

LAST DAYS OF THE BRITISH AT PRAIRIE DU CHIEN.

BY ALFRED EDWARD BULGER.

By means of two Canadians who had escaped from St. Louis during the winter, timely warning was given to the British garrison stationed at Fort McKay, Prairie du Chien, of the intention of the Americans to ascend the Mississippi towards the end of April or the beginning of May, and endeavour to regain possession of that post. For this purpose a strong force was to be dispatched from St. Louis, by land, as well as by water, accompanied by the Indians of the Missouri. The unexpected arrival of these men, in the middle of winter, bringing such important news as a combined attack by land and water on the part of the Americans and their Indian allies, — a move quite unlooked-for by the British garrison, — caused much uneasiness in that isolated situation.

Although in the heart of the Indian territory, the little band were not discouraged, neither were they alarmed for the safety of the fort which had been entrusted to their care; nevertheless they took every precaution to guard against surprise. During the remainder of the winter, every preparation was made for the spring operations. The fort was strengthened, and put into a proper state of defence. Special care was taken to have on hand an ample supply of ammunition and provisions. In regard to the latter, a stock of wild meat was collected, and stored in an ice-house. From a mine in the vicinity, an abundance of lead was obtained, and a large supply of ball and shot pre-