

immeasurably in advance of our own. Indeed the apparent supineness on our part had engendered doubt and suggested disaffection. It is impossible to ignore the alarm, and confusion, and despondency, which settled down, for a time, like a black cloud upon the country, until suddenly, day broke through the gloom, and the stalwart form and sterling character of Brock strode into light.

Like the white horse in a battle-piece by Wouvermans, in every delineation of this war, Isaac Brock stands forth from the canvas, the central figure and commanding feature of the scene. It will not be uninteresting, therefore, to offer, at the outset, a brief sketch of his earlier career. He was born in the Island of Guernsey in 1769, the year which gave birth to Napoleon and Wellington. He was descended from an old and respected family. He obtained his first commission in 1785, served in the West Indies, was promoted rapidly, thanks to the havoc of climate ; and, by the force of a vigorous constitution, survived to command the 49th foot as senior Colonel in the expedition to Holland in 1799, where he made his mark under adverse circumstances. In 1801 he was selected with his regiment to serve under Lord Nelson, in his memorable attack on Copenhagen. In 1802, Brock accompanied his regiment to Canada, and was, for the next ten years of his life, identified with the existence of a country which he ultimately governed wisely, defended nobly, and which points to his grave as the monument of his glory. He was a man of natural capacity, self-cultivated, resolute, and endowed remarkably with the qualities of forethought and foresight. His correspondence, imperfectly preserved, makes us regret that so much should have been lost.\* These memorials of an honest, modest, and truly brave nature, have furnished the greater part of these details. In person he was tall and athletic, with a commanding bearing and gentle manner. In private life he was irreproach-

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\* Life and Correspondence of Sir Isaac Brock, by Topper.

able, universally respected by those who did not know him, and loved by those who did. His public life speaks for itself.

In 1806, being senior officer at the time, Col. Brock commanded the troops both in Upper and Lower Canada, and so threatening was the aspect of affairs—six years before the war broke out—" the Americans being employed in drilling and forming their militia, and openly declaring their intention of invading the Province the instant that war is determined on,"\* that he took vigorous measures for the defence of the Ancient Capital, and for strengthening Cape Diamond. On the arrival of Sir James Craig, the new Governor General and Commander-in-Chief, he relinquished his temporary command, and returned to his regiment, which was always in splendid order. In 1808 he was appointed to be a Brigadier ; and an extract from a letter written to his brother in July of that year is worth reproducing here, as showing the malice aforethought which provoked the war—the pre-determination to " corner" Great Britain—to compel her to resent accumulated wrong—to strike the first blow,—and thus to unite the disunited opinions of the people of the States on the unavoidable necessity of war.

" What will be the result of our present unsettled relations with the neighboring republic," says Brock in 1808, " it is very difficult to say. The government is composed of such unprincipled men, that to calculate on it by the ordinary rules of action would be absurd. We have completely outwitted Jefferson, and all his schemes to provoke us to war. He had no other object in view in issuing his restrictive proclamation ; but failing in that, he tried what the embargo would produce, and in this he has been foiled again. Certainly our administration is deserving of every praise for their policy on these occasions. Jefferson and his party, however strong the inclination, dare not declare war, and therefore they endeavor

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\* Correspondence of Sir I. Brock, p. 45.

to attain their objects by every provocation. A few weeks since the garrison of Niagara fired upon seven merchant boats passing the fort, and actually captured them. Considering the circumstances attending this hostile act, it is but too evident it was intended to provoke retaliation. These boats were fired upon and taken within musket shot of our own fort. Their balls, falling on our own shore, were expected to have raised the indignation of the most phlegmatic. Fortunately, the commandant was not in the way, as otherwise it is difficult to say what would have happened. A representation of this affair has been made at Washington, and for an act certainly opposed to existing treaties, we have been referred for justice to the ordinary courts of law."\*

This letter was written from Montreal, but Brock was chiefly employed at Quebec up to July, 1810, when he was despatched to take command of the troops in Upper Canada by Sir James Craig. He established his head quarters at Fort George, on the Niagara frontier, but visited all the frontier forts, remaining for some time on the river Detroit, absorbed in observation and preparation for the contest he knew to be before him. In 1811, Sir George Prevost reached Quebec, and in October of that year, Francis Gore, Esq., the Lieut.-Governor of Upper Canada, having returned to England on leave, Brock, now a Major-General, succeeded him, and thus, at a critical moment, the civil as well as the military authority in the Upper Province was combined, most providentially, in the man most competent to confront the emergency. It is instructive to note from his correspondence at this time, how sagaciously he foresaw, how earnestly he forewarned, and to observe how little his counsels were appreciated.

