

It fell as a heavy blow upon the British, but it caused no discouragement among the people of Canada. It roused much indignation, and caused a renewed outburst of dogged resolution, but the immediate advantage to the Americans was immense. It gave them undisputed possession of the waters of Lake Erie and Lake Huron. It relieved them from all apprehension on their Western frontier, and enabled the Cabinet of Washington to concentrate their energies and their forces on the long contemplated project against Montreal.

In retracing our steps from West to East, we may be allowed to express surprise, that Harrison had not followed vigorously in the same direction, and treading with his Kentucky horse on the retreating footsteps of Proctor, reached, simultaneously, with him his refuge at Ancaster. The position of Burlington Heights might thus have been assailed on all sides, by land and lake, for speedy means of communication with Chauncey and his fleet at Niagara could easily have been found, and the British force advanced on the Niagara frontier, would have been placed between two fires ; and cut off from reinforcements and supply, would have been exposed to the fate which had just befallen the army of the West, or the Right Division.

For, be it remembered, that after the successful actions at Stoney Creek and the Beaver Dam, the British advanced posts had occupied the latter position, and the American forces on Canadian soil, though they held no more than the ground they stood on, still fringed the whole Niagara frontier between Fort George and Fort Erie, and that Commodore Chauncey occupied the safe and convenient refuge of the harbour mouth of the River Niagara.

In the interval between the engagement at Stoney Creek, and the battle of the Thames, Sir George Prevost had made a tour of inspection in Upper Canada, and had made bold to attempt a demonstration, as it was afterwards called, on the works held by the Americans at

Fort George. If this demonstration meant anything it must have contemplated the storming and the capture of Fort George, far the idea of a purposeless demonstration cannot be entertained. And yet the capture of this work would have resulted in exposing the town of Newark and the captors themselves, in an inferior position, to the powerful fire of Fort Niagara ; while the occupation of Fort George by the Americans weakened the American army in the field, and kept a large detachment of good troops uselessly entrapped upon the Canadian frontier. Nevertheless, on the 24th August, Sir George made a formal attack upon this post, drove in the pickets, looked the defences in the face, and retired, as Veritas says

The King of France, with forty thousand men,  
Walked up the hill, and then, walked down again.

Sir George appears to have been afflicted with a strange infirmity of military purpose. His error consisted, not so much in the failure of the attempt, as in attempting at all, either without plan, or without resolution. To woo a Queen, or to command victory requires a daring spirit :—

"Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall,  
If thy heart fail thee, climb not at all."

The Governor General returned to Kingston and to Montreal, taking with him De Rottenburg,—the Lieutenant Governor,—in his train, and having done little to infuse courage and confidence, or prepare the minds of men to encounter the trials to come.

On receipt of the intelligence of Proctor's disaster, General Vincent prudently withdrew from St. David's and the Beaver Dam, and again concentrated his forces at Burlington Heights. He also called in his outposts from Long Point on Lake Erie and made every preparation for a desperate struggle with Harrison. The universal feeling at this moment was " no surrender," and yet

there can be no doubt, but that fears which acquired strength as they flew, had magnified the danger to such an extent at Quebec, that orders were given at this critical moment, for the complete evacuation of all Canada, west of Kingston. Officers of rank and zeal, among whom the most conspicuous was Sir John Harvey, interfered to avert a measure pregnant with ruin, but so sure was the American Government that Vincent would save the "kernel" and Harrison only find the "shell" that they ordered their successful General back to Detroit, and by the aid of Perry's fleet threw the "Conqueror of the Thames" and his army on the Niagara frontier, in support of the combined operations planned from Sackett's Harbour and Lake Champlain on Montreal.

Thus, by degrees, Montreal became the grand centre of American strategy. Immense preparations had been made for a *coup de foudre* which was to terminate the campaign in a blaze of red lights with melodramatic effects. In the words of an American writer of no mean rank, the Hon. B. Gardinier of New York, once a Member of Congress :\* "The Democrats concerted a grand campaign. The whole season was employed in tremendous preparations. Public expectation was perpetually on the stretch. The Secretary of War was in the vicinity of the armies. Perry had secured Lake Erie, Chauncey had hemmed in Yeo. Wilkinson sounded his bugle. Hampton rose in his strength. From East to West was nothing heard but the dreadful note of preparation and the easy capture of Montreal. From both armies came letters teeming with assurances of victory. Victory was the cry of a thousand trumpets."† And again, from the same writer, we have an enumeration of the forces prepared for the invasion. "When Wilkinson lay at Grenadier Island, the army of the North amounted to

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\* From the "Canadian Inspector," being an answer to Veritas, pp. 24, 25.

