

with guns of all calibres. Fifty able bodied seamen came up from Kingston, and were divided among the five vessels of the squadron, the remainder of the crews was composed of Canadian lake seamen, some of the amphibious Newfoundlanders, and marines from the 41st foot.*

At length, when, as Barclay writes,t " there was not a day's flour in the store, and the squadron was on half-allowance of many things," and " it was necessary to fight the enemy to enable us to get supplies of every description," the British squadron took to the lake. The distance from Malden to Put-in-Bay, where the American fleet lay at anchor, was about sixty miles. On the morning of the 10th September, 1813, at sunrise, the two squadrons sighted each other, and prepared both for the battle. At a quarter before twelve, noon, the British, having the advantage of the wind, commenced the action. Barclay, in the Detroit, engaged the Lawrence, Commodore Perry ; and for two hours the battle raged. The Lawrence was utterly disabled, and reduced to an unmanageable hulk. At this critical moment Perry did a daring feat. He left

the Lawrence in a small boat, and, passing through the midst of the fire, gained the deck of his consort, the Niagara, and re-hoisted his flag. The Niagara was uninjured. Before, however, he could take part in the fight, the Lawrence struck her flag to Barclay. Then came a reverse. The wind had changed, and gave Perry the advantage. The Niagara bore up, and passed through the British line, engaging the Detroit and Queen Charlotte. The Detroit had been severely handled in her contest with the Lawrence, and had become since a special object for the raking attentions of the gun-boats. Finnis, of the Queen Charlotte, had been killed early in the action ; his first Lieutenant, Stokoe, had been struck senseless by a splinter. Irvine, of the Provincial Navy, who succeeded, with equal courage, may not have had the experience of these officers. He either fell on board of the Detroit, or the Detroit fell on board of him. Garland, first Lieutenant of the Detroit, was mortally wounded, and Barclay himself was at last shot down, and compelled to leave the deck. At this moment Lieut. Buchan, who commanded the Lady Prevost, and Lieut. Bignall, who commanded the Hunter, were both wounded. " Every officer, in fact, commanding vessels, and their seconds, were either killed, or wounded so severely as to be unable to keep the deck. Never in any action was the loss more severe."*

In this condition, without officers to direct or men to fight—for the slaughter, from the superior weight of metal of the enemy, had been dreadful,—and so wrecked, that, in a heavy sea on the next day, both the Detroit and the Queen Charlotte lost their masts,—after four hours of desperate fighting, the whole squadron was compelled to surrender.

Writers more addicted to sound than sense, have thought fit to ascribe their misfortunes to the " mixed crew of Canadians and

* Barclay's Letter :—Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, Sept. 22nd, 1818.

* ENGLISH FLEET.

AMERICAN FLEET.

Detroit,	19	Lawrence,	20
" " ; Queen Charlotte,	17	Niagara,	20
Lady Provost,	13	Caledonia,	3
Hunter,	10	Ariel,	4
Chippewa,	1	Trippe,	1
Little Belt,	3	Tigress,	1
JOU bi1J00 f ,..	63	Somers,	2
oviyib 3241 Js f		Scorpion,	2
frusod		Ohio,	1
		Porcupine,	1
			55
Weight of metal : British, 4591bs.		American,	9281bs.
Number of men,	345	Number of men,.....	580

† Barclay's Despatch :—Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, 22nd September, 1813.

soldiers " who manned the British squadron. Barclay might well be proud of the " Canadians and soldiers," who, with vessels ill-fitted and half-armed, with guns of all calibres, and insufficient ammunition, had enabled him for five hours to maintain this unequal contest ; who had compelled the Lawrence to strike her colours, and who yielded at last to nearly double strength of men, and more than double weight of metal. It may be questioned if the best seamen who fought under Rodney or Collingwood could have done more.

Cooper, in his Naval History, remarks, in the right spirit of an American sailor : " Stress was laid at the time on the fact that a portion of the British crews were Provincials ; but the history of this continent is filled with instances in which men of that character have gained battles, which went to increase the renown of the mother country, without obtaining any credit for it. The hardy frontier-men of the American lakes are as able to endure fatigue, as ready to engage, and as constant in battle, as the seamen of any marine in the world. They merely require good leaders, and these the English appear to have possessed in Captain Barclay and his assistants."

