

The Siege
of
Fort Erie
1814

by

Ernest Cruikshank

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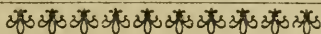
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August 1st - September 23rd, 1814



By **LIEUT.-COLONEL ERNEST CRUIKSHANK**

Author of "The Story of Butler's Rangers," "The Battle of Lundy's Lane," &c., &c., &c.

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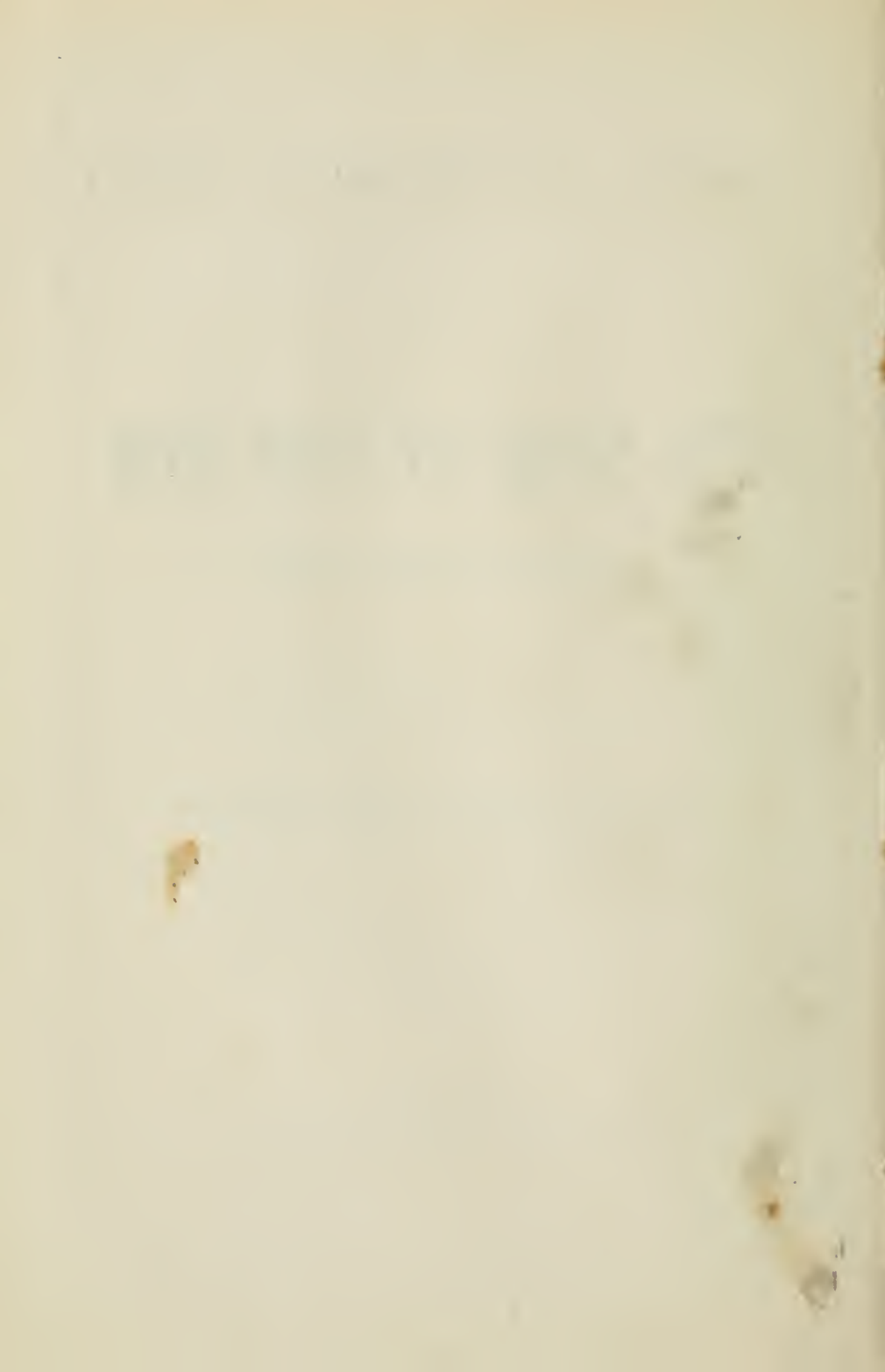
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THE SIEGE OF FORT ERIE.