Examiner, p. 317.

10,000 men Hampton had 5,000, which with 6,000 militia augmented the force destined to reduce Lower Canada to 21,000 men. Opposed to this army were 5,000 regulars—2,000 of which were in Upper Canada."\*

This writer was not far wrong in his estimate of the relative strength of the British and American forces. The original plan of the American campaign, as enjoined on General Wilkinson, had embraced the surprise and capture of Kingston and the seizure of Prescott—as a whet to a growing appetite, only to be appeased by the conquest of Montreal.† General Hampton having assembled his strength at Plattsburg was directed to penetrate across the Seignior of Beauharnois, emerge on the shores of the St. Lawrence, and occupy the coast of Lake St. Louis between the mouth of the Chateauguay and the Indian Village of Caughnawaga. From hence he could at any time unite with Wilkinson on the Island of Montreal, between St. Ann's and Pointe Claire. The Isle Perrot was regarded as a *point d'appui*, and intended so to be held, and the flotilla which had transported Wilkinson was prepared to aid in effecting the junction. This conjoint operation followed in the footsteps of its military predecessors. Like Amherst in 1760, and Montgomery in 1775, Wilkinson and Hampton manoeuvred to attack Montreal on its most accessible side. Then, as now, Montreal was not to be assailed in front with impunity. From Lachine down to the Island of St. Helen's, the rapids of the River St. Lawrence—a stream, very wide—in some places, very shallow, abounding in rocky reefs, and in rapid currents—and impassable, except in a class of vessels which can not be extemporized—present obstacles which, with a little precaution, may be made insurmountable.

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\* Examiner, p. 91, Vol. II.

† Armstrong. *Vide* Letter, dated War Department, Sackett's Harbour, Sept. 22, 1813. Appendix, Vol. II, p. 201.

Now, as then, no enemy can cross the River St. Lawrence below the Island of St. Helen's, until he has subjugated the South shore, and has scuttled the gunboats of England. These are some of the conditions precedent of a passage of this great river in summer. In winter the navigation will take care of itself. The American War Department was well aware that if, by a sudden irruption, they could occupy the fertile and inviting valley of the Richelieu, seize Sorel, and cross the St. Lawrence, they would, hazardously, place an immense river between themselves and their supplies ; expose their army to attack both from Quebec and Montreal, and invite every available war-ship of England to interrupt reinforcements and intercept retreat. They eschewed therefore any line of advance which would put them on the St. Lawrence below Montreal. To assail the city in front was impracticable without the aid of boats of a description which is not portable, and the last, and, perhaps only, practicable, expedient, was a descent on the Island from the West and an advance upon the city by the olden route of Lachine. It is not necessary to dwell further here, upon what, when occasion serves, will be shown hereafter, that, such being the unavoidable conditions of an advance on Montreal, the facilities of defence, developed by the necessities of the attack, if rightly improved, render Montreal a military position of great strength, resembling to a certain extent Vicksburg on the Mississippi—but in many respects superior.

These considerations, perfectly well understood by every instructed officer in the American service, led to the only feasible scheme of attack, had the execution been equal to the plan.

The combined operation was well designed, and the better, that either force, under Hampton or under Wilkinson, was in itself, more than sufficient in numbers and equipment to have attained the object in view. Wilkinson's force was 10,000 men—infantry, cavalry, and artillery, admirably supplied and transported by

water. The men landed and fought in light marching order—the very knapsacks were cared for in the boats. Hampton by his own account had with him " 4,000 effective infantry and a well-appointed train of artillery." \* And then, without speaking of cavalry, by which we know that he was accompanied, and without taking into account the 6,000 militia which, from the best American authority, we also know, that he had at his disposal, there can be no question, but that the American invading force from the Plattsburg frontier came up to the strength assigned to it by Sir George Prevost in his Despatch of the 30th October,—that is to say, to 7,200 combatants.