Barclay was the type of a British sailor. He had served under Nelson. He was noted for personal courage, and for that moral courage which, at the call of duty, defies despair. He was one of those sea-dogs which looses its hold only in death. He expected more from human nature than could be found in any other nature than his own. Defeat disturbed a temper which death could not daunt. His despatch on this occasion does not do justice to the brave men who stood by him so truly.

Some months afterwards, he tottered before a court-martial, like a Roman trophy—nothing but helm and hauberk. He had lost an arm at Trafalgar ; the other was rendered useless by a grape shot through the shoulder. He was further weakened by several severe

flesh wounds. Little wonder, that men not given to such weakness shed tears at the spectacle. Little wonder, that the president of the court, in returning his sword, told him, in a voice tremulous with emotion, that the conduct of himself and men had been most honourable to themselves and to their country.

Barclay's disaster was a knell of doom to Proctor. The possibility of such a result and its consequences had not been unforeseen. Salvation would have been the issue of success. Barclay had gallantly risked his " forlorn hope" to save his friends, and had failed,—retreat or ruin alone remained.

Proctor's position should be fairly understood. Winter was not far before him—Autumn was upon him. The forest tracks called roads, were, by the rains of the season, made almost impassable. Soon they would be impracticable. The only feasible communication, that of the river and lake, was intercepted by the American fleet. Fort Malden had been divested of its guns, its ammunition, and its spare food to supply Barclay. The garrisons on the line of the Detroit river could only be victualled from the scanty stores in hand, or be supplied from Burlington Bay. This resource was distant 200 miles from the nearest post. It was clearly more wise, and easier to march his troops to find supplies—than to bring supplies to find his troops,—prisoners, perhaps, in the hands of an enemy. But, whether for advance or for retreat, the by-paths of the forest, intermediate, were such as the macadamized and locomotive imagination of the present day cannot encompass. A backwoodsman, laden with his axe, wading here, ploutring there, stumbling over rotted trees, protruding stumps, a bit of a half submerged corduroy road for one short space—then an adhesive clay bank—then a mile, or two, or more, of black muck swamp,—may possibly, clay-clogged and footsore, and with much pain in the small of his back, find himself by sundown at the foot of a hemlock Or cedar, with a fire at his feet, having done manfully about ten

miles for his day's work ; Apart from the fire, and the blessed rest, practice deducts woefully from the poetry of bush life. But what could be done by the unaccustomed soldier, from long garrison service, out of training, with his pack and his blanket, canteen and haversack, with his musket and full supply of ammunition--a weight calculated by Napier, at his day, to exceed sixty pounds. What could the best and most enduring man, so laden, be expected to do, amid the sloughs of this unmitigated wilderness. But what was to be done with the impediments—the guns, the ammunition waggons, the daily and reserve supplies *de guerre et de bouche*? The man might carry enough to support life from day to day—but what was to provide for the morrow ? How were the women and children,—the rapid accumulations,—the *flotsam* and *jetsam* of a fluctuating force, to be conveyed away, protected and fed, for at least twenty marches ? And yet the alternative of ruinous retreat was hopeless surrender. Hull might have been exchanged on his own ground.

Proctor preferred at once the wiser part—rapidly he called in his outposts on either side of the river Detroit ; he dismantled Malden, Windsor, Sandwich, destroyed such stores as could not usefully be removed,—and then, having destroyed all public buildings, in the fort at Detroit, and transported all the guns across the river to the Canadian side at Windsor, he commenced his retreat upon Burlington Heights. It was deliberately organized and judiciously planned. The retreat being necessary, it was presumed that the Americans would not follow the British and their Indian allies far into the depths of the forest. A protracted advance would equalize the difficulties of either party—the American, removed from his base of supply, would certainly not find in the track of his adversary, improved means of transportation. So Proctor collected his people at Windsor; sent off his heavy baggage, reserve supplies, women and children, in advance, and on the 28th Sept. finally relin-

quished Detroit, and fell back upon British territory. His route was well chosen to assist him as far as possible into the interior.

