

pletion of an additional vessel of war, the Wolfe, of 20 guns, justified the hope that the chances of war had at length turned in favour of the British.

These chances appeared to the popular eye to be reduced to a certainty when it became known that Chauncey and his fleet, and Dearborn with his soldiers, were in front of Niagara; that to supply the means of attack they had dismantled and disarmed Sackett's Harbour, and that the stores and ships in course of construction, and the arsenal, naval and military, had been left to the protection of the militia of the country.

Expectation, too, rose to the highest pitch when it was announced that the Commander-in-Chief was himself in Kingston; that an attack upon Sackett's Harbour had been planned; and that the combined forces would be commanded by Sir George Provost and Commodore Sir James Yeo, in person. The preparations made under the circumstances were such as to reassure the least sanguine. Sir George Provost, surrounded by able officers, had under his command 750 men, detailed from the following regiments: the 100th, the Royal Scots, the 8th, the 104th, the Newfoundland regiment, one company of the Glengarries, two companies of Canadian Voltigeurs, and two six-pounders, with their gunners. This force was conveyed in the Wolfe, 20 guns, the flag-ship of Sir James Yeo; the Royal George, 20 guns; Moira, 16 guns; Melville Brig, 16 guns; Netley schooner; and smaller vessels.

The expedition sailed from Kingston early on the morning of the 27th May, at the hour when, the first echoes of the American guns reverberated on the shores of Niagara, and Chauncey and Scott were engaged, hand-to-hand, with Myer and Harvey. The weather being favourable, and the wind fair, the flotilla arrived off Sackett's Harbour about 10 a.m.

The accounts of the subsequent occurrences, both American and British, differ in all but the result. The Americans exaggerate

an irresolute resistance crowned by an undeserved success. The British, blind with rage and mortification, prove but blind guides to the confused enquirer. Sir George Provost, though an adept with his pen, upon this occasion, did not write his own commentaries; and the letter of his adjutant-general, Colonel Baines, affords but an imperfect explanation of this inexplicable transaction.

But the difficulty which clouded this page of the narrative, has been, to a great extent, dispelled, by an unexpected and friendly hand; and a light has been cast upon the movements and the men of this expedition, by private memoranda, which we have been most kindly permitted to use, and which command at once our respect and acknowledgments.

The witness, on this occasion, is well known to most men in Canada. To those who have attended, of late years, the numerous military gatherings on Queenston Heights, it is easy to recall one familiar face and figure. It is a tall and venerable form, of gentle aspect, but soldierly port—of grave costume, becoming the years of one

—Whose age is like a lusty winter—
Frosty, but kindly—

and whose left breast is decorated by a Canada medal* and an

* Since the above was in print, the writer has been informed that he is in error. There is no Canada medal; but let the error stand. If Dr. Richardson has no such medal, he ought to have one. And it would be well to know why this great boon has been withheld from the Militia soldier of Canada. Medals have been granted for services on the Ganges, and Sutlej, in China and in Kaffirland. A *pod-obit* decoration has been tardily bestowed on the heroes of the Peninsula. Medals were given for Chateauguay, where there was some fighting, and for Detroit, where there was no fighting at all. Why is it that the men who fought and bled at Queenston Heights, on the Niagara and Detroit frontiers; at Frenchtown and Fort Meigs; at Schlosser and Black Rock; at Ogdensburg; at Lacolle mill; on the St. Lawrence and the lakes; should have been denied a guerdon, so highly prized, for services which cannot be ignored?

empty TO thi enquiring AA Oer it would be Milled; thit
the Veteran wrid" eithited his interest 'was the Rev. Dr; RichardsoV,
D.D., now BishOP of the EpiS6ifiat **Methodist** Church in Canada-;
yOuth; a gallant officEr of the Provincial marine, wh6;
in 1814; had; in action with the enemy; **arm the service**
of his country-;