To encounter these combined forces, were dispersed below Kingston, on the line of the St. Lawrence, and in the District of Montreal, over a surface of at least 300 miles—in garrison, in camp—on outpost and in hospital some 3,000 troops, regular and militia. Of this force 1,600 men were in line on the South of the St. Lawrence, to repel Hampton's invasion. The advanced column, watching the frontier, consisted of 350 men.

The renewed preparations at Burlington in Vermont, and at Plattsburg in the State of New York had, from an early period in the season, attracted attention in Lower Canada. These preparations could have no other object in view than an irruption on Montreal, through that part of the District of Montreal lying west of the river Richelieu. Isle aux Noix—St. John's and Chambly—were the garrisoned points directly menaced—but garrisons can rarely do more than protect the posts they occupy ; and it was necessary to provide for the observation as well as the defence of an extended frontier. To this advanced column, therefore, scattered in a widely extended order, was confided the safety of the frontier. It was commanded by Colonel de Salaberry. It

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\* Letter to Secretary of War, 12th October, 1813. \_\_\_\_\_

became the duty of this officer to anticipate irruption or sortie, and to detect from the sound and flash of the distant gun the intended course of the projectile.

As early as September, the American General Hampton had transported across Lake Champlain the force collected at Burlington, and at the head of 5,000 men had attempted an invasion of the District of Montreal. On the 29th September he had despatched his *elite* under Majors Snelling and Hamilton to surprise an outlying picket at Odelltown. This was a hamlet buried in the dense forest, which for many leagues, in those days, covered the frontier. All the roads and pathways through the "bush" had been cut up, obstructed by *abattis*, and made impassable, during the preceding campaign by de Salaberry and his axe-men; still had Hampton pushed forward vigorously, his riflemen might have held the outskirts of the woodland, while his pioneers cleared away the obstacles in their rear. Three or four leagues of black-ash swamp once surmounted, and he would have emerged among the farms and populous parishes of an open and cultivated plain. But, both parties of the *elite* were misled or misdirected. The attack upon the picket was but partially successful—the alarm was given—the *abattis* were manned by a few frontier Light Infantry and by a handful of Indians under Captain Mailloux, who multiplied their number by an incessant fusilade, while yells of horrid augury reverberated through the gloom. These brave men held their own, until they were reinforced by the flank companies of the 4th Battalion of the embodied militia under Major Perrault\* and by the Canadian Voltigeurs commanded by Colonel de Salaberry.

This indefatigable officer was Hampton's fate;—

Hal who comes here?  
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,  
That makes my blood cold, and my hair to stand?  
. Speak to me. What art thou?

\* Vide p. 85.

*Ghost.* Thy evil spirit, Brutus  
*Brutus.* Why com'st thou?  
*Ghost.* To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

and, on the pretext of want of water, in a very wet country, a very wet season, Hampton withdrew from Odelltown—fell back on his own frontier, and moved his force westward, to find his Philippi on the banks of the Chateauguay.

Charles Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, Seigneur of Chambly and Beau Lac, was descended from a noble Basque family—of which a brave cadet had earned renown and rich feudal possessions under the French Crown, in Canada.\* He was one of that chivalrous race of men, whose very names embellish Canadian story with picturesque illustrations. The younger branches of many noble French houses had sought service and settlement in a country peculiarly adapted to the genius and traditions of men to whom arms were the only career, and with whom the sword was the *guidon* to fortune. The process of French colonization in Canada had been unavoidably military. The cultivator of the soil was in ceaseless contest with the savagery of nature and of man. He could never abandon the sword for the plough-share. He was compelled to use both, with alternate hand. The feudal system of medieval France was well calculated to encounter this condition of things. The same martial polity, which had, five centuries before, inspired the "Assizes de Jerusalem," engrafted its prototype the "Coutume de Paris" on the soil of Canada. The Saracen in the East, and the Savage in the West, would own no obedience but to the mailed hand. This military code provided at once for

\* Of the family of the brave Colonel de Salaberry, C.B., the eldest son, Alphonse, is Adjutant General of Militia for Lower Canada. Louis, the second son, lives at Chambly. Charles, the third, is colonel of a regiment of Volunteers in the district of Quebec. Of the ladies of his family, one daughter is the widow of the late Augustus Hatt, Esquire, and now resides at Sorel.

