

formed this feat, actually, upon snow-shoes, confronting hardships and surmounting obstacles, to which the late march of the Guards through the same scenes, admirable in itself, as it ever must be, was but a holiday freak. The staff and the Commissariat of those days had not undergone the teaching of a Crimean campaign—the more honourable to those who, by dint of individual exertion, contrived to supply those deficiencies, and among them no man shone more conspicuously than the late Major General Thomas Evans, C.B., long identified with the social circles of Montreal and Quebec, and who was then a Captain in the 8th Infantry.

In their wake followed Captains Barclay, Pring, and Finnis of the Royal Navy, with five lieutenants and a few seamen, overland) from Halifax. From Quebec they proceeded rapidly to Kingston, took the fleet there in hand, and laid themselves out, sturdily, to the work of fitting and equipment. In May they were joined by Sir James L. Yeo, from England, backed by about 450 British sailors.

It may be well to recapitulate here the strength of the respective forces on the frontier, both of Upper and Lower Canada, at the commencement of the campaign of 1813. Armstrong, the American Secretary at war, stated that the force commanded by General Dearborn, within District No. 9, that is to say, on the Plattsburg-Montreal frontier, was over 13,000 men of all arms. The force at the disposal of Sir George Prevost at this point did not exceed 3,000 regulars and militia.

At Sackett's Harbour 200 regulars and 2,000 militia ; at Lake Champlain, available for operations on Central Canada or the left Division, 3,000 regulars and 2,000 militia. To oppose this force there were scattered at Kingston, Prescott, and other posts on the line, about 1,500 men.

On the Niagara frontier, the enemy had assembled 3,300 regulars and 2,000 militia. To these men were opposed 1,700 men in Fort George, and 600 men on the rest of the frontier, 36 miles in length,—2,300 in all.

On the Western frontier, General Harrison held in hand some 2,000 men, while opposed to him in command of the Right division of Upper Canada, Proctor wielded about 1,000 troops, and 1,200 Indians and militia.

The first operations of the year were adverse to the Americans. The conditions of climate on the Western frontier admit of military movements at a time when Central Canada is difficult, and Lower Canada impracticable. Early in January, 1813, General Harrison, who, at the head of the Ohio levies, hung upon the border of Michigan, made demonstrations on Detroit, weakly garrisoned, and held by Colonel Proctor, who had been left in command by Brock. The season, though favourable to an advance from the American side, from the South, precluded all idea of British reinforcements from the North. On the 11th, Proctor learned that an American division under General Winchester, had reached Frenchtown on the River Raisin, with the intention of attacking Brownstown, still more in advance towards Detroit. Proctor boldly grappled with the danger. He saw that the American force had advanced beyond the shelter of support, and he flung his whole strength on Winchester before Harrison could reach him. At break of day; on the 22nd, Proctor attacked the enemy's division, about 1,000 strong, being the flower of the NorthweStern army, and encountered, from dread of the Indians, a desperate resistance. The buildings at Frenchtown were held, but a part of the American force broke to their rear, and endeavoured to escape by the road on which they came. In the pursuit, the American General was captured by Round-head, a Wyandot chief, and brought to Proctor. The Americans, who had retreated under cover, still fought with desperation.* Indian severities and their own inhuman reprisals crowded

* Christie, Vol. XI, p. 69. A more detailed narrative of these occurrences will be found hereafter, Chapters XVIII and XIX.

before :their eyes, like spectres of doom, assuming bodily shape, in swarms of dusky warriors, heralded by.demoniac yells. Winchester, apprehensive that the buildings held by his men would be fired to the hopeless destruction of every defender, agreed to surrender himself and his whole force. Five hundred and twenty-two .men and officers, with arms, stores and .annnution, became the prize of the British ; about 400 were killed and wounded. Proctor commanded 500 regular soldiers and militia, with about 600 Indians, and lost 180 *hors de combat*. He and his troops received a vote of thanks £roin the Canadian House of Assembly then in session, and he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. For a time, the Michigan te7itory was safe, and Detroit secure.