This gentletniii Was the soil Of the brave I utenant Richardson,
*he'," hefdrS related; carried the Simcoe into Kingston harbonii
in despite of the fire of the whole Anthricaii squadron. Brought itii
From a' boy in the d the Iakekat the' =*-10T **hti**
f011oWe'd his **fithei'S**

vice. In 1812, being then twenty-one year **iedeivea**
his commission s 4eutei ai t. At thig time **the ProViiiieitfNi4ir** on
the Royal George; 26' guiii t14
Moir, of 143 the sehei:66i Duke Of GIBlieifei; of 8, ant' the
Atetley schooner; Of 12 going ; with numerous smail vessels; acting
as gunboats and tranSpOrte. The services of theie vessels, in default
of all other **means of communication, were** indispensable to the
divisions of the army; bCiti east and in the west of Upper
Canada. •

The ,dit'6iir of the **iecelfed**
from the Commander-in-Chief in British North America, and the
whole force was attached to the department of the Quarter-Master-
General. **On** the arrival of the first detachment of the Royal Navy,
these gentlemen were informed that their commissions could not be
recognized by the rules of a service, which subsequent intercourse
With **and RuSitting, Naas retiteied**
more' cosmopolite. V^ith a very suggestive 48W of reticence,
the greater part of these officers retired from the marine, and took
service in the militia, where they were permitted to risk their **lives**
withoat offence to their feelings. **While we** appreciate the **sensitive**
ness which shrank WM in inaigniii, We admire the more the

patriotism of those who cast aside every consideration which inter-
fered with service to their• country. Two of the number, Lieutenants
George Smith and James Richardson, could not bring themselves
to abandon their more natural element, and, to the great satisfaction
of the Commodore, accepted rating as " masters," which gave them
rank in the gun-room with the commissioned officers, and enabled
them, as " masters and pilots," from their knowledge of their own
inland seas, to render important services.*

We may feel satisfied in Canada, however, that the reign of martinet
punctilio has long since passed away, and that a Canadian officer of
the Queen, should occasion ever require his services, will receive at
the hands of the army and navy of England the same share of
respect which is freely awarded, in military intercourse, to a German
" Felt-wacht-meister," or to a Turkish " Bim Bashi."

In the middle of May, Lieutenant Richardson had been des-
patched by Captain Barclay—previous to his own departure for the
western waters—to escort, in the gunboat " Black Snake," the rear
detachment of Yeo's blue-jackets, under Capt. Mulcaster, up the St.
Lawrence to Kingston. On their arrival, the men had been distri-
buted on board of the ships of the squadron. Richardson himself
was appointed to the Wolfe, and was thus present at head-quarters
on occasion of the descent of the 27th May.

The wind was fair, the weather favourable and propitious. About
10 a. m., on the 27th May, the squadron approached Sackett's
Harbour. No enemy appeared at the landing place, and no osten-
sible show of resistance. All preparations were completed ; the
men embarked in the boats ; the anchors ready to be dropped. The
very spot indicated as the point of disembarkation had been reached,
when, instead of proceeding to land and taking the place, which
might then undoubtedly have been effected almost without loss of

*Mein. of Dr. James Richardson, D.D.

life, the troops were ordered to re-embark, the ships hauled to their wind, withdrew from the coast, and the enterprise was apparently abandoned.

The general amazement was controlled by the instincts of discipline, and by the belief that the retreat was a *ruse*—*part* of some preconcerted plan ; and at this time an occurrence took place, which diverted attention, and caused some amusement. In the afternoon, as the *Wolfe* was working to windward, away from the landing place, and about six miles in the offing, a boat was discovered approaching with a white flag, from a low wooded point of land, which forms the entrance to a deep bay known as Henderson's Harbour. Commodore Yeo dispatched Lieut. Dobbs, in one of the ship's boats, to meet the stranger, and ascertain his business. After a brief interview, Dobbs proceeded on to the shore. The American boat continued its course, and discharged upon the deck of the flag-ship a gentleman, ostentatiously arced, with a belt bristling with weapons, who announced himself to be a captain of dragoons. He reported to the officer of the deck that he was in command of a detachment, which had, on an uncongenial element, been attacked by Indians, and had " concluded" forthwith to surrender. A part of his men were in the boat alongside, and Dobbs had proceeded to the shore for the remainder. It appeared that a party of Chippewa Indians, the occupants of about three canoes, had attacked the bold dragoon as he crept along the shore, seeking to reinforce the garrison at Sackett's Harbour, and had been, in reality, repulsed. One of the savages, badly wounded, had been taken on board of the *Wolfe* some short time before ; but dread of the Indians had blinded the gallant officer to his own success, and, without further molestation, he had thrown himself upon the protection of the fleet. The remainder of his men were soon brought on board. At this time the commanders were at dinner The officer was invited to the table, and, on being introduced, perceiving some twinklings of fun on the

