

was furiously assailed by General Scott's brigade, at the point of the bayonet ; but the enemy was repulsed with great slaughter. A tremendous fire was then commenced on the crest of the British position, by the first brigade of the enemy stationed near a copse between Lundy's Lane and the Falls of Niagara ; and the 9th, 11th and 22d regiments and Captain Towson's brigade of artillery, stationed on the Queenston road.

During this stage of the engagement, the light company of the Royal Scots arrived on the ground from the Twenty Mile Creek ; and a courier was despatched to countermand the route of the 103d Regiment and detachment's of the King's and 104th regiments, who bad, in a mistake, taken the road to Queenston from the Beach-woods, and to hasten their movement to the field of action.

On the brow of the hill at the east end of Lundy's Lane, for the possession of which the armies hitherto had principally contended, General Drummond now planted his artillery, as it appeared to form the key to the position. On this quarter, therefore, the enemy for a length of time directed his whole efforts ; and notwithstanding the carnage was truly appalling, no visible impression had yet been made. Still, on this part of the field did the whirlwind of the conflict continue to rage with awful and destructive fury : columns of the enemy, not unlike the undulating surge of the adjacent cataract, rushed to the charge in close and impetuous succession.

In this fearful and tremendous stage of the contest, the British forces both regular and militia, finding themselves pressed by an overwhelming force, simultaneously closed round the guns, apparently determined to contest their possession with the last drop of British blood on the ground, fully assured of their importance to a fa-

vorable termination of the engagement—in short, both armies appeared to be roused to a state of desperation for victory.

The enemy at length succeeded to make a slight turn on the left of the British position.; at which period, General Riall, who commanded that division of the army, was severely wounded in the arm, and having passed to the rear for the purpose of having his wound dressed, in his return to resume the command, was intercepted by a column of the enemy and made prisoner of war.

It was long before this crisis of the engagement that the curtains of night had enveloped the scene ; but instead of that circumstance tending to abate the fury of war which had now completely drenched the field with the blood of the combatants, the rage of battle appeared only to increase as the night advanced. Still did the enemy continue to direct his strongest force against the crest of the British position ; but his repeated charges were as often received and repelled by the regular, fencible, and militia forces engaged, with that intrepid gallantry for which the British army has ever been characterized. Charges were made in such rapid succession and with such determined vigor that often were the British artillerymen assailed in the very act of spunging and charging their guns ; and often were the muzzles of the guns of the contending armies hauled up and levelled within a few yards of each other : the havoc of lives on both sides, under such circumstances, may be better conceived than described.

The battle having raged with almost unprecedented fury for upwards of three hours, both sides appeared for a time mutually to suspend hostilities ; during which the British troops were supplied with fresh ammunition, and the enemy employed himself actively in bringing up his reserve columns ; after which, the fire was

recommenced from the Queenston road on the left of the British column ; however, it was discovered that this was only a diversion to mask the intention of a large body of the enemy's fresh troops, which was actually moving on the right of the British position, to outflank it. General Drummond commenced immediately to draw his strength towards this flank of his army, forming a line in a field of grain, upon which the enemy were seen to advance in slow and silent pace. The British line formed to repel this new attack, was directed to kneel sufficiently low to prevent being perceived by the enemy ; but scarcely had General Drummond completed this order of arrangement, before the enemy's column made its appearance and advanced within a few yards of the British line, when the signal was made to fire a volley and charge—the effect of that single fire upon the enemy's ranks was awful in the extreme—the effect of the enemy who were able made a precipitate retreat.

" The enemy's efforts to carry the hill," says General Drummond in his despatches, " were continued until midnight, when he had suffered so severely from the superior steadiness and discipline of His Majesty's troops, that he gave up the contest and retreated with great precipitation to his camp beyond the Chippawa, burning, as he passed, the flour mills at Bridgewater. On the following day he abandoned his camp, threw the greatest part of his baggage, camp equipage and provisions into the rapids above the falls; and destroying the bridge at Chippawa, he continued his retreat in great disorder towards Fort Erie."

" The loss sustained by the enemy," adds Sir Gordon Drummond, " in this severe action, cannot be estimated at less than fifteen hundred men, including several hun-

dred prisoners left in our hands\*. Generals Brown and Scott were among the wounded. His whole force, which was never rated at less than five thousand men, was all engaged."

In General Drummond's report of this action, his return of killed, wounded and missing is as follows, namely :

Killed,	...	84
Wounded,		559
Missing,		193
Prisoners,		42
		<hr/>
Total, • ...		878

By the regimental returns of the British army, including those of the militia both before and after this engagement, the whole British force consisted of two thousand eight hundred ; but before the arrival of the troops under Colonel Scott of the 103d Regiment, it did not exceed sixteen hundred.

Of all the battles (says a writer on this subject,) fought in America, the action at Lundy's Lane was unquestionably the best sustained and by far the most sanguinary. The rapid charges and real contest with the bayonet were of themselves sufficient to render this engagement conspicuous. Traits of real bravery and heroic

In General Brown's report of this action, his return of killed, wounded and missing is as follows :

Killed,	171
Wounded,	570
Missing,	117
	<hr/>
Total,	858

devotion were that night displayed by those engaged, which would not suffer in a comparison with those exhibited at the storming of St. Sebastian, or the conflict at Quatre Bras.