War was declared on the 18th June, 1812, but, by some strange omission on the part of the British minister at Washington, the official notification did not reach Sir George Prevost until the 7th

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\* Correspondence of Sir J. Brock, p. 45.

July. General Brock was not officially notified at all. Happily, private patriotism and enterprise supplied the deficiency. Mr. Richardson of Montreal, afterwards the Hon. John Richardson, had apprised the Governor General of the fact on the 25th June, and the intelligence reached Brock, through a private channel, about the same time. He was then at Fort George. He made the most, at once, of his insufficient means. If not forearmed, he had fortunately been forewarned, by his own forecast. Personally he provided for the protection of the Niagara and Detroit portion of his command. To Major General Shaw he confided the Eastern frontier, of which Kingston was the centre.

The thunder cloud soon burst ; — Long before the declaration of war, the American government had despatched from Ohio into the territory of Michigan 2,500 men, under Brigadier-General Hull. On the 12th July, Hull invaded Canada. He crossed the Straits, or Detroit, as it was called by the old French settlers—the earliest of the offshoots from the parent settlement at Quebec—to Sandwich ; where the people, in their habits and language, in their horses, vehicles, and domestic arrangements,—where the long lines of Lombardy:poplars, pear trees of unusual age and size, and umbrageous walnut trees,—still remind the traveller of the banks of the Loire. He landed among a simple, inoffensive, agricultural people, indisposed to resistance, and thundered forth a proclamation. This document appealed to the fear of poltroons and the instinct of traitors, denied the right of the red man to defend his own soil, and doomed to death every white man found fighting at his side. It threatened all who resisted with " the horrors and calamities of war," and proffered to the recreant and vanquished " peace, liberty, and security."

To this, on the 22nd July, Brock nobly replied, that the crown of England would defend and avenge all its subjects, whether red or white, and that Canada knew its duty to itself and to its sove-

reign, and was neither to be bullied nor cajoled into a departure from it.

On the 17th he had opened an extra session of the Legislature of Upper Canada, and it must be owned that, at this crisis, the Legislature was despondent, and the people misgave. But a change in the scene speedily took place ; the noble character of Brock rapidly assumed its natural ascendancy, the public mind became reassured, public confidence revived, and the lava tide of loyalty, living though latent, surged up and blazed forth as a bale-fire, inextinguishable in the land.

Loyalty to England, fealty to the crown, were the birthright and heir-loom of this people. The first settlers on the soil were the American loyalists, men of educated and elevated minds, who had undergone trials and persecutions, and a fierce fight of afflictions in the cause of the King and of the " auld countree," and who exclaimed in the affecting language of the Psalmist : " When I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning." They had left home, and friends, and wealth, and station, for a principle sanctified by its disinterestedness, and by the cunning of their hands had enshrined it in the heart of the wilderness. They had borne, for long, the scoffs and jeers of neighbors, who twitted them with a foolish choice, and who, until late trials, have not known the sacred impulse of a great cause. The reflections of the past had been to these men the only —the proud reward of rare sufferings and noble sacrifices. Oh let it not be imputed to them or to their descendants, that they have dwelt upon their loyalty overmuch. Englishmen make no more boast of their loyalty than they do of their honesty, or of their truth, or of any other of those manly virtues, which they justly claim to be national characteristics ; but, for generations, few have actually paid the price of their faith, and none can recall the rapture with which the martyrs, for conscience' sake, glory in the scenes of their

martyrdom. If the loud hosanna is often on their lips, the spirit is ever present in their hearts. If they lay claim to the " sangre azul," they are ever ready to prove its quality, and to pour it forth in the cause of their Sovereign and of the time-honored flag of England. On this emergency, the United Empire Loyalists were, as ever, true to their antecedents. They thronged to the banner of Brock. The Province rose as a man. Numbers for whom arms could not be provided, returned disappointed to their homes. The rest did their duty nobly, and

Have left their sons a hope, a fame,  
They too would rather die than shame.

In this interval, while Brock was exhorting his Legislature and forming new levies, his lieutenants in the west had not been idle.