We will now turn from the right division of Upper Canada, to the division of the left, or the frontier of the Upper St, Lawrence. On the 6th February, Capt. Forsyth, the invader of rustic tranquillity at Gananoque, made a nocturnal raid on the pigs and poultry of Elizabethtown, now Brockville, where he wounded a Tilitia sentry, sacked the cattle pens, and did not spare the private houses, nor the gaol, and carried off fifty-two of the into captivity,—among them two Majors, three CaptAna, and two Lieutenagts elderly gentlemen who . as a compliment retained their coMmissions in the militia.. This exploit led to a brilliant wrisal, and deserves notice moreover, as a proof, how far this part of the frontier is assailable **in winter** the ice, indeed, affording facility for small predatory excursions.

The Lower Canadian Legislature rose in February, and on the 17th Sir George Prevost left Quebec for Upper Canada. On his .troute' he found at Prescott Lieut.-Colonel Pearson, an active and enterprising officer, who urged upon him an attack on Ogdensburg in retaliation for the recent descent on Brockville. Prevost doubted and demurred ; but while the proposal was under discussion, it was discovered that two deserters had escaped from the British side

with the intelligence of the presence of the Governor in Prescott, and of his contemplated movement westward, no light incentive to the enemy to intercept his progress. It was therefore deemed expedient to distract attention from His Excellency by a diversion, and Pearson was permitted to plan a demonstration on the ice of the St. Lawrence,—like the torreador of a Spanish bull-fight,—partly to disconcert, and *hem*s the bull, and partly to test the mettle and strength of the animal.

Prescott was then a small village, protected by a palisaded fort, and block-house ; since enlarged, surrounded with heavy earth works, and now known as Fort Wellington. It is situated above the Rapids, or continuous, rough, and broken navigation of the St. Lawrence, which for 40 miles interrupts communications with Montreal, and was . a place of rendezvous, for voyageurs and batteaux, and a depot for military stores. It stands on an exposed part of the frontier, within cannon shot of Ogdensburg opposite. Below, the Canadian shore of the St. Lawrence is, to a great extent, covered by impassable rapids, and above, with a short interval, the coast is in like degree masked by the rocks of the Thousand Islands. But in that interval, from Prescott to Brockville—a distance of twelve miles—a lovely champaign country opens to the view, undulating upwards in rich verdure, as if born of the green waters of the noble river, and bearing on its fertile uplands, cornfields and orchards, mills and farm houses, villas and villages, nestling among primeval trees, all very beautiful to look upon, but difficult to defend, either in summer or winter.

Opposite to Prescott stands, now, the flourishing city of Ogdensburg, containing 7000 inhabitants, in those days a populous village, very democratic in its proclivities, and anti-British in religion. It was then, also, a fortified military post, garrisoned and armed, but still more effectually protected by the breadth of the St. Lawrence, at this point, a mile and a quarter wide. One rash at-

tempt upon the place made in open day, in the soft and golden autumn, had, as already related, been repulsed. In the later autumn and early winter, the floating masses of descending ice prohibit the use of boats, but by the end of December the river generally "takes," presenting when solid, a continuous surface, but interspersed here and there with open intervals of rushing water, and with uncertain intervals of unsubstantial ice, pitfalls, and worse to the incautious footstep, and very trying to the nerves, if nerves were known at that early period of the Canadian formation. It had been, of course, impracticable to test or try the strength of the ice under the fire of Ogdensburg.