Both the belligerent armies have offered their claims for victory in this engagement—upon what grounds the American general could propose such a claim are best known to himself. The result of the action, compared with General Brown's first instructions as set forth in his despatches to the American secretary of war, contradicts in the most pointed terms even the slightest suggestion of a victory on the part of the American arms. " It is proper here to mention," says General Brown in the despatches alluded to, " that having received advices as late as the 20th, from General Gaines, that our fleet was then in port and the commodore sick, we ceased to look for co-operation from that quarter, and determined to disencumber ourselves of the baggage and march directly for Burlington Heights. To mask this intention, and to draw from Schlosser a supply, I fell back upon Chippawa. As this arrangement, under the increased force of the enemy, left much at hazard on our own side of the Niagara ; and as it appeared, by the before stated information, that the enemy was about to avail himself of it, I conceived that the most effectual method of recalling him from this object, was to put myself in motion towards Queenston."

Now, a question very naturally presents itself—Did General Brown or the army under his command, in pursuance of the declared intention of the general, make a solitary effort after the action, to force a passage to Burlington, or even attempt to maintain the ground he held during the action ? The reverse was the case. Let General Brown speak for himself. " I therefore believed it proper," says that general in another part of his report, "that General Ripley and the troops should return to camp," that is, beyond Chippawa, a distance of nearly

four miles from Lundy's Lane, the field of action, leaving the British troops in peaceable possession of the ground they had gained, and during the arduous contest maintained by their prowess and steady discipline ; and, next day, the American forces continued their retreat in great disorder towards Fort Erie\*." Here was victory with a witness ; and just such a victory did Buonaparte gain at Waterloo.

General Brown not only abandoned the plans of operation which he had formed previous to the action at Lundy's Lane, but " retreated in great disorder towards Fort Erie," where his egress from the British territory might be more easy ; and in his way destroyed the bridge across the Chippawa, in order to retard the advance of the British light troops on his rear.

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\*General Drummond's Report of the Action.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

*The British Array, under General Drummond, pursues the Enemy to Fort Erie—General Drummond invests that Fort—Nocturnal Assault on Fort Erie and the adjoining Batteries in Possession of the Enemy—Disposition of the Force intended for that Assault—Failure that Assault—Sortie by the American Forces on the British Batteries in Front of Fort Erie—Result of the Sortie—Retreat of both Armies—Concluding Remarks.*

THE American generals, unacquainted with the policy of war, had suffered themselves to be too easily elated by the imaginary successes which attended the American arms during the first operations in this campaign, were now proportionably overwhelmed with disappointment at the signal defeat with which they met at Lundy's Lane; and confined themselves within the limits of Fort Erie and the adjacent shore, as far as Snake Hill, a distance of two miles; in front of which position, General Drummond, with as many of the remaining British forces as could be spared for that service, advanced in a few days.

The British army had no sooner taken up their position in front of Fort Erie than preparations were immediately made to storm the fort and American posts. General Gaines, on whom had devolved the command of the second division of the northern army of the United States, in the absence of Generals Brown and Scott, who had both been wounded at Lundy's Lane, now directed his whole attention to strengthening the Fort and outworks as far as Snake Hill.

On the 13th of August, General Drummond having previously completed his batteries, commenced a brisk cannonade on the position of the enemy, which, with

a few intermissions, was continued for two days; after which it was determined to carry the fort and outworks of the enemy by a nocturnal assault. In pursuance of this purpose, General Drummond formed his troops into three divisions; the first under Lieutenant Colonel Fischer of De Wattville's regiment, consisting of the King's Regiment, the Regiment De Wattville and flank companies of the 89th and 100th regiments, directed against the enemy's entrenchments at and near Snake Hill; the second, under Lieutenant Colonel Drummond of the 104th Regiment, consisting of the flank companies of the 41st and 104th regiments and a body of seamen and marines under the direction of Captain Dobbs of the Royal Navy, against the fort; and the 3d, under Lieutenant Colonel Scott of the 103d Regiment, consisting of the 103d Regiment supported by two companies of the Royal Scots, against the entrenchments adjoining the fort.

This arrangement being completed, the division destined for the attack of Snake Hill, marched by a circuitous route at four o'clock on the afternoon of the day previous to the attack, in order to gain the vicinity of the point of the enemy's works in sufficient time to co-operate with the other divisions of the army.

About two o'clock on the morning of the 15th, the several divisions of the British army moved on towards the enemy's entrenchments; but as soon as the column directed against Snake Hill had emerged from the woods, it came in contact with an abbatis within twelve or fifteen paces of the enemy's entrenchments, defended by a heavy column of infantry under the command of Major Wood and the artillery under Captain Towson. This for a time completely checked its advance.

However, it was soon announced by a tremendous fire from the guns in the fort, and from the columns of infantry defending the entrenchments near the shore of

the lake, that the other two columns, under Lieutenant Colonels Scott and Drummond, had commenced an assault on the enemy's works.

At the first outset of the two last columns, the enemy succeeded in turning the column on the left under Colonel Scott ; but that under Colonel Drummond penetrated the enemy's works and charged through his ranks with such irresistible impetuosity that nothing seemed sufficiently impregnable to arrest its progress. Lieutenant Colonel Scott, in the mean time, rallied his column which had been partially turned on one 'flank, and the fort was assailed in almost every quarter by the besiegers; an escalade was effected, the enemy drove from the ramparts at the point of the bayonet, and the guns of the fort turned upon the garrison ; all of which precludes of victory had actually been gained a few minutes after the first alarm.

The battle raged with a fury seldom equalled. The British troops having previously, in pursuance of an order to that effect, divested their muskets of the flints, every foot of ground was contended at the point of the bayonet, which rendered the carnage more dreadful and appalling.

