

The force detailed for this, one of the most trying operations in warfare, consisted of five companies of the 8th, and the whole of the 40th regiment—numbering 754 firelocks—under the personal direction of the General, but led by Harvey, whose arrangements and conduct were admirable. The Americans slept in fancied security on the banks of Stoney Creek ; the guns were posted on high ground on the left flank and centre. The generals occupied a farm house on their left flank, known as the farm house of old Jemmy Gap. Further to the left still, the ground rose higher gradually, until, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, it struck the precipitous hill-side of the plateau, which borders the whole road from Queens tonto Hamilton. It was near midnight when the British array reached the American watch-fires. " Sir," whispered a young Canadian cadet of the 49th (now Judge Jarvis, of Cornwall), " we are upon them."\* " Hush !" replied Harvey, and, with a sign, sent forward a sergeant and a file of men. The first sentry, a careless watcher—perhaps sleeping—was despatched. A second found the same fate. The third fired ; and with his shot came a shout and a rush, and the British stood among the American camp-fires. Some bayonetting took place, as the sleepers awoke, stumbling ; but the surprised men were not dismayed. They rallied rapidly and well, and opened a destructive fire. Their guns, too, were unlimbered and manned. As was the practice in those days, on such a venture, the flints had been removed from the firelocks ; and at this moment, standing out in strong relief, with the camp-fires around and behind them, the men were ordered to replace flints. One who was there declares this to have been the most trying moment of his life. The process is a slow one, and many a fine fellow fell without replacing his flint at all. But the pluck and steadiness of the men defied the trial. By degrees they were able to return the fire, to advance,



and answer the flashes of the enemy's musketry. In the meantime Harvey had despatched two companies to his right. Stealthily they crept along the slope at the foot of the plateau, among the beech woods, enveloped the farm house, and came down, with cheers, on the enemy's left. Surprised and staggered, the Americans still behaved bravely. Forming in small detached bodies, apparently without concert or command, they fought on, until forced by the bayonet to disperse. Generals Winder and Chandler were taken **in** their quarters. They had made themselves comfortable for the night. With the two generals, the British captured three guns, one howitzer, and three tumbrils, and about 100 officers and men.\* The contest, though short, had been very sanguinary. The American loss in slain was large ; but the withdrawal of the British made **it difficult** to ascertain numbers. That of the British, in killed and wounded, amounted to 160 men. Curiously enough, General Vincent himself was lost, in the bush, during the night, and was only picked up by a sort of military " hue and cry," in the morning. The American generals were lost irretrievably. Their army came back in the morning to recover them ; but, finding that their antagonists had decamped with the " spolia opima," concluded to decamp too, and never drew rein, nor breath, until they found themselves safe within the works of Fort George.

The scene of their exploits was, in the year 1813, but little removed from forest and farm land, in the first stages of cultivation. It is now a garden. It is pleasant on an early spring morning, to saunter over the field of this -midnight conflict, inhaling the incense of the apple orchards and peach blossoms, listening to the last cry of the whip-poor-will, retiring to its day dreams, and pausing to note each spot **of** 'interest, which the -rustic *cicerone* may point out to stranger's eye. There, is still seen the old German or Lutheran place **of** worship,' brown with age, and deserted now,

\*Narrative of a " 49th Man," given by Auchinleck, p. 175.

bearing on its wind-worn timbers, the bullet holes of the contest ; and in an angle of the primitive fence, hard by, may be discovered, amid tall weeds and overhanging ottacas, a pile of stones, a hasty, huddled cairn,—all that exists to mark the spot where rest the remains of the brave men who perished in that midnight fray. There they lie, heaped together, friend and foe,

—in one red burial blent.

Surely this is a reproach to the land ! Can neither men nor means be found to erect a simple monument to memories which belong to "*lee braves de toutes les nations*," before the frail land-marks of the spot itself have passed away for ever ? Can not the great omission be amended yet ? Twenty dollars,—to reduce the proposition to its most practical bearing,—would suffice to supply a simple stone, in the style of the memorial placed to indicate where Brock fell. The date, and a brief recommendation to the pious care of the people of the surrounding country, would secure its maintenance and protection. Such a stone should mark every battle field in Canada ; and all might bear the same truthful and noble motto :

Siste victor, hercem calcas.