Hull was in a position of great anxiety ; he had to draw all his resources from his rear, from distant Ohio, through ways which could' not be called roads, and which were infested by savages. The extent of his force increased his difficulties ; he had too many mouths to feed, and yet he could not detach in sufficient force to secure his communications. Proctor, who commanded at Amherstburg a force of about 350 men, threatened on his right by Hull, had still nerve enough to detach Tecumseh, the chief of the Shawanee Indians, across the Detroit River, to intercept a convoy commanded by Major Van Horne. The detachment was encountered in the bush, defeated, and scattered, the provisions captured, and the mail, containing the correspondence of the American army, fell into the hands of the savages. This occurred on the 4th of August. On the 7th, Hull, who had crossed to the easy conquest of Canada, and had relied on the country for supplies and upon the people for reinforcements, began to be satisfied of his mistake. He had made one or two abortive attempts on Fort Malden. Colonel Cass, the hero of Ta-ron-tee, had earned this designation by an heroic retreat from before a few Indians at the

Riviere aux Canards, which lies between Sandwich and Fort Malden or Amherstburg. The Rivière aux Canards, in French, or the Taron-tee, in Indian parlance, is a sluggish and sedgy stream, which percolates the wide marshes in the rear country, and unites with the Detroit about five miles above Fort Malden. This creek was crossed, near its mouth, by one of the make-shift bridges of the country. Here, on the 28th July, Col. Cass attacked an Indian scouting party, which, very properly, fell back, losing one warrior, whose body was scalped and otherwise disfigured. The Americans thereupon retired with their trophy—somewhat hastily, for they did not pause to destroy the bridge, which was re-occupied next day by the British, and was protected by two light field-pieces. Next day also re-appeared Colonel Cass, under the fostering wing of Colonel McArthur,—a strong reinforcement—and two guns. The bridge was attacked, two brave men of the 41st, outlying sentries, Privates Dean and Hancock, with that strange and dogged perversity so common among British soldiers, would neither retire nor give in. Hancock was killed—Dean wounded and taken prisoner. After some exchanges of cannon-shot, the Americans again retreated ; and an American writer declares " the escape of McArthur and his companions to have been truly miraculous."\* The proclamation, which Hull had fathered, but which Cass had written, was found to be theatrical thunder : the Canadians would not revolt ; the Indians flocked to the British standard. At this moment the defeat of Van Home sounded like a knell. Hull was appalled. To cover his " base of supply," he thought it best to change his " base of operations ;" so, on the 7th and 8th of August, under the pretext of concentrating his forces, he withdrew himself and his army across the river, and resumed his occupation of Detroit. On the 9th, Proctor, apprised of Hull's retreat, and relieved of all apprehension on his own part, with commendable promptitude determined to follow up his first

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\* Thompson's Sketches of the War, quoted by James, Vol. II, p. 61.

attempt upon Hull's line of supply, and detached Major Muir across the Detroit to intercept a much more considerable force and convoy *en route* to Fort Detroit. This expedition was not as successful as the preceding. Muir, with 100 regulars, 100 militia, and 250 Indians, found himself at Magagua in front of Col. Miller, a good officer, backed by the U. S. 4th Regt. of Infantry, a part of the 1st Infantry, some regular artillerymen, and 400 militia,—about 700 in all. Muir, with great judgment, bethought him of the paucity of the force on the other side of the river, and of the military policy which relinquishes a temporary credit for a future certainty, and so, ordered a retreat to his boats, which was safely effected. Muir and his subaltern Sutherland were both wounded ; the latter died shortly after. Two men were killed and nine disabled. In this action of Maguaga or Brownstown, the Americans, who held the ground on the retirement of the British and Indians, represent their own loss to have been 83 killed and wounded, and the Indian casualties at 100. The National Intelligencer, the American Government organ of the day, boastfully asserted that when the militia returned to Detroit from the battle of Brownstown they bore triumphantly on the points of their bayonets between 30 and 40 fresh scalps, which they had taken on the field. As no mercy was shown to the redskins by the trappers and borderers who constituted the militia, and as scalps were much prized spoils, it may be presumed that the number of these trophies represented fairly the number of the Indians slain.\* But this momentary reverse was of no benefit to Hull : Brock was on his track, and did not give him much time to deliberate.

But again, during this interval, while Brock at York was preparing for his swoop in the West, and his lieutenants were harassing and retarding the game, the first British stroke of the war had been delivered 250 miles to the north, at Michilimacinae, in

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\* James, Vol. II, p. 6.

the heart of what was then regarded as the Indian country. This island and fortress is situated at the northern extremity of Lake Huron, in the gorge of the Straits of Macinaw, and blocks the entrance to Lake Michigan. In those days it was regarded as a post of great importance. It is now the Gibraltar of that inland sea. It is strongly fortified, and makes of Lake Michigan a *mare clausum*, where, beyond the reach of treaty stipulations, or of hostile interruptions, armaments may be planned and matured safely, against the rear frontier of Canada.

