiliary and co-operative forces was criminal neglect." Lossing adds that in choosing to surrender Detroit Hull "bravely determined to choose the most courageous and humane course; and so faced the taunts of his soldiers and the expected taunts of his countrymen rather than fill the beautiful land of Ohio and the young settlements of Michigan with mourning. To one of his aides he said: 'You return to your family without a stain: as for myself, I have sacrificed a reputation dearer to me than life, but I

have saved the inhabitants of Detroit, and my heart approves the deed.'"

General Hull, as we have said, spent his last days at Newton, on his wife's farm, in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture. His means were very limited, and he was often in quite straitened circumstances, when he was supposed by the ignorant to be revelling with "British gold," for which he had sold his country. A large part of his support he derived from the produce of his farm. And none of his grandchildren will ever forget the happy hours spent at his house in the Thanksgiving holidays. Nor can we ever cease to remember the bounteous Thanksgiving dinner, nor the long table around which the company assembled, nor the satisfaction of our grandfather, when, at the beginning of the feast, he spread his hands above the board and said, "All that you see on this table, my children, is the produce of my own farm."

There is something instructive in the story of such a life. It is one of the lessons which will always bear repeating, which show us that the peace and joy of the heart come from a consciousness of right-doing rather than from outward circumstances. It is probable that General Hull, fallen on evil days and tongues, was quite as happy, fully as contented, as when his life led from one success to another. The "stupid starers and the loud huzzas" were gone, but the self-approval remained. Cast down, but not destroyed, persecuted, but not forsaken, he realized the description of the poet:—

> "Thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hast taken with equal thanks."

This sketch may fitly close with the account of the visit from Lafayette in 1825. General Hull received his old comrade standing on the steps of the house of his son-in-law in Boston, surrounded by his children and grand-children. One of the grand-daughters then present thus describes the interview:—

"I was present at the house of my uncle, Isaac McLellan, in Boston when General Lafayette made a special visit upon my grandfather. It was very touching to witness the meeting of the old companions-in-arms. General Lafayette embraced my grandfather in the French form, laying his hands upon his shoulders, and said, among other words of gracious welcome, 'We both have suffered contumely and reproach, but our characters are vindicated: let us forgive our enemies and die in Christian peace and love with all mankind.'"

LETTERS

From the letters received by General Hull, after the publication of his Memoirs, we give the following extracts:—

FROM ROGER M. SHERMAN TO GENERAL HULL.

FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT, March 21, 1825.

I cannot forbear expressing to you the great satisfaction I have derived from the perusal of your "Memoirs of the Campaign of the North-western Army." So far as I know the public sentiment, they are deemed a satisfactory and unanswerable vindication. Your proofs are conclusive, and no mind, however prejudiced, accustomed to the weighing of evidence, can resist the inferences you make from them. This remark is extensively verified in the circle of my own observation. I am happy that you possessed such ample means of doing an act of justice to yourself, your friends, and your country.

FROM CHARLES P. SUMNER TO GENERAL HULL.

BOSTON, March 11, 1825.

I feel it my duty to express to you my humble opinion that your Memoirs have had and are having the desired effect of reinstating you in the good opinion of impartial and disinterested men: this is the effect wherever I have had an opportunity of hearing their opinion, and it is the effect on me, although I am one of those who had some degree of prejudice to your disadvantage.

I am unknown to you, but there are thousands equally unknown

that are daily imbibing and recovering the most respectful sentiments towards you, and believe that your character will not suffer in the estimation of unprejudiced posterity by any comparison that can be instituted between you and any of your more successful contemporaries.

FROM DANIEL PUTNAM, SON OF GENERAL PUTNAM, TO GENERAL HULL.

BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT, Sept. 25, 1824.

If I advert to the season of youth, when under the appellation of "*Rebels*" and, as it were, with halters about our necks, we were among the number who opposed a powerful enemy and never *quailed* at his approach, why then I know not how to associate a lofty spirit and a patriot heart with dishonor.

If I call to remembrance the laurels which then encircled your brow, and the deeds of renown which drew forth the thanks of Washington in general orders and those of Congress inscribed on their journals, I recognize you as the gallant Colonel Hull, at the head of his partisan corps, and do not forget how I rejoiced in the well-merited fame of my friend. . . .

When the news of your capitulation reached us, and the epithets of "*coward*," "*traitor*," etc., were bellowed lustily from so many mouths, and rung long and loud in our ears, I thought, *as I now think*, and when, after a long delayed trial, I read your defence before the court-martial, and the cruel sentence of that court, I marked you as the "*scapegoat*" on whose head the errors of others were laid, to divert the public indignation from their own; but I never did believe your blood would be shed to expiate their sins: it was a sacrifice too daring.