On the withdrawal of the British troops the battle field at Stoney Creek was, as before said, for a short space, re-occupied by the Americans under Colonel Burns, a cavalry officer, upon whom the command had devolved. He merely remained long enough to destroy the tents which had been left standing, and to burn a quantity of stores. He then rapidly retired to the protection of the

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\* In a quiet corner of the churchyard at Gemappes, in the shade of a moss-grown buttress, is the simple tomb of General Duhesme, slain in the village, at the door of the " Three Kings," by a Black Brunswick trooper, on the evening of Waterloo. His widow and orphans record that they have erected this monument to the memory of a brave soldier and a good man, and leave it to the safeguard "*des braves de toutes les nations*." The hand would wither which could desecrate that stone.

lines of Fort George, though in executing this manoeuvre he was intercepted, and suffered much. On their advance the Americans had been accompanied, along the lake shore, by a flotilla of boats, and batteaux. Burns fell back upon this support, and embarked his wounded, and such of his men as had not yet got under cover, and was slowly creeping down the coast to the place from whence he came,—when, on the 8th June, Sir James Yeo, who, by this time had become master of his own mottinentS and had Of out of Kingston, appeared in the offing ; intelligence from the shore had apprized him of the state of things, and of the position of the enemy ; and Richardson\* dwells with sailorly impatience on the perversity of a calm which anchored every vessel of the squadron,

As idle as a painted,shik  
Wpott a painted ocean.

At length a breeze sprung up, and the squadron closed in with the shore, cutting off the twelve rearmost boats of the American flotilla, laden with valuable supplies and stores. Perceiving an encampment in the woods on the beach, the Commodore disembarked in the ships' boats two companies of regulars under Major Evans of the 8th Regiment. This active officer landed, and in the evening having been reinforced by two companies from Burlington Heights, under Colonel Bishopp, the second deserted American encampment was entered. It was in a state of conflagration at the time, but the captors saved from the flames 500 tents, 140 barrels of flour, 100 stand of arms, ammunition and other articles of a very acceptable character. Thus did this very gallant exploit of Harvey free the whole Peninsula from the invader, and threw them back upon the mere edge of the frontier, with a deep and dangerous river in their rear, between them and their supports and supplies.

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Meta. of Dr. Jamesitichardsoii, :b:

## CHAPTER XIV.

New American Enterprise. Attempt on the Beaver Dam Post. Noble devotion of Mrs. Secord. Her Adventures—Reaches Decau's house in safety. Fitzgibbon. Bcerstler's Advance—Attacked by the Indians—Reaches Thorold. Present aspect of Thorold. Welland Canal. Hamilton Merritt. Col. John Clarke. Old Isaac Kelly—Militia attack on Bcerstler—He surrenders to Fitzgibbon. Mary Secord the real Heroine. Princely generosity of the Prince of Wales. Lieut. Fitzgibbon—His career—A Military Knight of Windsor. History of the Knights. AReverie.

Nor was this all. One bold and successful feat of arms infused *morale*, and inspired another. On the retreat of the American force, Vincent had been followed up, and established his outposts at his old position, the Beaver Dam. Decau's house was occupied as a depot for stores. It was guarded by a small detachment of the 49th, about 30 men, under Lieut. Fitzgibbon. Fitzgibbon was one of the paladins of the war, a man of nerve and enterprise, of much vigour of character and great personal strength. An incident characteristic of the man had occurred on the spot. On taking up his ground at the Beaver Dam, he had driven out the American pickets. Attempting to intercept them he encountered alone at the back door of Decau's house two of the enemy, each armed with a musket and bayonet. Both charged upon him. Fitzgibbon grasped the musket of the more advanced man, and by main strength threw him upon his fellow, whose musket he also grappled with the other hand, and although both struggled desperately, he as resolutely held on, until his men came to his aid, and his antagonists surrendered.

Such was the man to whom on the night of the 23rd June there

came a warning inspired by woman's wit, and conveyed with more than female energy. The commandant of Niagara, chagrined by reverses, and anxious to reassure his own people, resolved to beat up the British quarters, to attack Decau's house, and destroy the depot of stores. The surprise of this outpost would have led to further surprises ; and to an officer, inspired with half the enterprise of Harvey, would have opened the way to Burlington Heights. The outpost was within striking distance, and exposed. The adventure was promising. He ordered, therefore, Lieut.-Colonel Bcerstler of the United States Army to prepare for this service, rapidly and secretly. He was in command of the 14th United States Infantry, one 12 and one 6-pounder field guns, with ammunition waggons, &c.—a few cavalry and volunteers—amounting altogether to 673 men.

In despite of all precautions, rumours of the intended expedition eked out, and reached the ear of James Secord, a British militia soldier, who resided at Queenston, then within the American lines. He had been badly wounded the preceding autumn at Queenston Heights, and was a cripple. He hobbled home to his wife with the news. The pair were in consternation ; they were loyal Canadians—their hearts were in the cause. If the design succeeded ; if Fitzgibbon was surprised ; de Haren in the rear would follow. Burlington Heights might be carried, and their country would be lost. Mrs. Mary Secord, the wife, at the age of 88, still lives in the village of Chippewa, to tell the story, and wakes up into young life as she does so. What was to be done. Fitzgibbon must be warned. The husband in his crippled state could not move, and moreover no man could pass the line of American sentries. She spoke out, she would go herself, would he let her ? she could get past the sentries ; she knew the way to St. David's, and there she could get guidance. She would go, and put her trust in God. He consented. At three in the morning she was up, got ready the children's breakfast, and