The vast territory surrounding this lake, now occupied by the States of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, embellished by the cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, Grand Haven, and peopled by 5,000,000 of inhabitants, was, fifty years since, a howling wilderness, the retreat and hunting-ground of savage tribes, whose traditional treatment had taught them to put but little trust in the white man. With the American settlers their relations had been, for long, those of chronic collision and contest. The British had, upon an emergency, accepted the services of an ally whose ferocity they could not restrain, and of whose acts they were ashamed; but if the British, in Indian estimation, had proved to be a cold and ungrateful friend, the Americans had never ceased to be a remorseless and grasping enemy. It is affectation to attempt to deny that at this crisis the Indian alliance was sought by both parties. Accident and action combined to solve the diplomatic doubt by the weight of the British bayonet. It was well known toW much the defence of the western frontier depended on the Indians. Great efforts had been made both by the British and Americans to secure the services of these uncertain and suspicious auxiliaries. Here the British labored under great disadvantage. Defence, not defiance, was then, as now, their motto. The policy of the day was to discountenance the idea of war. An Indian

alliance could only portend war. It was, at the same time, well known to those familiar with the Indian character, that the first successful blow struck in the west would attract the savage to the successful banner. Macinaw, as it is called for brevity, was an American military post in the heart of the Indian territory. Fort St. Joseph, a British post, established for the protection of the fur trade, was situated 40 miles north of Macinaw, at the debouchure of Lake Superior into the waters of Lake Huron.

Captain Roberts, a brave and energetic officer, was in command at Fort St. Joseph. Brock had reinforced this post in the spring, and Rolitrts had received instructions which, although embarrassed by the irregular and perplexing interference of Sir George Prevost at a later • period, he had prepared himself to carry out. On the 4th July, Brock informed Roberts that war existed, and left him to his own discretion.\* Roberts had at hand a congenial spirit. The Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company was Toussaint Pothier, afterwards the Hon. Toussaint Pothier, M.L.C., of Montreal, a French Canadian gentleman, brave, gay, polite, ready for any exploit in court or camp. To him Roberts disclosed the information he had received, and the plan he had formed. "Pardieu, Monsieur," exclaimed the chivalrous Frenchman, gyrating with delight,—and those who remember him can well imagine his glee,— "it faut froter ces gens la bas, joliment." With such associates in an enterprise, little time was lost. To a force of 33 regulars was supplemented about 160 Canadian voyageurs, half-armed with fowling-pieces and old muskets. Two old iron three-pounders, which had been used for firing salutes and astonishing the natives, were put into requisition; and accompanied by Pothier, who, like Clive in another hemisphere, had flung his pen under his desk and buckled on his hanger. Roberts embarked in a miscellaneous

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• Tupper's Life of Brock.

flotilla of boats and canoes, attended by a small brig laden with stores. In the grey of the morning of the 17th July, while the legislators at Toronto were snoring in their beds, while the unhappy Hull was cogitating moodily at Sandwich, and the hero of Ta-ron-tee, having fluttered the wild-fowl in Duck Creek, had just retired victoriously, crowned with water-tresses, Roberts landed on Macinaw Island unmolested, got his two guns into a menacing position, disposed of his force ostentatiously, ordered his 33 regulars to the front, and bade Indians and half-breeds yell the war-whoop. At this summons, the American commander, who, to say the truth, was quite unprepared for an attack, felt it to be prudent to surrender his post, with about 75 regulars and a large quantity of military stores and valuable furs. It was the first intimation he had received of a state of war. This well-concerted and well-executed stroke was timely, and, in fact, invaluable. It secured the adherence of the Indians. It disconcerted Hull, by exposing his rear, and was second only to the crowning exploit of the campaign, the capture of Detroit.