faces of the juniors, remarked : " Gentlemen, I confess that my appearance is uncouth, but my heart is as square as any man's."

Whether the information given by this officer restored confidence, or that his deportment gave occasion for reflection, Sir George, in a few hours, made fresh dispositions. At midnight, in the dark— heavy rain had come on—at a distance of some miles from the landing, which they had all but gained some hours before, the men were put into the boats, and directed to the shore. Colonel Baines relates that the boats were assembled at 1 a. m., in compact and regular order, intending to effect a landing before the enemy could line the woods with troops ; but the darkness of the night, ignorance of the coast, and a strong current had drifted the boats from their proper station. When day dawned they pulled for the proper point of disembarkation.*

In the meantime the enemy had not been idle. On the first approach of the British flotilla, the scant garrison of Sackett's Harbour consisted of a few American regulars, a small force of Albany volunteers, and the local militia. They mustered two field-pieces, and a long 32-pounder, on a pivot, surmounting Fort Tompkins. Colonel Baccus, of the United States army, was in command of the place. The general commanding the district, Jacob Brown, a respectable farmer, resided at a distance of about twelve miles from the harbour. He was immediately notified, and proved to be a man not unequal to the emergency. He took instant measures, alarmed the country, summoned the militia, and roused a spirit of resistance, which was not diminished by the abrupt departure of the British , fleet. By daybreak, on the following morning, all his arrangements had been made.

The troops landed with little opposition. They first encountered

*Mem. of Dr. James Richardson, D.D.

• Report of Colonel Baines, Adjutant-General, May 30, 1813.

a body of militia, supported by a field-piece. This force was attacked and routed, their commander killed, and the field-piece captured. The advance, however, was enfiladed by the gun on Fort Tompkins, which inflicted loss ; but the landing having been made, the front was forthwith cleared of skirmishers ; and, divided into two detachments, under Colonel Young, of the King's, and Major Gordon, of the 100th, the troops, in excellent order and with perfect confidence, advanced to carry the place.

The works at Sackett's Harbour then consisted of two stockaded barracks, with block-houses and defences constructed. of logs and cedar pickets ; of Fort Tompkins, with its solitary gun ; Fort Pyke, and the dockyard defences, denuded of artillery, employed in the attack on Niagara. The American garrison, in addition to the force first enumerated, consisted now of a swarm of militia, hurriedly assembled from all quarters, who, over-exultant the night before, were not a little disconcerted by the changed aspect of affairs in the morning. Little, had they thought—

That upon night so sweet, such awful morn should rise.

The British advance was an uninterrupted success. The militia, in despite of appeal, remonstrance and objurgation, took to flight. The American regulars were broken and destroyed. The brave Colonel Baccus, their commander, was killed. General Brown resolutely, but hopelessly, struggled to retrieve the disaster. Dismay spread on every side. The officer in command of the dockyard set fire to the Pyke, a frigate on the stocks, two ships of war in the harbour, and the naval store-house, filled with the spoils of York. The stockaded barracks had been fired by our troops. General Brown, **without disparagement to his personal conduct, was prepared to capitulate. The rough farmer, fresh from the plough, had displayed qualities which brave men admire, and older soldiers may have envied.**

At this moment of undisputed triumph, came an order to retreat, issued by Sir George Provost himself. It is idle now to speculate on motives, to invent arguments, or discuss theories. The great fact is indisputable and irresistible. By all accounts, both British and American, the place was at our mercy, when, with the effect of a stunning and stupefying blow, the order to re-embark fell upon all hearts. The men sullenly and mechanically fell in, formed, and retired unmolested, **frbni** before a dispersed and demoralized foe. One of the brave colonels in command exclaimed, indignantly, **in** the hearing of Mr. Richardson, as **he ca n up** the ship's side : " **If** he would but give me my own regiment, **I** would yet land again, and have the place."