Between sunset and midnight on July 25th, 1814, the stubbornly contested battle of Lundy's Lane was fought within view of the Falls of Niagara, between an American army, under Major-General Jacob Brown, consisting of about 4000 men, and a British division of inferior force, under Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond, which had advanced during the day in two columns from Fort George and the Twelve Mile Creek to occupy the junction of the roads where the action took place. The declared intention of the American commander was to force his way by the shortest route to Burlington Heights, where he expected to be met by the American squadron from Sackett's Harbor conveying siege artillery and a reinforcement of infantry. The British General wished to avoid an engagement until he could bring up the whole of his available field force but refused to yield the favorable position he had secured. Both armies lost heavily in this action, and when it ended the survivors had literally fought until they were able to fight no longer. Brigadier-General E. W. Ripley, who had by that time succeeded to the command of the American troops in consequence of the disablement of two senior officers, Major-Generals Brown and Scott, by severe wounds, found his forces so much scattered and disorganized that he gave orders for them to assemble and retire to their camp behind the Chippawa, about three miles distant, leaving his adversary in possession of the field and a considerable number of his dead and wounded. Such a movement on the part of an invading army is necessarily a confession of defeat, and although Ripley succeeded in removing most of his artillery without molestation and left few unwounded prisoners behind him he decided next morning that it would be unwise to renew the contest, and after a faint demonstration against the British position again retired behind the Chippawa and destroyed the bridge. Generals Brown and Scott and other wounded officers were sent across the Niagara and some heavy baggage was thrown into the river to facilitate the retreat to Fort Erie, which was begun shortly after noon and continued until midnight without molestation, the rearguard breaking down all the bridges along the road to prevent pursuit.

When this army had entered Canada three weeks before it was officially reported to consist of 5,000 men. Since then it had been

reinforced by five or six hundred regular infantry and a small body of militia, but its effective strength was now reduced by its losses in battle and desertions to less than 3,500 of all ranks. Fort Erie had already been considerably strengthened on the land side and the outline of an extensive intrenched camp had been traced from the flanks of this work eastward and southward to the water's edge, to serve as a base of operations and a place of refuge in the event of disaster in the field, in much the same manner as the lines at Fort George had been used in the preceding campaign. How much progress had been made upon this intrenchment cannot be accurately stated, but it is certain that upon arriving within it General Ripley at once relinquished his design of retiring across the river and set his whole force at work strengthening this position, which contained some thirty acres of fairly level ground sloping gently down to the level of the lake. Colonel Swift's regiment of New York Volunteers and two hundred men of the 1st United States Rifle Regiment, which had lately arrived from Sackett's Harbour, were brought over the river. The armed schooners *Ohio*, *Porcupine* and *Somers* were anchored near the shore in such positions as to enfilade the approaches both above and below with their long guns.

General Drummond reported that the whole number of troops under his command engaged at Lundy's Lane, including all reinforcements that came up during the battle, did not exceed twenty-eight hundred. Of these nearly nine hundred had been killed, wounded or taken prisoners during the action. The number of killed, however, was comparatively small, being less than half that reported by the American commander. Many of the wounded were injured by buck-shot, of which the Americans made extensive use, and were so slightly hurt that they were not rendered unfit for duty. Making due allowance for this, Drummond's effective force on the morning after the battle probably did not exceed twenty-one hundred of all ranks. Major-General Riall, who had commanded on the Niagara frontier since the beginning of the year, and whose intimate local knowledge would have been most valuable to him at this time, had been severely wounded and taken prisoner, and two of his most efficient regimental commanders, Lieut.-Colonels Morrison of the 89th and Robinson of the Incorporated Militia, were disabled by wounds. The detachment of Royal Artillery had lost one-third of its men and nearly all its horses. The Royal Scots had lost more than one-third and the 89th and Incorporated Militia more than one-half of their numbers. For a few hours it seemed probable that the attack upon the British position would be renewed, as a considerable force was seen to cross the Chippawa and advance towards it. Early in the afternoon