Lieutenant Colonel Drummond, during the conflict within the fort, performed most extraordinary acts of valor : in the hottest of the battle he would present himself encouraging his men both by example and precept. But in the very moment when victory was declaring herself in favor of the British arms, some ammunition which had been placed under the platform ignited from the firing of the guns to the rear, and a dreadful explosion was the result, by which the greater part of the British forces which had entered the fort, were literally blown into the air.

All the exertions of the few British troops who survived the explosion were found ineffectual to maintain their ground against such an unequal force as the enemy was then enabled to bring up against them ; the enterprise was therefore abandoned ; and the British forces retired in rear of their works before daybreak.

The loss of the British, in consequence of the explosion, was much greater than that of the enemy ; and amongst the killed were Colonels Scott and Drummond.

In General Drummond's report of this action, the return of the killed, wounded and missing stands thus, namely :

Killed, 2 lieutenant colonels, 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 serjeant, 1 drummer, 51 rank and file,	57
Wounded, 1 deputy assistant quarter master general, 1 major, 8 captains, 11 lieutenants, 2 ensigns, 1 master, 12 seamen, 20 serjeants, 2 drummers, 250 rank and file,	308
Missing, 1 deputy assistant quarter master general, 1 captain, 3 lieutenants, 2 ensigns, 1 midshipman, 1 adjutant, 7 seamen, 41 serjeants, 3 drummers, 479 rank and file,	539
Total,	904

Nothing particular occurred for the space of a month after the affair of the 15th August, if we except occasional skirmishes with the advanced posts, and the frequent cannonading maintained between the British batteries and the enemy's works, as well at Black Rock, on the opposite side of the river, as at Fort Erie and its neighborhood. At about the expiration of a month, however, General Brown, having recovered of his wounds, again resumed the command of the American army on the Niagara frontier, and brought with him a

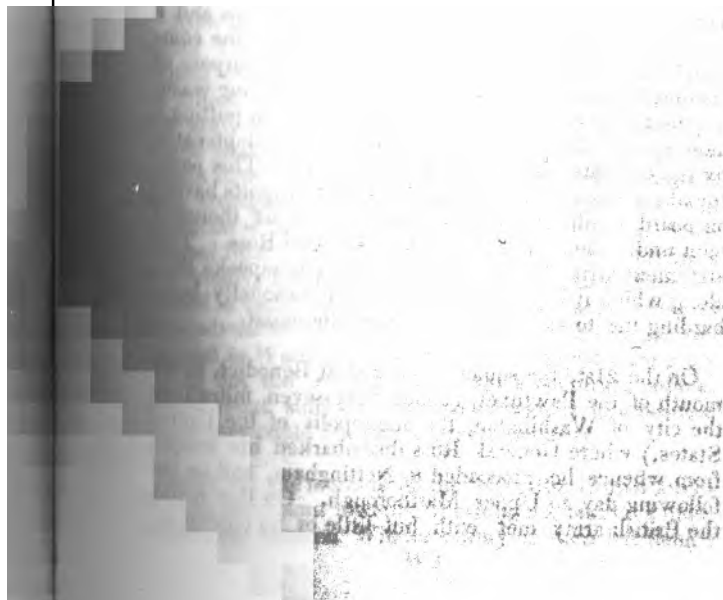
strong reinforcement, resolving to attempt the destruction of the British batteries in front of the fort. Pursuant to this determination, on the 17th September, at about 12 o'clock, noon, the whole American force including both regulars and militia sallied forth in three divisions under Generals Porter, Miller and Ripley ; and before the ready and reserve columns of the British could be brought up from the camp, (about a mile in rear,) the enemy had succeeded in penetrating the batteries, destroying the works With one magazine of ammunition, and spiking the guns. But ere he could effect his retreat, the ready and reserve columns had arrived, who immediately commenced a determined attack upon his columns ; and after about a half hour's desperate fighting, notwithstanding his great superiority of numbers, he returned before the bayonets of the British line, in great precipitation, under the cover of his works, after losing nearly six hundred of his force.

The incessant rains which had fallen that season rendered it impossible for General Drummond to repair his batteries, or, indeed, longer to keep the field ; he, therefore, on the 21st of September, broke up his camp, and retired to winter quarters in rear of his works at the mouth of the Chippawa.

During the retreat, General Brown feigned some inclination to follow on the rear of the British army ; yet, notwithstanding all the efforts which could possibly be exercised by a general, were called into contribution by Sir Gordon Drummond, to bring General Brown into action; but it all proved unavailing. The American general, " as soon as the coast was clear," evacuated Fort Erie and retreated across the river into his own territory.

Thus terminated the campaign of 1814, on the Niagara frontier ; and whatever might have been the object of the American government when they sent that army

to invade Canada, it is certain that nothing was acquired, if we except afresh proof (if such had been now necessary,) of the loyalty of the Canadian people to their sovereign, and their unshaken zeal to defend their country from the grasp of its enemy, at whatever time he might think proper to invade it.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

*Arrival of a British naval and military Force on the Shores of the U. States—Troops land at the Mouth of the Pawtuxet and move on towards Washington—General Ross arrives at Bladensburg and finds the American Force strongly posted to oppose his Passage—The American Army routed—General Ross takes Possession of the American Capital—The British Forces again retire to the Seaboard and embark—Captain Gordon's Expedition up the Potomac—Captain Sir Peter Parker's Expedition up the Chesapeake—Descent upon Baltimore—Retreat and re-embarkation of the British.*

DURING the period in which the operations of the campaign on the Niagara frontiers were transpiring, a naval force, consisting of five line of battle ships and a few frigates, was fitted out and placed under the command of Vice-admiral Cochrane, for the purpose of visiting the coasts of the United States and laying waste her maritime cities and towns, with a view to putting a more speedy termination to the war so much deprecated by the enlightened men of both countries. This naval squadron was accompanied by several transports having on board a military force of from five to six thousand men under the command of Major General Ross. This arri- ment arrived on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, which it hovered a few days, occasionally bom- barding the towns and villages along the coast.