FROM JOHN STACY, A REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER, TO GENERAL HULL.

HARVARD, 20th August, 1824.

General WILLIAM HULL:

Sir,—Permit a soldier of the Revolutionary war, who served six years previous to its close, and who is a native of the county of Middlesex, to congratulate you on the honorable testimony borne by General Heath and others, highly distinguished in that war, for your having acted so distinguished a part in our Revolutionary struggles. I am probably one of the few remaining who was under your command in the hazardous expedition at Morrisania, and I feel myself happy in living to this period, that I may witness to the gallantry and address with which the enterprise was effected; not only as it respects the assault on the enemy in that place, but on the morning after, in decoying the enemy some miles from its lines, without any material injury to our troops, and until it came in contact with our reinforcements, which immediately checked the enemy and drove it back with considerable loss. We were nearly forty hours from our quarters and the whole time on the alert, without any respite from duty. Well knowing the courage and enterprise of the commander on this occasion inspired every soldier with a noble ardor, animated every one to a prompt and cheerful performance of duty, and stimulated them to follow their leader, not knowing whither going or what the object.

Would to God, sir, I could add one mite to have your character, as an officer and soldier, placed on its proper basis; and to have it entirely acquitted from what I consider, and I believe thousands of your fellow-citizens do also, the vile, wicked, and corrupt proceedings that have been had against you in consequence of the failure of the expedition against Canada in the late war, and that those who formed the scheme of your destruction might soon feel the weight of their own iniquitous conduct.

From an old soldier, who still feels the high value of a soldier's reputation.

FROM DR. JAMES THACHER, THE HISTORIAN, TO GENERAL HULL.

PLYMOUTH, April 4, 1825.

I have perused your Memoirs with great satisfaction. It has confirmed my conviction, and I have no doubt but it has had the same effect on every candid and unprejudiced mind. I am decidedly of opinion that justice and duty require that you should no longer estrange yourself from the society of your fellow-citizens and your compatriots, and I hope you will resume that standing with the public to which you are unquestionably entitled. I expected to have seen you in our ranks at our interview with General Lafayette. Since the much-lamented death of our excellent and amiable friend, General Brooks, I have suggested to several of our brethren that you ought to succeed him as President of our Society (Cincinnati). Some few have objected, and Dr. Townsend (our vice-president) and Major Alden have been mentioned, and the result is uncertain.

I understood that you have received a letter from General Lafayette, and should be glad to know the purport of it.

FROM S. HALE, ESQ., TO MRS. N. B. HICKMAN, A DAUGHTER OF GENERAL HULL.

KEENE, N.H., Sept. 27, 1847.

That public sentiment has been unjust to him, I do not doubt, and have never doubted; and now, after having had my attention again fixed on the subject, and called to mind all I have read and heard, I am convinced that to others rather than to him should the disasters of that campaign be attributed. I have no doubt of his patriotism, nor of his personal courage.

I am now convinced that the Administration of that day did not contemplate the conquest of Canada.

FROM COLONEL TRUMBULL TO MRS. JULIA K. WHEELER, A DAUGHTER OF GENERAL HULL.

NEW HAVEN, June 3, 1841.

The declaration and conduct of that war I have always regarded as one of the least honorable passages of the American history, but I now view it with increased disgust, as a most disgraceful period of the grossest ignorance and misconduct; and, what is worse, a vile endeavor to divert public indignation from its authors and conductors by a sacrifice of the reputation and even life of one of the bravest officers of the Revolution.

I had not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with your honored father during the Revolution, as we were employed in quarters distant from each other, but I always regarded him as one of the ornaments of the service.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM THE HONORABLE HORACE BINNEY TO MRS. MARIA CAMPBELL, A DAUGHTER OF GENERAL HULL.

PHILADELPHIA, March 4, 1841.

There are perhaps too many still living who are interested in sustaining the unjust sentence of the day to permit us to hope for the universal acceptance of any work that shall bring it and them to reproach by exposing the prejudices and party interests which led to it. But the truth, dispassionately told and sustained by evidence, is sure to triumph, sooner or later. It is one of the common incidents of our condition, a state of war between evil and good, that its triumph is frequently too late for the happiness of those we respect and love. . . .

After all, a reversal by the Government is a form. The true reversal is by the voice, and in the hearts, of the people. With those who know the case of General Hull, that reversal has, I think,

been already pronounced. The thing to be desired by the personal friends of himself and his family is to make that reversal the sentence of history.

How much I shall be gratified to see, to *live* to see, I may say, all your wishes attained on this, a subject among the nearest to your heart, I need not say.