The proposed demonstration was in itself an adventure full of peril, but the man who led was no trifler. Pearson had been ordered away, and his second in command, Lt.-Col. G. Macdonnell, conducted the enterprise. Colonel Macdonnell being for the nonce a militia officer, like the Free Lance of former days, was given to fighting on his own inspirations, and it was hinted that Pearson did not altogether disapprove of the latitudinarianism of his subordinate. This gallant officer came of a good stock. Descended from the old, and a native of the new Glengarry, he led to the fight such a following as Vich Ian Vohr himself, might have been proud to muster. He commanded the Glengarry Fencibles, raised wholly in Central Canada, and on the occasion of the raid on Brockville, had been dispatched to remonstrate with the American commander on the un-military character of his excursion. He had been received with a discourtesy not usual to the educated officer of the American army, had been taunted somewhat in the style of "Mine Ancient Pistol," and had been challenged to a fight on the ice ; a fancy he was not disinclined to gratify, and he had at his bidding the very men to help him.

These men were the Glengarries. In the rear of Prescott, due North and East, fronting on the St. Lawrence, and a few miles

distant from the stream, lies what is known as the Glengarry country, of Canada, composed of the present united counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry. At the time of the war these tracts of country were known as the Eastern District of Upper Canada. After the peace of 1783, the Eastern District had been appropriated by the British Government, as a place of refuge for the U. E. Loyalists, and it so happened that among these early and war-worn settlers, a majority consisted of Scotch Highlanders, the descendants of men who, after Culloden, had been transported to the plantations, and whose instincts of loyalty were such, that regardless of names, genealogies, or dynasties, they looked to the principle, and whether it was for James, or whether it was for George, struck heartily and home in the abiding sentiment of Claverhouse :

" Ere the king's crown comes down, there are crowns to be broke."

The dauntless devotion of these men attracted a still further accession of chivalrous loyalty. To the Jacobites of 1745—to the U. E. Loyalists of 1775, was added a gallant band of Scottish soldiers who had fought the battle of the Crown against Republican France from 1792 to 1803. Men who had battled under Hutchinson and Abercrombie, who had pushed the French grenadiers at Aboukir, and had borne the brunt of the Turkish cavaliers at Rosetta. The brief and illusive peace of Amiens (1802) led to the disbandment of many fine British regiments, and among them a Catholic regiment of Highlanders, raised some years before, mainly through the instrumentality of Alexander Macdonnell of Glen Urquhart, a Catholic clergyman of great energy of character and benevolence of disposition.* He had been appointed chaplain of the corps, and in the hour of their destitution proved to be a fast and faithful friend. By unremitted exertion, he obtained from the British Ministry of the day the permission and the means, to transport the men of the late

* Morgan, Celebrated Canadians, p. 262.

Glengarry regiment to Canada. He led them into the wilderness, and engrafted on the waste, their faith to God and their fidelity to the throne. Good Catholics, faithful and loyal men, they have never departed from that first, noble teaching. The earnest priest and tried friend, through life, never deserted them. Partaking of the character of the mediæval churchman, half bishop, half baron, he fought and prayed, with equal zeal, by the side of men he had come to regard as his hereditary followers. With the universal acclaim of all good men of all denominations, he rose to the Episcopate and died Bishop of Kingston, mourned in death as he had been revered in life.

The Bishop had been most active in rousing and recruiting the Glengarries during the preceding winter. The fiery cross had passed through the land, and every clansman had obeyed the summons. The Glengarry Fencibles garrisoned the frontier, and their gallant leader, (George the Red) a near relation of Bishop Macdonnell, now rallied his followers behind the earth works of Prescott for his proposed demonstration on Ogdensburg.

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose,—
 The war note of Lochiel,—which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard too have her Saxon foes :—
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the firm native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evans', Donald's fame, rings in each clansman's ears.