On the 21st, the squadron arrived at Benedict, at the mouth of the Pawtuxet, (about forty-seven miles from the city of Washington, the metropolis of the United States,) where General Ross disembarked his troops ; from whence he proceeded to Nottingham, and on the following day to Upper Marlborough. On this march the British army met with but little or no opposition,

except from *a* flotilla of about twenty gun-boats maimed with about four or five hundred marines and seamen, under the command of Commodore Barney, an experienced and meritorious naval officer, but who was at length compelled, with the men under his command, to abandon and set fire to the boats, directing their flight to Bladensburg, there to join General Winder, who had, at that place collected *a* force of nearly nine thousand for the purpose of disputing with Gener 1 Ross the road to the capital.

General Winder's army was visited by President Madison accompanied by General Armstrong, the American Secretary of War, together with the United States Attorney General, before whom they passed in review on the morning of the 23d, at Old-Fields, about five miles distant from the iity of Washington.

After the review, General Winder detached a column under Colonel Scott, to reconnoitre the force of the British with a view to harrass them in their advance, and by which means so retard their progress that the American army might gain as much strength as possible, whose ranks were hourly swelling by the arrivals of the militia from Baltimore and Annapolis and volunteers from Georgetown and its vicinity. General Ross had advanced within six miles of the enemy's camp, when Colonel Scott's column was discovered ; but receiving a few volleys from the British advanced guard, they retreated in rapid movement towards their camp. General Ross advanced his column about three miles further on the road to Washington, where he encamped during the night ; but the enemy, dreading a nocturnal attack, retired about sunset towards Washington, to *a* position where they could encamp in greater security.

Early on the morning of the 24th, the British forces were in movemont towards Washington, taking a route which kept General Winder's army on their left flank ;

but about noon the enemy was discovered strongly posted at Bladensburg, ready to dispute the passage at that place. The bridge was defended by a large brigade of artillery supported by a column of riflemen, with a division of tricantry drawn up in an orchard in the rear ; and a strong brigade of infantry under the directions of General Stansbury was drawn up on the west side of the western branch of the river ; and on the heights commanding the great road to Washington were erected two batteries served by the seamen and marines commanded by Commodore Barney and Captain Miller, and supported by a body of infantry and riflemen -; the other columns of the enemy were posted according to the situation of the ground, in the best order of defence which suggested itself to the minds of their generals.

General Ross, taking a moment's survey of the disposition of the enemy, formed his plan of attack. The 85th Light infantry regiment, and the light infantry companies of the different regiments constituting the British column—the whole Under the command of Colonel Thornton—rushed forward with such irresistible impetuosity, supported by a division of infantry commanded by Colonel Brooke, that the bridge was carried in a few minutes : and the enemy compelled to retreat in confusion and dismay towards the capital, carrying terror in their flight, and after the brief deliberations of a council of war hastily assembled, it was concluded that under present circumstances the metropolis was completely untenable by the American army under their present dispersed and disorganized state ; it was, therefore, ordered that General Smith should continue the retreat of the army through the city, and take up a position on the heights of Georgetown.

The loss sustained by the British in the engagement at Bladensburg, amounted to two hundred and forty-nixie in killed and wounded, sixty-four of whom were

of the former\*. The loss of the American army only amounted to one hundred and eighty, in killed, wounded and missingli ; but their loss in property was immenseT no less than two hundred and sixty pieces of cannon, five hundred and forty barrels of gun-powder, and a hundred thousand cartridge mostly charged each with a ball and three buck-shot, were taken by the captors.

General Ross, meeting with no further resistance, continued his approach to Washington ; and having the main body of his army encamped about a mile and a half from the city, he entered the metropolis at the head of six or seven hundred men, about 8 o'clock in the evening. Immediately on the entry of the detachment of British troops into the city, General Ross issued orders for the destruction of all the public buildings and public works together with the public library, the capitol and a frigate and sloop of war in the navy yard, almost ready for launching, with all the materials in the naval arsenal ; pursuant to which they were all consigned to one continued conflagration, in which it is to be regretted that an elegant hotel with a few other private buildings were consumed.

Next day, General Ross having accomplished the object of his expedition to Washington, ordered a retreat which was commenced that evening and continued next day to Benedict. During the progress of these affairs,

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\*General Ross to Earl Bathurst, dated, on board the Tonnant, 30th August, 1814.

li General Winder to General Armstrong.

l By the report of the committee appointed to investigate the amount of public property lost to the United States at the capture of Washington, it is estimated at nine hundred and sixty-nine thousand, one hundred and seventy-one dollars.



Captain Gordon of the Sea Horse, with a naval force under his command, ascended the Potomac ; but, in consequence of the difficulties which presented themselves in the navigation of that river with vessels of large dimensions, he did not reach Fort Washington until the 27th, upon which he immediately opened a bombardment ; but the officer commanding that garrison gave orders for spiking the guns and blowing up the works without the least show of resistance. Captain Gordon then passed on to the town of Alexandria, the municipal authorities of which, in order to save the town from destruction, stipulated for the surrender of all public stores together with twenty-one sail of merchant shipping with their cargoes then lying in the harbor.