Street's Mills at Bridgewater were seen to be in flames, and the retirement of the Americans across the Chippawa, followed by the destruction of the bridge, satisfied Drummond that they were preparing to retreat. Believing that he was still considerably outnumbered, and apparently contented with his partial success, he despatched his cavalry, consisting of a single squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons, supported by a small force of light infantry and Indians, to harass them in their march, but owing to the destruction of the bridges nothing was effected beyond picking up a few stragglers and deserters. The disposal of the dead and the care of the wounded occupied his attention for the next two or three days. The sedentary militia, which had assembled in considerable numbers at the Twelve Mile Creek, were immediately discharged from service to enable them to harvest their crops, which were already suffering from neglect. The 89th Regiment, which had borne the brunt of the battle and was reduced to less than two hundred effectives, was sent back to Fort George, while some weak detachments of the Royals, King's and 41st were brought forward to strengthen the field force, and DeWatteville's Regiment, nine hundred strong, was ordered forward from York. Several days elapsed before Drummond felt prepared to resume operations. On the thirtieth of July an advanced party under command of Lieut.-Colonel Pearson succeeded in surprising an American outpost at the ferry landing opposite Black Rock and captured a number of rowboats it was guarding. The main body of the division, however, did not commence its advance from Niagara Falls until the morning of August 1st. The bridges along the road had already been repaired and Drummond moved forward that day as far as Palmer's tavern, six miles from Fort Erie. Next morning the heights opposite Black Rock were occupied and a camping ground selected on the northern slope of this ridge about two miles from the American works and entirely screened from observation by a belt of trees. From this position the besiegers could easily approach the northern and western faces of the fort and at the same time detach a force to attack the American works by the lake shore without being observed by the garrison. During the afternoon Drummond carefully reconnoitred the enemy's position in person and ascertained that the fort itself had been much enlarged and protected by a parapet of earth and *abattis* on the land side. It was connected with a new battery, which had been constructed immediately in rear of a quarry close to the margin of the river, by a parapet of earth covered by a ditch and line of *abattis*. On the left a similar rampart of earth ran southward to Snake Hill, a mound of sand about twenty feet in height on the shore of Lake Erie, on the

summit of which a large redoubt had been thrown up. The woods on the western front of these works had been obstructed by felling many large trees and converting them bodily into *abattis*. This forest was about a mile in width by four miles in length and so dense and marshy as to be impassable for troops. During the preceding winter the commandant of the fort had cut a passage through it in a north-westerly direction to the concession road for the convenience of obtaining supplies, which was commonly known as "Buck's Road."

The guns of Fort Erie and an armed schooner in the river opened fire upon the reconnoitering party as soon as it came within view. Two iron twenty-four pounders were brought forward along the river road to reply, but their fire was so ineffective that Drummond determined to defer any direct attack upon the American works until more heavy guns could be brought up from Fort George. Learning that supplies and reinforcements were constantly being sent over from Buffalo in rowboats he resolved in the first place to attempt the destruction of their depots on that side of the river. For this purpose the boats captured at the ferry opportunely afforded the means of transporting a small force. Lieut.-Colonel J. G. P. Tucker, who had gained some distinction recently while in command of the garrisons of Forts George and Missassauga during their investment, was accordingly instructed to pass the river below Squaw Island on the night of the 2d with 600 rank and file, consisting of six companies of the 41st Regiment under Lieut.-Colonel Evans, and the light companies of the 89th and 100th and flank companies of the 104th under Lieut.-Colonel Drummond. If he succeeded in landing without being observed he was directed to move rapidly up the right bank of Scajaquady Creek until he gained the main road from Williamsville to Buffalo and advance along it directly upon the latter place and accomplish the destruction of the depots of provisions and military stores, which was regarded as the principal object of the expedition. The dispersion of the troops assembled at Black Rock and the destruction of the batteries along the river were named as of secondary importance. As it was reported that this force consisted mainly of New York Militia, the veteran character of the troops detailed and the known talents and courage of the principal officers induced General Drummond to believe that this service could be accomplished with little difficulty. If his movement was discovered Lieut.-Colonel Tucker was authorized to attack Black Rock first if he deemed it advisable. The passage of the river was accomplished without opposition and a landing effected on the American side, but while the column was advancing in the dark along the narrow path by the creek it was suddenly and unexpectedly assailed in flank by

musketry from two small redoubts and a log breastwork on the opposite bank, which created a strange panic even among these seasoned soldiers. Order was finally restored by the efforts of Lieut.-Colonel Drummond and other officers and the advance was resumed under a heavy fire as far as the Military Road, when it was discovered that the bridge was destroyed. An ineffectual attempt was then made to rebuild it under cover of musketry from the edge of the woods. The American force assembled here to resist their crossing, it was afterwards ascertained, consisted of the First Battalion of the First United States Rifle Regiment, which had been stationed there the night before, supported by a detachment of volunteers numbering in all about three hundred men under the command of Major Lodowick Morgan of the Rifles. From the cover of their entrenchments they maintained such a steady fire upon the approaches to the bridge that the attempt to rebuild it was abandoned at daylight. An attempt to discover a ford higher up having also proved unsuccessful Lieut.-Colonel Tucker gave orders to recross the river. During this affair, which had continued nearly three hours, he had lost twelve men killed, seventeen wounded and five missing, while Morgan acknowledged the loss of but two men killed and three officers and five privates wounded.