colonization and defence, and harmonized with the antique associations of the colonists. " In 1598 Henry of Beam authorized the granting of fiefs, chatellaines, and baronies in Canada to men of gentle blood for the tutelage and defence of the country." \* And the Bearnoise or Basque family of de Salaberry profited, and not unworthily, by the wise liberality of their fellow countryman. Their father and the grandfather of Colonel de Salaberry had borne the "*panache blanche*" in full front of the fight against the standard of England, but from the hour when, by sacred treaty, their allegiance had been transferred to the sceptre of England, they bowed reverently to the last behest of their native Prince, and, at his command, gave "*foi et hommage*" to the British Crown.† And to that great obligation they, and the mass of their fellow countrymen, have ever been nobly faithful since. De Salaberry and three brothers took service in the British army. Two died under the blazing sun of Hindostan,—one fell in the deadly breach of Badajos. Our Canadian hero served in the West Indies. He had commanded the Grenadier Company of the 60th regiment, 4th battalion, in many fierce engagements. He distinguished himself in 1795 at the conquest of Martinique, and had survived the miasmata of Walcheren. On returning to Canada he turned

\* Garneau, Vol. I, p. 182.

† In a note to Mr. J. M. Lemoyne's interesting collection, entitled " Maple Leaves," we find the following record of French Canadian services to the British Crown twenty-five years after the Conquest :-

" A party of distinguished Canadians on the 8th June, 1775, offered their services to Major Preston in Montreal to retake Fort St. John from the Americans, and did so on the 20th June, placing it in the bands of a detachment of the 7th Regiment, or Royal Fusiliers, under Captain Kineer. They were the Chevaliers de Belestre, de Longueuil, de Lotbinière, de Rouville, de Boucherville, de Lacorne, de La Bruinière, de St. Ours, de Levy, Pertuis, Hervieux, Gamelin, de Montigny, d'Eschambault, and others. For this service, General Carleton publicly thanked them. In September of the same year, this party, with the

his military experience to good account, and raised the corps of Canadian Voltigeurs. At the head of this corps, as has been already related, with the advance of Colonel D'chambault he had, in the campaign of the preceding year, repulsed the first attempt made by Dearborn on the debateable ground of La Cole. '

On Hampton's retirement from Odelltown he was promptly followed up. Salaberry overtook him at the Four Corners, or cross roads of the Chateauguay—via *quid, se findit in ambas*—about five miles within the American frontier, and near the source of the river. Here an attempt was made to surprise the American camp, which failed through the accidental discharge of a musket, when Salaberry, finding himself to be discovered, collected about fifty of his Voltigeurs, and a handful of Indians, and made a vociferous onset on the advanced detachment of the enemy, consisting of about 800 men. The Americans fell back in confusion, and enabled him to withdraw without loss. These small affairs had infused mutual confidence into the commander, and his men, and contributed to the great success which was shortly to follow.

Under the smoke of this light skirmish, de Salaberry fell back on his supports, following the descending course of the Chateau-

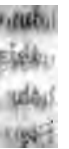
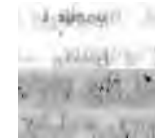
assistance of a number of Volunteers, from Quebec and Three Rivers, Messieurs de Montisson, Duchesnay, de Rigouville, de Salaberry, de Tonancour, Beaubien, de Musseau, Moquin, Lamarque, Fauchier, and others, started for St. John's near Montreal, to relieve the 7th and 26th Regiments, then in charge of the fort ; and who expected a siege ; but after being beleaguered, the fort surrendered on the 2nd November to Gen. Montgomery. The Canadians and the two regiments were carried away prisoners of war—Congress refusing to exchange the Canadians they being too much attached to the English Government, and too influential in their own country.' Two—Messieurs de Montesson and de Rigouville—died prisoners of war. De Lacorne, Pertuis, and Beaubien had been killed during the siege. De Lotbinière had an arm shot off. De Salaberry was twice wounded."—Pp. 66, 67.

guay. Ilk knew the ground thoroughly, having long before examined it, with the foresight of one charged with the safety of the outposts of the army.

He could now see the course of the projectile. He had indeed already anticipated its line of flight, and was already prepared to counteract the blow. For some days previous he had been occupied in choosing his positions and in fortifying them with the ready materials the Canadian forest offers. His dispositions for this purpose were made with great judgment.

