

Later in the year, on the 5th September, the British brig of war Boxer, of 14 guns, lying at anchor off Portland, Maine, discovered a sail in the offing ; weighed, and brought to action the American gun brig Enterprize, of 16 guns. Here the advantage in tonnage and weight of metal was on the side of the Americans. In men they were 120 to 60. The usual sanguinary scene ensued. The fighting on both sides was desperate. Both of the captains, Blythe and Burrows, were killed, and the British ship was surrendered when her crew was reduced to 27 men. Her colours could not be hauled down; they had beennailed to the mast. Greeks may have met Greeks in a manner worthy of all imitation, but it may be doubted if they ever surpassed British or American sailors at the close of an action.

These were the most remarkable events of this naval campaign: Commodore Rogers, in the President, made a long cruise, prolific in despatches, during which he was always running away from somebody, or somebody running away from him. He made a few prizes, and a great escape, and successfully got home, which appears to have been the greatest success of his expedition.

We will now retrace our steps from the ocean to our own inland seas—from the sea-board of the Atlantic to the Detroit frontier. Here, in the extreme West, the war had undergone many vicissitudes. The scenes there enacted have, to a certain extent, been already recorded as they befell ; but for a clear understanding of the catastrophes of this campaign, it is well to recapitulate some of the early occurrences of the year. It is not a pleasant tale to tell which terminates in disaster, but a great nation looks upon reverses as the true test of prowess, and whether on the banks of the Canadian Thames, or in the rocky fastnesses of Cabool, encounters the decree of fate with dauntless front. From these, and a thousand such ordeals, England has emerged, purified, and strengthened. All that men of British lineage wish to know upon subjects such as these is the truth. The wisdom, which truth inspires, has long since taught,

that we can never be told the truth too often, or too emphatically, and we are permitted on this occasion to draw it from a source beyond all peradventure.

All men who know Amherstburg, or Malden, as it is often called, know Squire Reynolds. There is not in all the Western Counties a man better known or more respected. He is in fact an institution—one of the oldest and earliest in the country. At the age of eighty-three, he unites the mental vigour of middle age with a wonderful amount of bodily activity and buoyancy of spirits. His vitality is Palmerstonian. This gentleman exercises in his part of the country the functions of a patriarchal Rhadamanthus. He is the universal arbitrator and referee. If you want safe law or intelligible logic ; if you want counsel for the present, advice for the future, or an inkling of the past, you are handed over at once, and as a matter of course, to Squire Reynolds. He lives in a snug homestead, more villa than farm-house—low, with extended wings—embedded in a grove of fine old pine trees. In front flows the Detroit, literally seamed with long lines of schooners, tugged and towed by little ungainly steamers—the " Black Dwarfs" of the river, small, ugly, but possessed of giant strength--and which scare up from the surrounding waters, flocks of innumerable wild-fowl. Around him are the inclosures and gardens, and the indescribable mass of out-buildings, which the protection of his cattle in winter imposes upon the Canadian farmer—with an eye, in early days, to the wolves—perhaps to the Indians. We are reminded in the long low irregular building, in the court yards and out-stedings, and even by the relics of a former " stockade," of " Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon."

With this introduction, the kindly old gentleman may be left to speak for himself. Seated in his rocking-chair, before a cozy log fire, at his own hearth-stone on the shores of the Detroit, on this misty November morning,—he jerks himself back from before the blaze, and exclaims-

"Know something of the country ! Why, I think I do. I knew it before it was made, and have seen it grow, every inch, since. I remember when, with the exception of this little strip of settlement, hardly wider than the Beach Lots where we now are, there was not a house between Huron and Ontario. No man but the hunter traversed that wilderness, of which London is now the centre. Our communications from 'below' were all by water. The Courts of Law were transported by water. Well do I remember when, in 1802, the Brig Speedy, Thomas Paxton, master—father of Major Paxton, of Fighting Island—was lost on the Lake, and the Judge and the Jury, Crown Offices, and litigants—all went down in her.