Captain Sir Peter Parker, to whom was entrusted the command of another division of the fleet with which to ascend the Chesapeake, on the night of the 30th of August, landed a body of seamen and marines, in all amounting to one hundred and twenty, near a place called Georgetown Cross Roads, where a body of the militia of Maryland was stationed. The enemy, apprized of this movement, were drawn up in much greater force than Captain Parker was led to anticipate, in front of their camp. Still the intrepid captain, thinking of nothing but conquest, pressed forward with his handful of brave followers, and while animating them in the fury of the combat, received a buck-shot in the thigh, which penetrate( the femoral artery, yet continuing to cheer his n the conflict, he fell and terminated a life rendered immortal in the recollections of his countrymen; after which the enemy pouring upon them in overwhelming numbers, compelled them to retire to their boats and abandon the enterprise.

Admiral Cochrane now assembled his whole squadron in the waters of the Chesapeake, determined on a descent upon the city of Baltimore ; for which purpose the fleet ascended the bay, and on the 11th of September,

they came to an anchor off the mouth of the Potomac River, about fourteen miles distant from Baltimore. Early on the following morning, General Ross debarked his troops amounting to nearly six thousand, under cover of the gun-boats, at a place called North Point. On receiving intelligence of this movement, Brigadier General Stricker, who had been detached with a force of between three and four thousand infantry, with a large park of artillery, a corps of cavalry and a body of riflemen, to resist the approach of General Ross, took a position at the junction of the several roads which led to the city, having a body of light troops in his front under Major Heath, for the purpose of annoying the British and checking their advance. The point at which General Ross had effected a landing is a kind of peninsula formed by the Patapsco and Back rivers, across which Major Heath had thrown up an intrenchment ; but, on the advance of the . British column, this position was hastill abandoned with little or no resistance.

In a short time the British forces came up with the column under General Stricker, which was discovered to be strongly posted with the right resting on Bear Creek and the left covered by a swamp almost impervious. General Ross continued to advance under the fire of the enemy's riflemen and light troops; and always too prodigal of his own safety in the field, placed himself in front of his advance, who had now become engaged with that of the enemy. While iii this situation, with his hat waving in the air, animating his troops, lie received a rifle ball in his breast which proved to be mortal.

The command of the expedition now devolved on Colonel Brooke, for whom General Ross immediately sent, and to whom he yielded his instructions ; and after taking an affectionate leave of that officer and his personal staff, and ejaculating " my dear wife," he breathed his last, deeply lamented by the whole army he had

so recently commanded. Colonel Brooke continued to move forward on the enemy's position, and commenced a general attack ; a few minutes after the commencement of which the signal was given to charge the enemy's line, when a rapid advance took place ; and the whole of General Stricker's army was completely routed and driven in confusion at the point of the bayonet. The enemy's position was then taken possession of, together with two pieces of field ordnance which the enemy's artillery, in their precipitation, were unable to take from the field.

On the following morning, Colonel Brooke continued to advance till he arrived within a mile and a half of Baltimore, intending an immediate assault upon that place ; but upon reconnoitring the works with which the enemy had surrounded the city, he discovered that all those hills, with which its ambient vicinity abounds, were completely studded with fortifications and redoubts, the whole of which were connected by breastworks and defended by an army of fifteen thousand men, exclusive of a numerous train of artillery commanded by Generals Stansbury and Foreman, and a body of seamen and marines under Commodore Rogers.

During the land operations against Baltimore, a powerful and well concerted plan of attack was attempted against Fort Mc. Henry commanding the entrance of the harbor of Baltimore, with a view to the reduction of that fort, that the naval force might approach the town and co-operate with the army; but in consequence of a number of vessels having been previously sunk by the enemy across the entrance, it was found impracticable to approach sufficiently near to render any assistance ; the enterprise was therefore given up.

Next morning, the 15th, between one and two o'clock, the British army retreated a few miles from Baltimore, where they remained the whole of that day,

with an intention to draw the American forces from their defences for an attack ; but finding the enemy no way disposed to hazard a field engagement, the retreat was continued the next morning to North Point, where the troops were re-embarked, together with about two hundred of the most respectable inhabitants of Baltimore, prisoners of war. The loss of the Americans is said, in their own accounts, not to exceed one hundred and eighty killed and wounded ; while, on the same authority, the British loss amounted to six hundred including a number of prisoners.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

*An Expedition formed in Lower Canada for the Invasion of Plattsburg—Arrival of the British Squadron at the Harbor of Plattsburgh—Naval Engagement, and loss of the British Squadron—Retreat of the British Troops—British Expedition formed against the Shores of the United States bordering on the Mexican Gulph—Result of that Expedition—Expedition against New Orleans—Partial Encounter between General Jackson's Army and a Body of British Troops under Colonel Thornton—The British under General Pakenham advance towards New Orleans—Reinforcements arrive for both Armies—Unsuccessful Attack on the Enemy's Entrenchments—Second Attack on Fort Bowyer—Surrender of that Fort—Action between the British Frigate Endymion and the American Frigate President—Surrender of the latter—Concluding Remarks—Summary of the Treaty of Peace.*

DURING the period in which the operations against Washington and Baltimore were in progress, British troops were pouring into Lower Canada from France, in consequence of the Peace of Paris having been concluded, until the army under Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost actually amounted to fourteen thousand effective men, which were immediately formed into brigades ; and an expedition fitted out for the invasion of the enemy's territory.

On the 2d of September, the British army commanded by Sir George Prevost in person, approached the line of demarkation between Lower Canada and the United States. On their advance, the American forces stationed on the lines fled from their entrenchments, panic struck, towards Plattsburgh, destroying all the bridges and felling trees across the road in their route

thither, in order to impede the advance of the British ; but, in opposition to all these obstructions, the army appeared before Plattsburgh on the sixth.