Now came Brook's turn. No man knew better than he, the value of vigour in war, and that rapid offence was often the best description of defence. Having dispatched at once the Legislature and all pressing public business, on the 6th August he left York, now Toronto, for Burlington Bay, and from thence proceeded by land to Long Point, "Point aux Pins" being the rendezvous,\* speaking a word of counsel to the Mohawks on the Grand River by the way. At Long Point, he embarked with about 300 militia, all volunteers, and a few regulars, in the ordinary boats of the country, and ran along a dangerous and unsheltered coast for 200 miles, amid heavy rains and tempestuous weather, and exposed constantly to surprise, without losing a man. His constant superintendence, forethought, and precaution, inspired his followers with

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\* General Order, 12th August, Isaac Brock.

unbounded confidence. After four days and nights of incessant exertion, the little squadron reached Amherstburg at midnight on the 13th August ; Brock declaring, that " in no instance had he seen troops who could have endured the fatigue of a long journey in boats, during exceeding bad weather, with greater cheerfulness and constancy ; and it is but justice to this little band to add that their conduct throughout excited my admiration." \*

Here Brock encountered Tecumseh, chief of the Shawanee Indians,—regarding whose character and fate more will be said hereafter. It is wonderful with what an instinctive perception of character these two men instantly took to each other. Brock descried at once the sagacity and intrepidity of the \_Shawanee chief. Tecumseh, in one of his glowing orations, apostrophizes Brock as the warrior who, " standing erect in the bow of his canoe, led the way to battle." It reminds one of Caesar's standard-bearer launching himself upon the shores of Britain. The incident occurred in crossing the Detroit River two days after ; Brock exposing himself, not from ostentation (for his courage was most unpretentious), but to win the confidence and rouse the enthusiasm of his Indian allies. Brock concerted with Tecumseh the plan of his operations against Fort Detroit. The chief listened eagerly, with glistening eyes but undemonstrative attitude. He expressed his approbation with Indian brevity, and his readiness to act by a gesture. Brock asked him, " Could the Shawanees be induced to refrain from spirits ?" Tecumseh answered that "Before leaving their wigwams on the Wabash, they had vowed not to touch rum till they had humbled the " Bio. Knives," meaning the Americans. Brock remarked, "Adhere to this resolution and you must conquer."

Brock acted with promptitude and vigor. The correspondence of the American army had come into his hands by the defeat of

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\* General Order, Amherstburg, 14th August, Isaac Brock.

Van Horne, on the 4th August. The despatches of General Hull disclosed his own misgivings and the demoralized state of the army under his command. Brock saw the opportunity, and grasped at it, at once. With a force of the most miscellaneous character, not half the numerical strength of the enemy, he determined to cross the river Detroit, and beard him in his den. On the 15th August, he summoned Hull to surrender. The latter took two hours to consider the invitation, and declined it. **That night** Tecumseh crossed the river with about 600 warriors, and occupied the roads and woods below Detroit, intercepting the American communications. The spot selected for landing was Springwell, four miles below the fort, on the only American line of retreat. The river at this point is about three-fourths of a mile wide, deep and strong. Before daybreak on the 16th, the force under Brock, consisting of 330 regulars and 400 militia, with four light pieces of artillery, crossed the river, and advanced upon the fort. He was flanked upon the left by the Indians in the woods, and on the right by a small vessel of war, the Queen Charlotte. Brock led on rapidly. He had taken the measure of his foe, and knew that daring was the best title to success. "Of the force at his disposal," says Armstrong, the American Secretary of War, "four hundred were Canadian Militia, disguised in red coats."\* The sequel proved the imitation not to have been a bad one. The York Volunteers, under Hatt, Howard, Bostwick, and Robinson, the men who had escorted Brock to Amherstburg, thrown out as skirmishers, were well forward in the front. Astonished by the vigor of the advance, and perhaps disconcerted by the unearthly outcries of the Indians, the Americans abandoned an outpost, well placed, strongly picketed, and defended by two 24-pounders, and retreated into the main fort. Preparations were made for an assault, when suddenly, was seen to emerge from the works, an

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\* Armstrong, Vol. I, p. 35.

officer bearing a flag of truce. Brigadier-General Hull had resolved to capitulate, and proposed a cessation of hostilities. Articles were formalized then and there, under which the whole Michigan Territory, Fort Detroit, a ship of war, 33 pieces of cannon, stores to correspond, and military chest, 2500 troops, and one stand of colors were surrendered to the British, who, thereupon, betook themselves to dinner. The first act of Brock on entering the fort was to release from captivity Dean, the gallant private of the 41st, who behaved so nobly at the Ta-ron-tee. He sent for the man at once, and shook hands with him cordially, in front of the whole force.\*

The surrender of Detroit electrified all Canada. It was the first enterprise in which the Militia had been engaged, and the courage and success of their Volunteers animated and encouraged all. No more was there of doubting or of wavering ; disaffection slunk out of sight. Brock became the idol of Upper Canada ; and no man ever, by his dauntless example, both moral and physical, and by effecting much with small means, had more honestly won the homage of a people.

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\* Mem. : Col. A. McLean.