" My father was Commissary to the British troops at Fort Detroit—at that time the chief trading port and military settlement in this part of the world. I was born there in 1781. At this time the whole State of Michigan was British Territory—the river Miami divided it from the State of Ohio,—and we were often and much disturbed by quarrels, and bloody fights at times, between the Indians of our territory and the frontier settlers, who could not be kept back.

" At length, in 1794, Governor Simcoe, with the authority of the British Government, caused a Fort to be built at the mouth of the Miami, for the protection of our frontier. Pilkington, late General Pilkington, of the Engineers, planned it and superintended the construction. Colonel England was in garrison there with part of the 24th Foot. In 1795, by Jay's Treaty, a new line of frontier was established. The Americans persuaded the British Government that the Line of the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, was the safest frontier between the countries, and so, for the sake of a quiet house, they gave up all the frontier posts—Oswegatchie, Oswego, Niagara, Miami, and Detroit. I saw the British flag hauled down from the flagstaff of Detroit at noon, 11th July, 1796. I saw it again hoisted by Brock, at noon of Sunday, 16th August, 1812.

" When we gave up Detroit, the river was wider than it is now in front of that huge city. It must have been at least 1,000 yards wide then, but the wharves on both sides have much encroached on the waters. The fort stood back on a rising bank about 700 yards in the rear of the river. We left it in capital order. The troops were withdrawn and quartered at Sandwich and Fort Malden. We had at that time the entire control of the waters of the upper Lakes. We had a flotilla, composed of two large brigs, 16 guns each ; one schooner of 8 guns ; and three gun-boats of one gun each. They were all allowed to rot.

" Thus England abandoned Michigan, a territory as big as Spain—with its coal mines and other resources—and our Indian allies were left to the tender mercies of the Ohio trappers, who invaded their hunting grounds, and drove them to desperation. Lord Dorchester went home in disgust, remarking that Canada was a new ' Arcady the Blest,' to be protected, thenceforward, by catch-poles and javelin men. Well did Lord Chatham exclaim, before this time, that the diplomatists of England threw away, with a dash of the pen, what her soldiers had won at the point of the bayonet.

" There was a gentleman of your name residing at that time in Newark. He was in the Commissariat. Ah ! an uncle. Well, I can tell you something about him in relation to the surrender of this territory. In 1797, the year after the evacuation, I was sent down by my father to Newark, on a mission of which I was proud. I was only 17 years old then. It appears that Governor Simcoe, who had built Fort Miami, and had defrayed the expenses out of the Military chest, had further resolved that the expenditure should be refunded from the revenue of the Province, and I was sent down with an order on Peter Russell, President of the Council, for the amount. Mr. Russell honoured the order and gave me the money, which I handed over to the Imperial Officer, Commissary James Coffin, and took his receipt. We became great friends in after years.

"I cannot say whether the Province actually paid the money or not. The revenue was very small then. The amount paid over was somewhat about £4,000 specie, sealed up in canvas bags. Lord Dorchester and General Simcoe might have had to raise the money themselves—Simcoe had left the Province. All I do know is, that the money was refunded to the Imperial Treasury. If Canada paid for Fort Miami, it was given up without much regard to her interests. I don't know that she paid in like manner for any other places surrendered on the frontier.

" I was here in 1812. I was myself a commissary to the forces ; and, in those days, to feed a force, and provide in advance for the supply, was an arduous task : of course our main dependence was on the regular line of supply from Montreal. The troops, and the Indians, too, were supplied from our stores. The chief rations then consisted of Irish mess pork ; but pigs had begun to be plentiful ; and, when our communications were interrupted, I contrived to supply the deficiency from the farms which were springing up over the country, with most of which I was familiar. While I had charge, the troops never wanted, though they had often but little to spare.

" Before the war broke out—I think early in June, 1812—Brock paid us a flying visit. He was then Governor, during the absence of Governor Gore. When at Fort Malden, the Indians asked Brock for powder and guns, to go back into Michigan, and get back their lands. The General told them, that to give them ammunition, would be to make war on the United States ; ' but,' said he, ' I am very sure that they will make war upon us before long. So wait a bit, and you shall have all you want ;' " but,' added he very solemnly, ' if I supply you, you must abstain from scalping the dead, and ill-treating your prisoners. Promise me that, and then you shall have all you want.' They did promise. Colonel Elliott, the Indian interpreter, was present, and translated.