General Drummond was so greatly disappointed by this unexpected reverse that he published a district general order attributing the failure of the expedition solely to the unmilitary and disgraceful conduct of the troops, but at the same time announced his intention of giving them an immediate opportunity of retrieving their reputation. On the afternoon of the 3d he again reconnoitred the northern and western faces of the fort, at the same time bringing forward two long twenty-four pounders on travelling carriages, with which a distant and ineffective fire was opened from a rocky point on the river about fifteen hundred yards below. At the same time the light brigade advanced into the woods and drove the American picquets within their works with some loss. The guns of the fort and schooner were, however, immediately turned upon these troops with such precision that they were quickly withdrawn under cover. On the same day a party of dragoons and some mounted men of the Glengarry Regiment reconnoitred the road along the lake. The right wing of DeWatteville's Regiment, which was reported to be on its march from Kingston to York, was ordered to join the besieging force as soon as possible and two armed schooners lying in the Niagara river were despatched to bring it across the lake.

By this time General Ripley had been superseded in command of the garrison by Brigadier E. P. Gaines, who had been ordered from

Sackett's Harbour for that purpose. Like his predecessor, the new commander had served under General Dearborn at Fort George in the summer of 1813, and was not disposed to neglect any means of strengthening his position.

On the 4th of August Major-General Conran, who had arrived from Kingston a day or two before to take the place of Major-General Riall as second in command to General Drummond, was thrown from his horse and disabled for duty. This accident proved the more serious as Colonel Stuart of the Royal Scots, who came from York to replace him, was prostrated by ague on the day after his arrival, and Colonel Scott of the 103d, through resentment for some real or imaginary slight, insisted on resigning the command of the brigade to which he had been appointed. As Drummond himself was still suffering from the unhealed wound received at Lundy's Lane the loss of these experienced officers was of serious importance.

On that day also the American squadron on Lake Ontario appeared off the mouth of the Niagara. The British armed schooner *Magnet*, returning from York with troops on board, was intercepted and driven ashore near the Ten Mile Creek, where she was burnt by her crew. Considerable alarm was excited in the garrisons of the forts and the movement of troops was delayed for several days in consequence. On the evening of the 7th, however, Commodore Chauncey sailed down the lake, leaving three of his largest brigs to blockade the British vessels in the Niagara river and cut off communication by water with York.

Gaines brought over detachments of the 1st and 4th Rifle Regiments from Buffalo amounting to about 400 men, with whom he made a vigorous sortie on the afternoon of the 6th. The British Indians stationed in the woods fell back upon the advanced picquets, who also retired until they were supported by the Glengarry Light Infantry, when the American riflemen were driven back and the ground re-occupied. During this conflict the American schooners canonaded the British position and one of their shot striking the ground near the place where General Drummond and Lieut.-Colonel Harvey, his Deputy Adjutant-General, were standing, the latter was severely wounded in the face by a splinter, which injured one of his eyes.

By the night of the 8th a breaching battery for two guns was completed on the bank of the river about twelve hundred yards from the north-eastern salient angle of the fort. This position was so much exposed that it was found necessary to shelter it in front by a traverse and *abattis* before arming it. It still remained open to the fire of the American schooners in flank and their batteries at Black

Rock in the river, and further delay was occasioned by the necessity of protecting it in these directions. Deserters continued to arrive daily from the garrison, from whom some important information was obtained mingled, however, with much that was false and exaggerated.

Already the besiegers were considerably distressed for want of provisions and military stores, owing to the difficulties of transport and the blockade of their vessels in the Niagara. Finding that there was little prospect of accomplishing any further service on Lake Ontario for some time, Captain Dobbs joined General Drummond with two hundred seamen and marines. The remainder of De Watteville's Regiment was also ordered up from Fort George with the intention of attempting an assault as soon as a breach was declared practicable, the battalion companies of the 41st being sent away to replace them in that garrison. The appearance of the American squadron, however, caused the detention of the 82d Regiment at York and Burlington for the protection of those places.

General Gaines continued to strengthen his works and materially increased his force by calling in small detachments from the nearest military posts. A resolute attempt was also made to assemble an auxiliary force of Indians and militia. On July 29th General Peter B. Porter had attended a meeting of Indian chiefs at Buffalo at which he urged them to exert their influence to induce their warriors to rejoin the American army, and succeeded in persuading them to send messages to that effect to all the neighbouring villages. In consequence a considerable number of Indians assembled in Buffalo on August 7th, but although they announced their willingness to remain at Black Rock for the defence of that place, they steadfastly declined to cross the Niagara.

Meantime the most moving appeals had been addressed to the Governor of the State of New York to despatch a strong force of militia to the relief of the beleaguered garrison.