On Lake St. Clair, thirty miles due East of Detroit, is the embouchure of the Thames, emulous in its turbid tide alone, of its British prototype. It is navigable for small vessels, some seventy or eighty miles on the line of the proposed retreat. The road, such as it was, followed the North shore of the sinuous and sluggish stream, at places on the bank, at others, and where " cutting off bends " at some distance from the river. The direction of the stream, ascending, of the line of road, and of the line of retreat, were generally the same, due East. The boats having been despatched with the *impedimenta*, the troops following, covered the advanced retreat. The force at this time, with Proctor, consisted of about 830 men, including the 41st Regt., about 540 strong. The residue consisted of men of the Royal Newfoundland regiment and militia. Tecumseh, the Shawanee Chief, with 500 warriors, and the invariable incumbrance on the Indian war path, a large number of squaws and papooses, all of whom had to be fed by the British commander.

The American force under Gen. Harrison, which had been thrown on the Canadian shore of the river Detroit, amounted to 5,000 men. Deductions having been made for the occupation of Malden, Windsor, and the Fort at Detroit, had left a force at Harrison's disposal of 3,500 men, of whom 1,500 were Kentucky Mounted Riflemen, of whom this officer says in his despatch to his own government, " the American backwoodsmen ride better in the woods than any other people,—a musket or rifle is no impediment, they being accustomed to carry them on horseback from their earliest youth."* It is well known, too, to those who have had any experience in the bush, that horses used to this work, acquire an

*Despatch :—Detroit, 9th October, 1863.

instinctive facility for dodging difficulties and surmounting obstacles, —they become singularly sure-footed and steady; however deep they may plunge, they rarely stumble. Horses so trained, thread the mazes of the forest at a rapid walk, and can only be checked by a wind-fall or black swamp.

It is also worthy of remark, that the whole of this part of Canada is a rich alluvial deposit reclaimed in the course of ages from Lake St. Clair. The forests are of prodigious size. Here is found in luxuriant growth,—six feet in diameter at the base,—the noble black walnut, now so favourably known for purposes of domestic ornament and use ; and here the wild turkey, weighing from 20 to 30 lbs., displays in large flocks, its lustrous plumage, rich with metallic tints, and frights the solitude with its unearthly gobblings. These noble overtowering trees intercept the light, and to a great extent destroy the undergrowth—between the huge trunks the space is clear ; you may ride between them as freely as through the aisles of a Gothic Cathedral. The trees which would neutralize and disturb the regular formation of infantry, offer but little impediment to a bold irregular cavalry, each horseman fighting " on his own hook."

CHAPTER XXI.

Proctor falls back to Baptiste Creek—General Harrison with Perry's assistance follows—5th October—British force halts at Dalson's Farm—Colonel Maclean of Scarborough—His reminiscences—Warburton in command at Dalson's—Proctor retires personally to Moravian Town—Roused before daylight—Intelligence—Troops attacked and retreating—Warburton followed by Shelby and Kentucky riflemen—Description of these troops and mode of attack—Proctor halts his men—Nature of ground and position—Tecumseh—His last words—No abattis made—American attack—Defeat and surrender of the British.

Proctor had drawn off on the 28th of September. His baggage-waggon and store-boats had been sent on in advance. Many of his men had already marched 18 miles through a country deep as the worst marsh in Holland. They fell back leisurely for about 80 miles to Baptiste Creek, near the mouth of the Thames. They crossed on a bridge which, when passed, was most unaccountably left by the troops undestroyed. They then took up their line of march on the north shore of the Thames. They still covered the rear of their boats and convoys.

From the Bridge to Dalson's farm, near where the town of Chatham now stands, was a distance of about 16 miles. Dalson's was a small clearing, one of those scattered Oases which were then found, at long intervals, in the wilderness. Here, the uninterrupted level was broken by a rising ground, probably pitched upon by the pioneer and bush ranger, as possessing the recommendation of dryness.

Here, upon the 5th of Oct., Proctor had halted with his whole force. He had been retarded by the state of the roads, and by the necessity of not leaving in the rear, supply-boats—delayed by

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