"You would like to know how that promise was kept. I can tell you something about that, too. When Hull crossed at Sandwich, 12th July, 1812, he despatched scouting parties to the Canard River, only seven miles from Fort Malden, under Cass, and one McCulloch, a Kentucky man.\* They encountered at the Canard Bridge an Indian scouting party of fifteen warriors and two squaws. The Indians opened fire on the Americans, who fell back. One of them crossed the river, fool-hardily, and was shot. McCulloch scalped him, and the body was abused by those with him.

McCulloch bared his arm, and attached the trophy to his left elbow, a way they have of drying such things. On his way back he stopped at the Park farm, near Sandwich, and asked Widow Park for a drink of water. She observed what hung from his elbow, and remarked on it. ' Yes,' said he, ' it is the scalp of a d—d red-skin we killed below there. I am sorry for it,' said she ; ' the Indians would not have done the like. I guess you'll suffer for this.'

"And so they did. When the Americans retired, the Indians went over and found the body of their comrade, scalped, and his skull beat in. They wrapped it in a blanket, and bore it back to Fort Malden, went right to the door of Colonel St. George, the commandant, and laid it down at the threshold. They called out the Colonel. ' Look !' said they, ' our great father not long ago told us not to scalp, not to kill. Look at our brother ; the long knives not only scalped him, but killed him over again. Look at his skull ! Our promise is wiped out.'

" This was but the beginning—more by and by. But in a day or two the Americans came back to the river Canard—the Ta-ron-tee,

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\* McCulloch (Captain McCulloch) was, it is to be presumed, the person killed by the Indians, at the head of a scouting party, in the subsequent affair of Van Horne. Vide James I. p 62.

as the Indians call it,—which by this time was better protected, by more Indians and a small party of the 41st. Again they had a fight, and were again repulsed. A fine fellow of the 41st lost his life here.\* He was advanced sentry in the plain on the other side of the river. They came upon him suddenly, and called to him to throw down his arms, and surrender. He replied that he was there to defend his post, and fired, killing one man. They fired, too, and mortally wounded him, and, on their retreat, left him to die in a shed. He died, and was found, scalped, and the Americans were at first accused of the deed ; but that was soon proved to be wrong. It turned out that one Main-poche, an Indian of ours, had stealthily followed the Americans in hopes of picking up a scalp, in revenge for the act of a few days before. He did not succeed ; but on his return, alighting upon the dead body of the soldier, he thought that any scalp was better than none. He brought it in, and, both from the colour and cut of the hair, was detected at once by the comrades of the dead man, who gave him a good thrashing for his pains.

" We heard of the declaration of war on the 28th June, 1812. Brock sent up the news from York. He had arranged before with Proctor, to go over and take Detroit, at the first outbreak of war. Hull had not yet reached this post, but was on the way with reinforcements from Ohio. On the 2nd of July all arrangements were made, and we were on the point of starting, when, below Bois Blanc Island, on the Canada shore, appeared a fleet of boats. We made up our minds at once that it was the Americans coming to attack us, and manned our works. It was all a false alarm. It turned out to be a brigade of trading boats and canoes from Montreal to Macinaw. Next day orders came from Prevost to make no offensive movements, and nothing more was done.