"Is it possible," General Porter wrote on August 9th, "that the State of New York will sit with her arms folded and see this army, deserving a better fate, sacrificed? With 3,000 men, which, had there been any patriotism in the country, would have been with us before this time, we should not only be relieved but we might *with certainty* capture the whole British army in thirty days."

A few days later the first draft of one thousand men from Major-General Hall's division, under Lieut.-Colonel Micah Brooks, actually arrived in Buffalo, but steadfastly declined to cross the river under any circumstances. The old batteries on the high bank of the river above Black Rock were repaired and armed with long guns to

annoy the British in flank and if possible to enfilade their trenches. Although too distant to be very accurate the fire of these pieces killed a sergeant and wounded four privates almost as soon as they were opened, on the afternoon of August 12th.

Finding that his first battery was very badly located, being too distant from the American works to be effective and at the same time exposed to an enfilade and even a reverse fire from the batteries across the river, Drummond became heartily dissatisfied with the work of his engineer officer, Captain Samuel Romilly, whom he ordered back to Fort George and put a junior officer, Lieut. Philpot, in charge of the siege works. Another battery was immediately begun about three hundred yards nearer the fort in a less exposed position, and a trench and parapet of logs and earth was constructed on the southern side of a dry watercourse which afforded some natural cover, extending westward nearly eight hundred yards into the woods. A line of rifle pits was also excavated in front of this for the protection of the picquets.

On the morning of the 10th a party of British Indians surprised and cut off nearly the whole of an outlying picquet close to the fort, and a sortie of the American riflemen was soon after repelled with some loss. In this affair a detachment of the Royal Scots was warmly engaged and lost Lieut. G. McGregor and three privates killed, besides nine privates wounded. On the afternoon of the 12th another very determined attempt to drive the working parties out of the trenches was repulsed and the commander of the American riflemen, Major Lodowick Morgan, was killed with ten or twelve of his men. The brunt of this action on the part of the besiegers was borne by two Canadian corps, the Glengarry Light Infantry and Incorporated Militia, of whom General Drummond reported that "their steadiness and gallantry as well as their superiority as light troops have on every occasion been conspicuous." Captain Hamilton Walker of the latter corps was killed and Major James Kerby, commanding the battalion, received two severe wounds. Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Evans of the 8th Regiment, who commanded the picquets, received the hearty thanks of General Drummond upon his arrival on the field at the close of the engagement.

Throughout these operations General Drummond possessed a considerable advantage in the excellent position of his encampment, which enabled him to conceal the numbers and movements of his troops, while from lookout stations upon the high ground in its front, the American works, the lake in rear and Buffalo Harbour could be closely watched, and supports moved forward to the trenches when required. Every attempt of the besieged to ascertain his force was

easily baffled and Generals Gaines and Porter were induced to believe that it exceeded 4,000 and possibly amounted to 5,000, when, in fact, it barely numbered 3,000 effectives.

But on the other hand the American armed schooners in the lake and river continued to annoy the British working parties so persistently and effectively that General Drummond became convinced that it would be useless to attempt an assault until they were taken or driven away, and he readily agreed to a proposal to attack them made by Captain Dobbs. That officer had already gained much experience in leading cutting-out parties during his service in the Mediterranean and he now undertook to convey a number of row-boats secretly overland into Lake Erie and attack the American vessels by night. Five batteaux and the *Charwell's* gig were accordingly brought to the mouth of Miller's Creek on the Niagara River where they were concealed. Thence they were conveyed overland by the well-known Ridge Road to Point Abino, the seamen carrying the gig the entire distance of eight miles upon their shoulders to protect it from injury. The remaining boats were successfully conveyed in waggons through the excellent arrangements made for that purpose by Lieut.-Colonel Robert Nichol, Quartermaster General of Militia. In the woods at that place they were securely hidden until the remainder of the seamen arrived from the camp and darkness favoured their movement down the lake. On the night of the 12th Captain Dobbs accordingly embarked with seventy seamen and marines and rowed quietly down the lake in the direction of the American schooner until they arrived within two or three miles of their customary anchorage, when they changed their course into the lake, making a considerable circuit to gain the route usually followed by boats passing from Buffalo harbour to the American camp with supplies. In this way Dobbs succeeded in approaching the *Somers* within hailing distance soon after midnight, when his boat was challenged from that vessel. He promptly replied, "provision boats from Buffalo," which satisfied the sentry until his boat actually ran aboard the schooner and his men began to clamber up the side, when some resistance was attempted. After a very short struggle, in which two seamen of the *Somers* were wounded, the remainder of her crew were driven below. The sounds of conflict put the crews of the other vessels on the alert, and when a boat commanded by Lieut. Copeland Ratcliffe of the *Netley* approached the *Ohio* it was promptly assailed by a volley of musketry. Ratcliffe and one of his men fell dead and four others were wounded in the short but desperate struggle that ensued after they gained her deck. The onset of the boarders, however, was irresistible and the crew was driven below with the loss of