General Moers of the New-York militia, Colonel Appling, Major Wood and Captain Sprout, of the American army, were sent out from Plattsburgh at the head of columns of both regulars and militia, to oppose the British in their advance; but the utmost united exertions of the general and every officer under his command were found insufficient to prevail on the American troops for a moment to maintain their ground before the advance of the British.

On the approach of the British to Plattsburgh, it was discovered that the bridge across the River Saranac had been stripped of its planks, to the south side of which river the whole of the American force had retired and taken up a position on an elevated piece of ground, fortified by three redoubts and a number of breastworks and batteries, and commanded by General Mc. Comb in person. The planks which had been taken from the bridge crossing the Saranac were piled in the form of a breast work at the south end, to cover the American troops intended to dispute the passage with the British advance.

The time which intervened between the 6th and 11th was chiefly employed by Sir George Prevost in raising his works and bringing up his ordnance and mounting it for the purpose of bombarding the town and out works of the enemy. At 7 o'clock on the morning of the last mentioned day, the British squadron on Lake Champlain, under Captain Downie, was discovered over the isthmus formed by the union of the River Saranac and Cumberland Bay, nearing the harbor of Plattsburgh to attack the American squadron under Commodore Mc. Donough, and to co-operate with the forces on land. The British squadron consisted of the *Confiance* of

thirty-nine guns, the brig Linnet of sixteen guns, the Chub of eleven guns, the sloop Finch of eleven guns, and thirteen gun-boats, five of which carried two guns each and eight one gun each—total ninety-four guns. The American squadron consisted of the Saratoga of twenty-six guns, the Eagle of twenty guns, the Ticonderoga of seventeen guns, the Preble of seven guns, and ten gun-boats, six of which carrying two guns each and four one gun each—total eighty-six guns. The American squadron was moored in line, within the harbor of Plattsburgh, supported by the gun-boats on the flank, awaiting the approach of the British.

About S o'clock, A. M., Captain Downie bore into the harbor, and formed his line directly in front of the enemy, each vessel selecting her antagonist according to its strength and agreeable to previous arrangements, within two or three cables length distance. The action between the two hostile fleets commenced with cheers from the crews on both sides ; and in consequence of the very light winds which prevailed during the action, the lake was quite smooth, by means of which the fire on both sides had the most destructive effect.

The battle raged for nearly two hours, in the early part of which Captain Downie was killed and the confiance so completely disabled that she was compelled to surrender, a destiny which awaited the other vessels of the British squadron. Three of the British gun-boats had been sunk in an early stage of the action, which considerably weakened their force ; but in consequence of the shattered state of the enemy's ships, the remaining gun-boats were enabled to escape.

The British lost in killed and wounded, in this action, one hundred & seventy-four, eighty-four of whom were killed, including the gallant Downie who commanded the British squadron. The American loss amounted to

one hundred and ten, in killed and wounded, fifty-two of whom were of the former number.

During this naval engagement, the efforts of the land forces had been in some measure successful. The brigades under Generals Robinson and Power had succeeded in forcing a passage across the Saranec ; but on the first shouts of victory from the enemy's works, in consequence of the surrender of the British squadron, Sir George Prevost, in the most unaccountable manner, peremptorily commanded them to retreat ; and the same evening the guns were all dismounted from the British works ; and two hours before day on the following morning, the army retreated once more to Canada, leaving a number of the wounded in the hands of the enemy.

The loss sustained by the British land forces, in killed and wounded, from the 6th to the 14th September, amounted to about two hundred and forty\*, but the number was supposed to have been augmented by desertions.

During the time of the expedition to Plattsburgh, and while negotiations for peace were in progress at Ghent, an expedition was undertaken by the British government for the invasion of the shores of the Gulph of Mexico. On the 15th day of September, a squadron under the command of the honorable Captain Wm. Henry Percy of the Royal Navy, consisting of two frigates and two gun brigs, appeared off Mobile. A force Was immediately landed under the directions of Colonel Nicholls and Captain Woodbine, for the purpose of attacking Fort Bowyer ; (situated on Mobile Point ;) but the American commandant, Major Lawrence, withstood the attack with such determined bravery that the force was compelled to retire ; and the fire from the fort was so ably

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\*Sir George Prevost's Despatches to Earl Bathurst.

directed against the shipping that before they could withdraw themselves without the reach of the cannonade, the *Hermes*, flag-ship to the squadron, caught fire and exploded.

As soon as the severity of the winter had suspended the military operations on the frontier of Upper and Lower Canada, a force was collected in the neighborhood of the Bermudas under the command of Major General Keane. This force was embarked on board the fleet under Vice-admiral the Honorable Sir Alexander Cochrane. The armament, on the 12th of December, made its appearance in the bay of St. Louis. The American flotilla of gun-boats under Lieutenant Jones, then lying at Cat's Island, took shelter further up the bay, where they were attacked by the British gun-boats under Captain Lockyer, with great bravery and skill ; and after an animated engagement, the American gun-boats were compelled to surrender.

General Jackson, who commanded the United States forces in this region, had been for some time employed in making the most formidable preparations for defending New Orleans. He had proclaimed the country as far as his command extended under martial law ; he personally superintended the erection of such works of defence as time would permit, and he reviewed the whole of the militia and volunteers in the vicinity of New Orleans, preparatory to their being engaged. No possible exertion that could be made was neglected : General Carrol was called from Tennessee with about five or six thousand troops, who arrived at New Orleans on the 21st December. A host, too, of Baritarian pirates offered themselves to General Jackson as a reinforcement, on condition of a free pardon, whose services were accepted of.