Little time was wasted on preliminaries. It had been the practice of the British for some time previous, to exercise daily on the ice. Half the river fairly belonged to them, and not having, hitherto, carried their mimic warfare beyond these limits, they had continued to drill and manoeuvre, unmolested. On the morning of the 22nd February, Macdonnell descended on the ice at the head

of 480 men,—two-thirds and more Canadian militia, supported by two field pieces. He played and purred for some time with velvety touch, prepared for a spring. The American officer in command, Forsyth, was at his breakfast. He was informed, in haste, that the British fun, that morning, looked very like earnest; but assuming the privilege of the "old soldier," he simply "pooh-poohed" his informant. The British were only at drill, "they were not the men to trouble him in that impudent way," and so, betook him afresh to his corn cakes and hominy. He occupied an old French work on the western side of the Oswegatchie, a small affluent of the St. Lawrence, at its mouth, situated behind where the lighthouse now stands. He had eleven guns in position, 500 men at his back, and a glacis before him a mile wide, exposed and smooth as a tablecloth. Macdonnell manoeuvred briefly, and then dividing his force into two columns, advanced rapidly to the attack ;—speed and resolution alone could save them. The Americans, more wary than their chief, sprang to their guns ; musketry and cannon opened on the advancing columns. The left, under Macdonnell himself, rushed rapidly on, under a heavy fire, and through the deep snow ascended the river bank, and swept from the left into the village of Ogdensburg, overwhelming all opposition. Here from the eastern bank of the Oswegatchie, he commanded to a great extent the flank and rear of old French Fort Presentation, and the batteries which raked the river ; but his own guns were behind hand, they had stuck in the deep snow bank and rough ice, broken and piled, at the river bank. By furious efforts they were forced to the front, and not a moment too soon. While this was doing, Jenkins, who commanded the right wing, a gallant New Brunswicker, and a Captain in the Glengarries, had, most emphatically, taken the bull by the horns. Seven pieces of artillery, backed by 200 good troops, smashed the head of his advance ; gallantly he rallied his broken column, not a living man shrank ; springing forward with a

cheer, his left arm was shattered by a shot ; nothing daunted, forward and still cheering on, his upraised right arm was disabled by a cluster of grape. Thus crippled, his voice still failed not, nor his gestures, until he fell from loss of blood,* but he was nobly followed. His gallant Glengarries, with broken formation, through the deep snow, in front of the deadly battery, were re-forming for a charge with the bayonet, when, fortunately, Macdonnell's guns on the left got within range. Captain Eustace, with the men of the King's, crossed the Oswegatchie and captured the eastern battery, and together, both attacks swarmed into the body of the place, to find it vacated, except by dead and dying, the enemy having withdrawn to the woods in their west rear, where there was no means of intercepting their retreat. The Americans lost about 75 men and officers, eleven pieces of cannon, a large amount of military stores and four armed vessels burnt in the harbour. The British lost eight killed and fifty-two wounded, the larger proportion, as may well be supposed, in front of the old French work assailed by Captain Jenkins.

This feat was performed chiefly by the men of the country, by the militia and Fencibles, both Canadian and Glengarry. These men did not plead qualms of conscience or constitutional scruples, as an excuse for not daring the ice, which undulated and cracked and gaped beneath their feet. One hundred and twenty of the King's regiment, under Captain Eustace and " Lieutenant Ridge of that corps, who very gallantly led on

* Captain Jenkins was a man of striking appearance and bearing,—the admiration of his men. He was, as stated in the text, a native of New Brunswick, the son of an American loyalist and brave old soldier. His left arm was amputated at the shoulder ; his right arm was saved, but almost in a useless state. He survived in this condition some years. Mrs. Sampson of Kingston,—the estimable wife of a man as much respected as she was beloved, the late Dr. Sampson,—was a sister of this distinguished officer. His only daughter, the wife of Sutherland Stayner, Esquire, lives near Richmond, C. E.

the advance,"* and forty of the Royal Newfoundland regiment, under Captain Lefebvre, led the left column, and, as ever, were foremost in the fray, but the remainder of the force, and particularly the men under Jenkins, were farmers' sons fighting in defence of their homes, and right nobly did they redeem, that day, the pledge made to mother and sister and wife by the old fireside. Col. Frazer of the militia was bravely supported by his officers and men. Lieut. Empey of that force lost a leg. Lieut. McAulay and Ensign Macdonnell of the Glengarries, Ensigns Kerr of the militia, and Mackay of the Light Infantry, who had each charge of a field-piece, and Lieut. Gangueben of the Royal Engineers, are all honourably mentioned by Colonel Macdonnell in his graphic and soldierly despatch.