one man killed and Lieut. Conkling, Sailing Master McCally and five men wounded. The cables of the two prizes were immediately cut with the intention of running on board of the *Porcupine*, the third schooner, which lay a short distance below, but the current carried them both to leeward into the rapids at the head of the river where it became necessary to make great exertions to keep them clear of the rocks and shoals near the shore. Although there was considerable firing and the usual noise incident to a hand-to-hand conflict, not a shot was fired from the American works at Fort Erie or from the *Porcupine* at either of the captured vessels as they drifted silently down the river, nor did the batteries at Black Rock make any attempt to damage them as they passed. The prizes mounted three long guns and each of them was manned by thirty-five officers and men, their ordinary crews having been supplemented by soldiers acting as marines. The commander of the *Porcupine* was so much alarmed by the fate of her consorts that he instantly made sail up the lake.

The skill and courage displayed by Captain Dobbs and his followers in this expedition could scarcely be surpassed, but it may be fairly acknowledged at the same time that they were materially aided by an amazing lack of vigilance on the part of their adversaries, who appear to have been completely taken by surprise. Although a rumor had been current in Buffalo for some time that the British were engaged in building boats near Point Abino, the commanders of these vessels do not seem to have entertained the slightest suspicion that any attack was meditated against them and were quite off their guard. The conduct of the British seamen on the other hand was so meritorious that an American historian, who is by no means free from national prejudice, has remarked that "the manner in which they brought up the men and boats from Lake Ontario for this purpose, and the neatness with which the enterprise was executed reflected great credit on all concerned."*

Drummond was greatly encouraged by the success of this enterprise and immediately published an order congratulating the army upon this "brilliant achievement," and announcing to the troops that he had "a similar service for them to execute," and inviting "corps and individuals desirous of volunteering their services on the occasion to intimate their wishes without delay."

On the following morning the siege batteries opened with four guns, but it was soon perceived that they were too far away to be effective against the earthworks of the fort and their fire was accord-

*Cooper, History of the American Navy, Vol. II., p. 518.

ingly directed principally upon the stone barracks within, of which only the upper story could be seen over the crest of the bastion. The bombardment was continued without intermission until dark and resumed at daybreak next morning. Shortly before sunset on the 14th an expense magazine in the northeastern bastion blew up with a loud explosion, and the gunners in the siege batteries and the covering parties in the adjacent trenches cheered vehemently in the belief that much damage had been done to the works. Observing early in the day that the stone buildings inside the fort seemed to be greatly damaged and that the outline of the parapet and embrasures of the bastion was materially altered by the fire of his guns, General Drummond determined to take advantage of the favourable temper of his troops and attempt to carry the American works by assault that night. The available force at his disposal for this enterprise certainly did not exceed 3,000 effective men belonging, however, to ten different corps. Of these only the 103d and DeWatteville's Regiment were fairly strong in numbers, the others had suffered so severely in the recent operations that they were reduced to mere fragments. The 103d Regiment, formerly the New South Wales Fencibles, and known in that colony by the opprobrious epithet of the "Rum Corps," had been absorbed into the British regular army in 1810. Before sailing for Canada it had been recruited nearly up to strength with convicts released from prison, on the condition that they would enlist, and had already become noted by insubordination and numerous desertions. Besides these disreputable and unreliable fellows, who were ready to abandon their colours at the earliest opportunity, two entire companies were composed of boys, who were too young for field service and had to be left in garrison. DeWatteville's Regiment had originally been a Swiss corps, raised in 1801 by a gallant soldier, Louis deWatteville, who had previously served for many years in the Dutch army. It had behaved with credit at Maida, but of late years its ranks had been recruited with numbers of deserters and prisoners of war from the French Imperial army of various nationalities and speaking different languages. These men had volunteered for service in North America. American spies reported that many of them were greatly disaffected, and as soon as the corps approached the frontier desertions became frequent. DeWatteville himself had recently been promoted to the rank of Major-General, and the command of his regiment consequently devolved upon Lieut.-Colonel J. Fischer. Two companies had been engaged in the assault of Oswego, when they fought very gallantly. This corps had been reduced by casualties to about 900 effectives, and the 103d did not number more than 700 of all ranks.