On the 23d, the British army landed, and, making their way through a swamp which lay between the place of

landing and the main position of the enemy, captured a strong piquet stationed at the entrance of a canal called bayou Bien-venu, for the purpose of checking the advance.

General Jackson no sooner heard of the approach of the British column, than placing himself at the head of two regiments of regular troops, the militia and volunteers of Tennessee and New Orleans and a regiment of colored troops, moved a few miles down the river where he awaited the arrival of General Coffie with the force under his command, to whom orders had been previously transmitted to join General Jackson at that place ; after which he prosecuted his march down the river, until about dark he found himself coming in contact with that British advance under Colonel Thornton. A heavy fire was immediately commenced on both sides ; and an American schooner which had dropped down the river for that purpose, kept up a galling fire upon the British. But Colonel Thornton, perceiving the awkward predicament into which he had fallen, immediately ordered his troops to charge ; which compelled the enemy to retreat, and a body of the American riflemen fell into the hands of the victors.

On the morning of the 25th December, Major General Sir Edward Packenham accompanied by Major General Gibbs, arrived in the British camp and assumed the command of the army. Early on the morning of the 27th, the British forces moved forward in two divisions, driving in the enemy's advanced columns to a position about three miles distant from New Orleans ; where his main body was discovered strongly posted in rear of a breast work raised in some places with bales of cotton and covered in front with a very wide ditch ; and in consequence of a recent swell in the river, the American general was enabled to inundate the ground in front of his position, which, when the water receded, left a sufficient quantity in the ditch to render it impass-

sable without the aid of temporary bridges or fascines to fill it up.

The Vangeur with a convoy of transports arrived in the bay on the 1st of January, 1815, with a reinforcement of British troops under Major General Sir John Lambert, who arrived in the British lines on the 6th; and on the 4th, a reinforcement of three thousand Kentucky militia arrived in the American camp under Generals Thomas and Adair.

From the time of the arrival of General Lambert until daylight on the morning of the 8th was incessantly employed by the British in preparations for a general assault upon the enemy's intrenchments. Colonel Thornton was ordered to the right bank of the Mississippi with a detachment under his command, to seize a battery erected by the enemy for the purpose of enfilading the British columns in their advance to the attack.

At break of day on the morning of the 8th, the British columns being under arms, and all things being prepared for the onset, a volley of bombs and Congreve rockets were thrown into the American lines; and at the same moment the army commenced its movement upon the enemy's works. General Packenham, after giving the word of command to advance, galloped in front of the advancing columns and continued to animate his men with his hat waving in the air, until he arrived in front of the enemy's position; where reckless of his own invaluable life, he would present himself at all times in the fury of the conflict, in the same animating manner; but such heroic conduct could not escape the observation of the enemy, especially in close quarters; for almost in the same moment of time he received a wound in the knee and another in the body, upon which he fell into the arms of his aid de camp, Major Mc. Dougal, and immediately expired. Generals Keane

and Gibbs were also wounded, the latter of whom died next day.

The circumstance of the fascines and other apparatus for crossing the trenches not having been such, as was now discovered, entirely to answer the purpose for which they were intended—and the troops perceiving all their leaders, as it were, either killed or carried off the field wounded, (as General Lambert expresses in his despatches)—caused a wavering in the ranks, which, in such a situation became irreparable; and as I advanced, continues the general, at about two hundred and fifty yards from the line, I had the mortification to observe the whole falling back upon me in the greatest confusion. The disorder into which the British columns had been thrown at this juncture rendered it impossible, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of General Lambert and the officers under his command, to restore any kind of order in the lines; a short consultation was therefore held, in which it was conceived advisable to withdraw the troops and abandon the enterprise.

On the opposite side of the Mississippi matters wore a more brilliant aspect. Colonel Thornton advanced his detachment to the attack simultaneously with main body on the other side of the river. The forts against which Colonel Thornton's brigade was opposed were defended by a body of Kentucky volunteers and the Louisiana militia under the command of General Morgan, who, after the first fire, retreated in disorder, leaving the British in possession of their intrenchments.

The loss sustained by the British, on both sides of the river, amounted to not less than two thousand and forty in killed, wounded and missing, a great number of whom were of the latter and were afterwards found to be prisoners of war. The loss of the enemy, according to the despatches, of his adjutant general, was very

trifling, not exceeding twenty killed and fifty-one wounded.

It was concluded in a council of war held by General Lambert and the heads of departments assisted by Vice-admiral the Honorable Sir Alexander Cochrane, that, from the unsuccessful result of the attack already made upon the enemy, and the heavy loss sustained, to renew the assault was utterly hopeless ; it was therefore given up and the army retired from before New Orleans.

Before re-embarking the troops, a second attack was made upon Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point. On the 7th of February, the *Vangeur*, commanded by Captain Ricketts, was brought up in front of the fort, while the land forces closely invested on the other side : and so closely was the siege pushed that in a few days Major Lawrence found it necessary to accept terms of capitulation, and surrender himself with a garrison of three hundred and sixty-six men, prisoners of war.

On the 15th of January, as a British squadron blockaded the port of New-York, the *President* frigate, Commodore Decatur, was discovered leaving the harbor ; a chase immediately commenced which lasted eighteen hours, when the *Endymion* came up with and laying herself alongside her antagonist, a spirited action commenced, which was maintained on both sides with equal courage and heroism during a period of two hours and a half, the result of which was the surrender of the *President*. This was the last naval engagement fought between the two nations, and may be said, together with the most of the campaign in the neighborhood of New Orleans, to have transpired after the plenipotentiaries of the two powers had finished their labors at Ghent.