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*Vide p. 42 ante.*

"But upon this day, the 3rd, a gallant feat was performed by Lieut. Rolette, a plucky little French Canadian from Quebec. He was Lieutenant in the Provincial Marine. He was out in a boat with eight men, when he saw a vessel approach under American colours. He went right alongside, and boarded, and found himself among American uniforms. Without a word, he put a sentry on the arm-chest, one on the companion ladder, and one at the wheel, and then gave loud orders to shoot any man resisting. The Americans knew nothing of the declaration of war. Independent of the crew there was on board a guard of thirty-three soldiers. Shortly recovering from their surprise, the Americans, remarking the number, began to cast ugly glances on their captors ; but it so chanced that the vessel was close off a windmill on the Canada shore, around which had been thrown up a breastwork of logs, which gave it a military look. Rolette, with presence of mind, ordered the helmsman, in loud tones, to put the vessel under the guns of the battery. This had its effect for the moment. Fortunately a batteau came down the river at this time, with men and an officer, and enabled him to secure the prize. She proved to be the Cayuga Packet, containing Hull's military chest, extra baggage, military and medical stores, and all the correspondence of the army.

## CHAPTER IX.

Squire Reynold's narrative—Arrival of Brock—Interview with Tecumseh—Affairs on the Frontier 1813—Ball at Malden—From the dance to the field—Colonel St. George—Attack on French Town—Capture of General Winchester—Retreat of Proctor—Wounded abandoned—Rolette hit—Brownstown and the scalps—Fort Meigs—British engineers—Colonel Gratiot—Major Reynolds at the Raisin—Defeat of Green Clay—Retaliation of the Indians—Retreat from Fort Meigs—Council of war—Recriminations—Proctor, Elliott, Tecumseh—Proctor's treatment of the Militia—Second attack on Fort Meigs—A failure—Fort Stevenson attacked—Bravely defended by Major Croghan—Col. Short killed—Stormers repulsed—Proctor retires—Barclay at Malden—Efforts to equip squadron—No men nor material—The two 24's—Calibre and character of guns in the squadrons respectively.

" This exploit of Rolette's was of great value to Brock when he arrived on the 13th of August. I was with Col. Elliott, Superintendent of Indians, when news came that a boat had reached the beach with officers on board. Tecumseh was in the room. Elliott got up and spoke to Tecumseh in Shawanee, and we went down together to the water-edge. We found the General and others disembarking. Among the first was John Beverley Robinson, and a lot of York volunteers. We were told more wanted to come than the General could bring ; and he put them off by saying that he wanted some to remain to defend York.

" Tecumseh was presented to Brock. I observed him looking narrowly at the General. On our way back to the house, he remarked to Elliott that the General was a brave man, deserving of all confidence.

"And now, with respect to the occurrences on this frontier in the spring and summer of 1813. I was present at them all. The troops could not move without the Commissary ; and I am proud to

feel that whatever was left to me was done satisfactorily. A little of the early fighting, when told, explains the rest.

" On the 18th Jan., 1813, being the anniversary of old Queen Charlotte's birthday, all the young fellows on the coast side—*les jeunes yens de la cote*—combined with the military to give a ball. We had assembled at Mrs. Draper's Tavern, here in Amherstburg, and the lads and lasses were full of dance and fun, when in walked Colonel St. George equipped for the field. " My boys," said he, in a loud voice, "you must prepare to dance to a different tune ; the enemy is upon us, and we are going to surprise them. We shall take the route about four in the morning, so get ready at once." Of course there was some confusion and surprise, but I believe the fellows liked the fighting as much as the dancing. The ball broke up at once, and every man was at his appointed post at the proper time. It had been very cold, but no snow had fallen. The river had taken across, and we started for Brownstown, four miles distant, on the ice. It was not considered strong enough to bear more than small 4-pounders. The men marched in extended order.

" It appears that the General had got intelligence that General Winchester was advancing rapidly to attack Fort Malden or Detroit, and had resolved to anticipate him. The American Generals, Winchester and Harrison, were at loggerheads. Winchester, an old revolutionary officer, did not like to be superseded by Harrison, and aimed at a great blow, on his own account, before the other could come up to share the glory. We took the wind out of his sails most completely. It was just dawn of day when our columns got out of the forest on an open space in front of the house of a Canadian named Jerome, which the Americans had stockaded. The place was called French Town, on the River Raisin. The Americans must have arrived on the ground the night before. The stockaded house was quite insufficient to receive them. Part were encamped or bivouacked on the outside. As we got out of the