It is impossible not to be struck by the meagreness of detail which characterizes both British and American narratives of this important action—but to the American the subject was not a pleasant one, and to the English writer not very intelligible. The scene of action was remote from the daily track of travel and of strife. It was neither seen nor sought. The battle was fought by French Canadian militia-men. These men dispersed to their homes—doubtless they " fought their battles o'er, again " by their own fire-sides, but the English writer had not much opportunity to hear from their lips the changes of the fight. The Despatch of Sir George Prevost dwells more upon his own slight intervention at the close of the action than upon the incidents of the contest. The report of the American Adjutant General, King, is curt and conclusive : " 25th October. The plan of the attack adopted by the General was to detach Colonel Purdy with the *elite* and the 1st Brigade, forming the most efficient part of the army, across the river ; and by a night march gain the fording place on the left of the enemy's line, re-cross the river at that point, and at dawn of day attack the enemy's rear ; while Izzard's Brigade, under his own direction, should pursue the march, and at the same hour, attack it in front. The whole of this plan miscarried shamefully;

Purdy's column, probably misled, fell into an ambuscade, and was quickly beaten and routed ; and that of Izzard, after a few discharges, was ordered to retreat." And this report is a fair introduction to a more detailed story of the fight.



## CHAP. XXIV.

Story of Chateaugay. The " Temoin oculaire." Hampton advances from Four Corners. De Salaberry faces right about, and returns to meet him. First rencontre—Halts—Throws up breastworks and abattis. Disposition of defenders—Ford in the rear. American attack on abattis—Impracticable. Attack on flank and rear, partially successful—Impulsed—Broken by flank fire. Retreating Americans fire on each other. Hampton, daunted, withdraws fro'm front of abattis and retreats. Force engaged. Brilliant conduct of officers and men. Honour to De Salaberry.

It is always satisfactory that the party most interested should be enabled to tell his own story, and by a fortunate occurrence, this source of satisfaction has been supplied. The Redacteur of the " Courier d'Ottawa," Dr. L. E. Dorion, has re-produced most opportunely the narrative of a " Temoin oculaire," dated 3rd November, 1813. This narrative appears to have been published in some of the journals of the day. If a guess may be hazarded as to the authorship, it might be, perhaps not unjustly, ascribed to the late Commander Jacques Viger of Montreal. Ample in detail and minute in circumstance, it gives, with all the proverbial ease of the French *raconteur*, incidents which correspond in the main with the relations of more pretentious writers. The following account of the Battle of Chateaugay will be little more than the story told by the " Temoin oculaire " done into English. The original will be found in the Appendix.

The American army at the Four Corners, under Hampton, after having for some time attracted the attention of our troops, on the

21st October moved direct on our frontier. That same afternoon about 4 p.m. his advanced guard drove in our advanced videttes. They were thrown out to a place called " Piper Road," about ten miles from the church at Chateaugay. Major<sup>o</sup> Henry, of the Beauharnois militia, in command at the English River, notified Major General de Watteville, who ordered up, at once, the two companies of the 5th Incorporated, Militia, commanded by Captains Levesque and Debartzch, and about two hundred men of the Militia de Beauharnois. This force advanced about two leagues until, at nightfall, it halted at the extremity of a thick wood into which it would at that moment have been imprudent to penetrate. At daybreak they were joined by Colonel de Salaberry with his Voltigeurs and Captain Fergusson's Light Company of the Canadian Fencibles. Thus composed, de Salaberry pushed on, along the left bank of the river, about a league, and there encountered a patrol of the eneihy. He instantly halted his force. He had some weeks before carefully reconnoitred this very ground, and knew that the whole course of the river presented no better position. The forest was intersected by ravines which drained a swamp on his right, and fell into the river which covered his left. Upon four of these ravines, which were like so many moats, *fosses*, in his front, he threw up breastworks. The three first lines were distant perhaps 200 yards from each other. The fourth was half a mile in the rear, and commanded a ford, by which an assailant coming from the right bank of the Chateaugay might have got into his rear. It was most important to guarantee this, the weak point of the position. Upon each of these lines of defence a parapet of logs was constructed, which extended into the tangled swamp on the right ; but the front line of all, following the sinuosities of the ravine in front, formed almost an obtuse angle to the right of the road, and of the whole position. This whole day—the 22nd—was employed vigorously in strengthening these works,