

consumed. The pilots were unwilling to enter the rapids at night. It was necessary to hear from Brown, for when the flotilla should once be committed to the swift current of the rapids there could be no retreat. These considerations caused Wilkinson to halt for the night, and his vessels were moored a little below Chrysler's Island, nearly in front of the farm of John Chrysler (a British militia captain then in the service), a few miles below Williamsburg, while Boyd, with the rear of the land force, encamped near.

"At ten o'clock in the morning of the eleventh of November Wilkinson received a dispatch from Brown, addressed from 'five miles above Cornwall,' announcing his success in his attack upon the British post at the foot of the rapids, informing him of the wounding of Lieutenant-Colonel Forsyth and one of his men, and urging him to come forward with the boats and supplies as quickly as possible, because his wearied troops were 'without covering in the rain.'

"This dispatch found Wilkinson extremely ill, and his reply, in which he told Brown of the presence of the enemy upon his rear, and his apprehension that he intended to pass him with his gun-boats and strengthen the British force below, was addressed 'From my bed.' 'It is now,' he said, 'that I feel the heavy hand of disease—enfeebled and confined to my bed while the safety of the army intrusted to my command, the honor of our armies, and the greatest interests of our country are at hazard.'

"Wilkinson now ordered the flotilla to proceed, and Boyd and his command to resume their march. At that moment information reached the commanding general that the enemy were advancing in column, and that firing from their gun-boats was heard. He immediately sent Colonel Swift with an order for Boyd to form his detachment into three columns, advance upon the enemy, and endeavor to outflank him and capture his cannon. At the same time the flotilla was ordered to lie moored on the Canada shore, just below Weaver's Point, while his gun-boats lay off Cook's Point.

"The brave Boyd, anxious for battle, instantly obeyed. Swartwout was detached with the fourth brigade to assail the vanguard of the enemy, which was composed of light troops, and Covington was directed to take position at supporting distance from him with the third brigade.

"Swartwout, on a large brown horse, dashed gallantly into woods of second growth, followed by the Twenty-first Regiment, commanded by Colonel E. W. Ripley, and with them drove the light troops of the enemy back upon their main line in the open fields on Chrysler's farm, below his house. That line was well posted, its right resting on the St. Lawrence, and covered by Mulcaster's gun-boats, and the left on a black-oak swamp, supported by Indians and gathering militia, under Colonel Thomas Fraser. They were advantageously