Thus terminated a second war between Great Britain and America—a contest from the narrative of which,

detailed in the preceding pages, may be seen was evidently commenced by the government of the United States, from the most unworthy motives that possibly could have actuated the councils of a nation. They attempted to practise a scheme of policy, in all their intermixture with Great Britain and France, which was obviously intended to paralyze the whole energies of the British empire, and give loose reins to the high towering ambition of the French usurper ; to defeat the means employed by Great Britain in resisting the arrogant and aspiring pretensions of that despot, in the magnanimous stand she had taken in defence of the independence of nations.

It cannot surely be denied by any person having the exercise of reason, that the very first principle in prosecuting a war is to inflict the greatest possible injury upon the enemy, at the least possible risk or expense. Then, precisely so did the case stand with Great Britain : no circumstance ever shone on any page of the annals of the world could have rested more fully and fairly upon this basis. The cause in which England was engaged was the most interesting and the most calculated to draw forth the sympathies of the world at large. To see, as it were, all Europe (Great Britain alone excepted,) groaning under the iron yoke of a haughty, arrogant tyrant, equally reckless of justice or humanity—actually visiting those nations he had already subdued into a state of the most degraded vassalage, with the most unparalleled treachery and the most atrocious violence that ever stained the ambition of despotic power. To redress those wrongs and to emancipate European nations from the galling chains of that despot—in fine, to break the bewildering spell which appeared to hang over the surrounding continent, at his growing power—Great Britain, with a promptitude and generosity confessedly peculiar to herself as a nation, had stepped forward ; and to see the councils of America, (let it again be reiterated,) the only republican nation

then in existence, willingly enlist the energies of that country into the service of the French ruler, to oppose the grand struggle for freedom, is a problem, to the solution of which the historian is compelled humbly to acknowledge himself incompetent.

But, however the warlike resources of Great Britain were absorbed in the peninsular war, the celebrity of her arms was gallantly sustained (as is seen in the foregoing review of the operations of the war,) by the brave militia and fencible corps of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; to whom, with the few regular troops then in the country, was entrusted the defence of the whole of that part of the British empire; and to the small naval force which could be spared on that service, whose gallant conduct stands forth eminently conspicuous, when it is considered the prodigious disadvantages under which they had at all times to engage an American.

On the 8th of August, the day on which the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and the United States held their first conference at Ghent, the English ministers submitted to the American commissioners the following *rojet*, explanatory of the subjects to be brought under discussion\*:

1st. The forcible seizure of mariners on board of merchant vessels and, in connection with it, the claims of his Britannic Majesty to the allegiance of all his native subjects.

2d. The Indian allies of Great Britain to be included in the pacifications, and a definite boundary to be settled for their territory. The British commissioners stated that an arrangement upon this subject was a *sine qua non*.

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\*Draft of the original Protocol, made by the American ministers at the two first conferences held with the British commissioners.

3d. A review of the boundary line between the United States and the adjacent British colonies.

With respect to this point, the British commissioners disclaimed any intention, on the part of their government, to acquire any increase of territory.

4th. The fisheries, respecting which the British government will not allow the people of the United States the privilege of landing and drying fish, within the territorial jurisdiction of Great Britain, without an equivalent.

The American ministers, at the second meeting, which was held the following day, stated that, upon the first and third points proposed by the British commissioners, they were prepared with no instructions from their government; but that on the second and fourth of these points, there not having existed, hitherto, any difference between the two governments, they had not been anticipated by the United States, and were therefore not provided for in their instructions: that, in relation to an Indian pacification, they knew that the government of the United States had appointed commissioners to treat for peace with the Indians; and that it was not improbable that peace had already been made with them. At the same time, the American commissioners presented, as further subjects considered by the government of the United States as suitable for discussion, the following:

1st. A definition of blockade, and, as far as may be agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights.

2d. Certain claims of indemnity to individuals, for captures and seizures preceding and subsequent to the war.



3d. They further stated, that there were various other points to which their instructions extend, which might with propriety be the subjects of discussion, either in the negotiation of the peace or in that of a treaty of commerce ; which, in case of a propitious termination of the conferences, they were likewise authorised to conclude. That for the purpose of facilitating the first and most essential object of peace, they had discarded every subject which was not considered so peculiarly connected with that, and presented only those points which appeared to be immediately relevant to the negotiation.

At a subsequent meeting held on the 10th, the British commissioners endeavored to impress the American ministers with the propriety of giving up certain places ceded to the United States by the memorable treaty of 1783, for the purpose of rendering the limits of Canada more precise and secure ; but upon this point the Americans were immovable.

The most important, as well as the most difficult subjects in dispute between the two countries, were undoubtedly those relating to the impressment of seamen from American ships, and the limits of blockade. The peace in Europe had, however, reduced these questions to mere abstract principles, regarding the future rather than the present ; and both parties, aware of the difficulty, agreed to waive discussions upon which it seemed impossible to arrive at any amicable conclusion. The other subjects of importance were the admission of the Indians to the treaty and the establishment of a new Canadian frontier. On the former of these points, it was agreed that the Indian allies of both parties should be left in the same situation in which they were found in 1812 ; and on the latter, that any ambiguity regarding the territorial limits between Canada and the United

States should be removed by commissioners appointed on both sides for that purpose ; but that the line of demarkation, as drawn by the treaty of 1783, should form the standard of their decisions\*.

The foregoing formed the basis of an amicable arrangement of the ditietences between the two countries, and was concluded by the signature of a treaty of peace to that effect, at Ghent, on the 24th December, 1814.

\*For the foregoing summary, see Baines' Wars of the French Revolution,