There were doubtless many faithful and trusty soldiers in both, their officers were probably as capable as any in the division, and owing to their numerical strength it was upon them that Drummond now placed his chief reliance. The information which he had obtained respecting the state of the garrison, being solely derived from prisoners and deserters, was at best rather vague and unsatisfactory. In his secret orders for the attack he said that the American force was reported not to exceed 1,500 fit for duty, and "represented to be much dispirited." This estimate was undoubtedly much too low. On July 31st a return of the American division at Fort Erie showed an aggregate of regular troops fit for duty of 97 officers and 2,125 non-commissioned officers and men.* This did not include General Porter's brigade of New York and Pennsylvania Volunteers, which certainly did not fall short of 400 effectives, besides about fifty Indians. Between the 1st and 12th of August the garrison had been reinforced by two weak battalions of the 1st and 4th United States Rifles under Major Morgan and Captain Birdsall, numbering at least 400 of all ranks and detachments of the 11th and 19th United States Infantry, amounting to 150 or 200 more. During this period they may have lost in action or by disease and desertion at the most 400 men. Consequently at the time of the assault the garrison must have numbered not less than 2,800 of all ranks. As a matter of fact General P. B. Porter, in a letter to Governor Tompkins dated August 9th, stated that its effective strength was between 2500 and 2700. Two companies of the 19th United States Infantry arrived in Buffalo on August 11th and crossed to Fort Erie a day or two later. In the number and calibre of artillery and in regularly trained gunners they possessed a decided advantage, and, as it afterwards appeared, the works had received but little damage from the bombardment or the effects of the explosion, which, it is stated, did not kill a man nor dismount a gun.

Drummond determined to make the assault in three columns with the intention of assailing simultaneously every accessible part of the fortifications. The first and strongest of these, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel J. Fischer of the Regiment de Watteville, consisting of the remnant of the 1st Battalion of the 8th Regiment, the light companies of the 89th and 100th, as many volunteers from the Regiment de Watteville as could be obtained, and a dozen gunners of the Royal Artillery, was instructed to move from the camp at four o'clock in

*Bombardiers—2 officers,	58	N. C. O. and privates.
Light Dragons—1 officer,	47	do. do.
Artillery Corps—12 officers,	241	do. do.
First Brigade—40 officers,	905	do. do.
Second Brigade—42 officers,	874	do. do.

—Henry Adams, History of the United States.

the afternoon and march westward along the Concession or Garrison Road for about four miles, when turning to the left they would gain the lake shore at Baxter's farm. Until they reached this point their movements would be effectually screened by dense woods. Here they were to halt until eleven o'clock. No fires were to be lighted and no loud talking permitted, and every precaution was to be taken to prevent desertion. The rolls were to be called every hour and no officer allowed to leave his command. To further ensure silence and secrecy the flints were to be removed from the firelocks of all except a reserve of very steady men. It was anticipated that these precautions might enable this column to take the garrison in that part of the works by surprise and effect an entrance between Snake Hill and the water, where a space was reported as being sufficiently open to admit the passage of a small body of troops. If they succeeded in doing this they were to turn at once to the left and assail the occupants of the Snake Hill battery and adjacent line in flank or attack their reserves at the building known as the White House. It was hoped that the removal of their flints would "effectually conceal the situation and number of our troops, and those of the enemy being exposed by his fire and his white trousers, which are very conspicuous marks to our view, it will enable them to use the bayonet with the effect which that valuable weapon has ever been found to possess in the hands of British soldiers." If the storming party failed to penetrate into the camp at this point it was provided with hay-bags and short ladders to scale the works elsewhere. This attack was to commence at two o'clock in the morning. As nearly the whole of the Regiment deWatteville volunteered with alacrity Fischer's command exceeded a thousand men, and as General Drummond had purposely avoided any previous demonstration on that flank he believed he had succeeded in drawing the attention of the garrison to their right. The Snake Hill battery was considered the key of their position, and if Fischer succeeded in carrying it there could be little doubt of his final success. This column was piloted by Captain Powell, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General, who was well acquainted with the ground, and accompanied by a picquet of the 19th Light Dragoons under Captain (afterwards Sir John Rowland) Eustace.

The infantry picquets on Buck's Road, supported by the Indians, were directed to attack the American picquet a few minutes before two o'clock, under the superintendence of Lieut.-Colonel Nichol, as a demonstration to create an alarm in that quarter.

The centre column, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel William Drummond of the 104th Regiment, a nephew of the General and a very

gallant and distinguished officer, consisting of a small detachment of Royal Artillery under Lieut. Charleton, the flank companies of the 41st and 104th Regiments, fifty marines and ninety seamen, about 360 officers and men in all, was designed to enter the fort itself by escalade when the attacks elsewhere were well developed. It was guided by Captain Barney of the 89th Regiment, and Lieut.-Colonel Drummond had personally selected Sergeant Richard Smith of his own regiment for the desperate service of leading the forlorn hope, encouraging him with the prospect of receiving a commission if successful.