There still lives in Ogdensburg an old Canadian militiaman, by name Pierre Holmes. His father had been a British soldier, his mother a French Canadian of Sorel. French is his natural language. He is very old and very poor. He works about, doing " chores," cutting wood, and drawing water for the grandsons of those against whom he fought on this memorable occasion, and who appear to regard the lively old man with especial favour. He relates how that he was a "*petit tambour*" of the Canadian Fencibles in those days ; how the British paraded for a while, threw out skirmishers, and advanced on the ice "*drapeaux cloployes et tambours battants* ;" how boldly Macdonnell led, how, by swearing and sweating, he got his guns out of the deep snow ; how, he cared for his prisoners ; how, he released one indignant captive, who had been rudely treated by an over lively volunteer, and

* *Vide* Macdonnell's despatch, February 23rd, 1813. This dashing officer subsequently married the eldest daughter of the Hon. Samuel Gerrard of Montreal. Their eldest daughter is married to Edward L. Freer, Esquire, Canada Postal Department, and the second to George, son of the Hon. George Moffatt, of Montreal.

sent his unworthy assailant to the black-hole ; how, he prohibited and forstalled all pillage. It appears, that in crossing the river, a little of the olden rieving temper had revived among the Highlandmen, and the word " spulzie " had passed, and many faces glistened with glee at the hopeful prospect ; but to their intense disgust Macdonnell anticipated them. He put a sentry upon every door in Ogdensburg ; " and so," exclaimed the auditor of old Peter Holmes' narration, " you got no plunder after all ? " "Plunder !" shrieked the old man, in the angry accents of indignant recollection, " Plunder ! *Non, monsieur, non pas même une torquette de tabaer**

Macdonnell took his revenge by force of contrast ; he was courteous to his enemies, protected prisoners, spared the poultry, respected elderly gentlemen notwithstanding their rank in the militia, and paid every American teamster employed in transporting the captured stores to Prescott four dollars *per diem* in hard silver, as the price of his services.

*' Pierre Holmes, as has been before said, is very old and very poor. By some misadventure or inadvertence, or want of knowledge, or of energy rightly applied, he never got the 200 acres of land awarded to him as " Tambour Major " at the end of the war. Is it now too late ; can nothing even yet be done for the brave old man ?

CHAPTER VIII.

.British armaments at Kingston and York. British force. American strength. Descent planned on Kingston. York and Fort George. Little York—What it was—What it is. Defences in 1813. York attacked 26th April, 1813. Ship of war on the stocks, on British order. First alarm. Pluck of the population. Maclean, clerk of the House of Assembly, killed. Young Allan MacNab. Sir Roger Sheaffe.

In the mean time, Sir George Prevost, on the 23rd February, had reached Kingston in safety, and there, animated by his presence, the exertions made to restore the equality of the British with that of the American naval armament on lake Ontario. One ship of war had been laid down at York, now Toronto, in the preceding year ; and another, the Wolfe, of 24 guns, was in an advanced stage at Kingston, but men and stores were both wanting. The American shipwrights at Sackett's Harbour, through the energy of their government, fore-reached, hand over hand, those in the British ship-yards. Sir James Yeo and his seamen did not arrive until May, so that Commodore Chauncey, amply supplied and equipped from the sea-board arsenals, rode undisputed master of Ontario from October, 1812, to the middle of May, 1813. How he used his opportunity will be shortly shown. The whole coast of this beautiful lake was open and exposed to attack. A descent on Kingston had been planned and was expected. The Americans had six fine schooners and a ship, mounting together 72 guns, all admirably appointed and manned by choice seamen, disposable for an invasion at any point.

The real military objects of attack were Fort George, Niagara, and Kingston. Little York, the point selected, was notably