The expedition returned to Kix/Obn, oterwhelmed with indignant mortification. **Brave Men** and gallant officers had fallen ; life and reputation **had been** saerificed—honour itself imperilled, in the very wantonness **of** irresolution. The story told requires **no** further comment.*

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"The personal courage of Sir George Provost in the field has always been extolled by those who were around his person, and who knew him best, and Whom he inspired wflai strong affection. CcOnel Miednnald, an officer who had served with great distin&iiii•ka. tt3i lithsequently acquired still more on the Upper Lakes in 1814, writes thus,' on this headi dated Kingston, 29th May, 1813. "Sir George landed with the troops, accompanied by Mr. Brenton and myself. His Excellency was in the thickest of the fire, and of course had some narrow escapes in an action, the musketry of which was heavier than anything I ever saw, except the irst knich **tgipit.**"

CHAPTER XIII.

Return to Vincent at the Beaver Dam—Retires on Burlington Heights—Colonel Harvey—Stoney Creek—British retire from, and the Americans occupy their position—Harvey's plan for night attack—The Americans surprised—Desperate fighting—Americans dispersed—Generals Chandler and Winder taken prisoners—Present aspect of the ground—Old Lutheran Chapel—Burial place of the slain—No memorial stone—Why not? Americans fall back on Niagara—Abandon camps and supplies.

It is with a grateful sense of relief, that, following the natural course of events, we are now transported to the upper end of Lake Ontario—to General Vincent and the retreating garrison of Niagara—there to record how one resolute, thoughtful man, may control fate and restore fortune.

Vincent had withdrawn deliberately to the position of the Beaver Dam. Here his outlying detachments had joined him from the south. Bishopp, on evacuating Fort Erie, had blown up that work ; and now the General, with the same deliberation, fell back upon the strong position of Burlington Heights.

Burlington Heights, situated about two miles to the west of the present city of Hamilton, was, in those days, a strong position. Modern artillery, however, has been very destructive to this sort of reputation. The area is too contracted to be of any value now. It is a peninsula, elevated about one hundred feet above the water of Burlington Bay on one side, and the extensive Desjardins marsh on the other. It was unassailable, except by the neck of the isthmus, which was defended by field works. Here the general covered and maintained his communications, with York on his left rear, and with Proctor and the western division of his army on his right.

General Vincent had the merit of appreciating merit in others. He discovered talent, made use of it, and did it ample justice. His despatches do honour to his soldierly honesty. He had by his side a man of rare military qualities—Lieut.-Colonel Harvey—in after years, Sir John Harvey, K.C.B., a general officer, and governor of Nova Scotia. He was at this time Adjutant-General to the forces in the field on the Niagara frontier. He had conducted the retreat of the troops from Fort George with marked skill and energy, and had aided his chief in taking up his present strong position. The force, however, was weak in one important particular. The ammunition was reduced to about 90 rounds per man, without resource or means of supply.

On the 5th June the American army, in pursuit, amounting to 2500 men, including 250 cavalry and eight guns, under command of generals Chandler and Winder, had reached Forty Mile Creek, one of the numerous streamlets which descend from the plateau of Niagara into Lake Ontario, and which, in popular parlance, indicate rather than define the distances between Niagara and Hamilton. The British advanced posts at Stoney Creek fell back before them, and the enemy occupied for the night ground well known to the late defenders. Vincent despatched Harvey with a small force to reconnoitre their position and strength. There is a tradition in the neighbourhood that Harvey himself, having borrowed the garb and the waggon of a Quaker, penetrated into the American lines, selling potatoes and " taking notes." Those who can recall the commanding stature and bearing of the gallant officer, maintain that this was the very last disguise in which he was likely to succeed. It is not impossible that some patriotic " friend " really found a good market for his produce, and valuable information for Harvey, who rapidly matured his plans, and laid them before the general, who approved of them at once, and promptly resolved on a night attack.