The left column was composed entirely of the effectives of the 103d Regiment, about 700 strong, under their Colonel, Hercules Scott of Brotherton, an exceedingly brave and spirited but irascible officer, who had openly quarreled with General Drummond and made no secret of his lack of confidence in him. He could, however, be trusted to lead his men into action at all times with the utmost gallantry and coolness. Before leaving his quarters that evening he had openly criticised the plan of attack, but at the last moment seemed in high spirits and shook hands with his surgeon, saying: "We shall breakfast together in the fort in the morning." Captain Eliot, Deputy Quartermaster General, was assigned as guide to this column, which was directed to attack the right of the American position between the fort and the river, and endeavor to penetrate through the opening next the salient angle of the bastion, using their ladders at the same to scale the intrenchment.

The remnants of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots, the Glengarry Light Infantry, Incorporated Militia and the remainder of De-Watteville's Regiment constituted the reserve under Lieut.-Colonel Tucker and was directed to occupy the ground where the picquets and covering parties had been posted during the day. The squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons was instructed to take post in rear of the battery nearest the fort, in readiness to escort prisoners to the rear. General Drummond also took his position at this battery to watch the assault. "The Lieutenant-General *most strongly recommends the free use* of the bayonet," his secret order added. If the assaulting columns met within the works they were to recognize each other by the watchword, "Prince Regent," answered by the countersign, "Twenty." "As proposals of surrender may possibly be made to you," his instructions said, "you are to attend to none which are not unconditional, not suffering yourself for a moment to be diverted from the prosecution of your attack. Clemency to prisoners it is unnecessary to recommend to you, but in removing them you must be careful not to detach too many men."

As Lieut.-Colonel Fischer's column was as strong as the other two combined, it is evident that General Drummond based his chief hope of success upon its ability to carry the Snake Hill battery and take the remainder of the intrenchments in reverse. But by thus dividing his force into two nearly equal bodies with an impassable forest between them it is apparent that he exposed either wing to the danger of being overwhelmed by a sudden and vigorous counter attack.

For the past three weeks working parties composed of one-third of the American force, who were relieved every eight hours, had been employed night and day in fortifying their position and had accomplished much. When captured on the third of July, Fort Erie was a small quadrangular work, enclosed in rear only by a wooden palisade, and a shallow dry ditch. It had been designed merely to command the entrance of the river, and was armed with three pieces of artillery, all mounted on its water front. During the advance of the American army towards Lake Ontario it had been made defensible on the land side by the construction of a curtain and parapet of earth of the same height as the adjacent bastions, leaving the palisades, eleven feet high, still standing outside. The ditch was deepened and protected by *abattis*. The northeastern bastion had a scarp of masonry, surmounted by a parapet of earth measuring from the bottom of the ditch to the crest of the merlons twenty-two feet. Inside this stood two substantial stone barracks, each ninety-three feet in length by twenty-six in width and two stories in height. The upper story of these buildings had been considerably damaged by the fire of the siege guns, for which they had formed a conspicuous target. Outside of the line of palisades a small fleche had been constructed and two new bastions thrown up, which were connected with each other by a line of high palisades, behind which was a log building loopholed for musketry. Curtains of earth connected them with the original fortification, and the whole was enclosed by a dry ditch nine feet deep and twenty-five feet wide and a double line of *abattis*. Six guns, varying in calibre from a six to a twenty-four pounder, were mounted, and the garrison at the time of the assault consisted of Captain Williams's company of United States artillery and two companies of the 19th United States Infantry, commanded by Major W. A. Trimble, amounting in the whole to two hundred and fifty effective men.

On the right a parapet of earth, seven feet high and eighteen feet thick, had been thrown up extending from the ditch outside of the re-entering angle of the northeastern bastion eastward to the river, where it terminated in a *lunette*, usually called the Douglass battery,

after Lieut. David B. Douglass of the United States Engineers, who had superintended its construction. This work was built on a narrow rocky mound rising some nine feet above the ordinary level of the river, immediately in rear of an abandoned quarry which served as a ditch. Its parapet was nine feet high and sixteen feet thick at the top. An eighteen-pounder was mounted *en barbette* in this redoubt and a field piece placed on its right to command the approach through the shallow water near the shore. The opening between the fort and the end of the shelter trench was obstructed with brushwood, behind which a field piece was planted and the whole of this line was further protected by a dry ditch and double row of *abattis* extending to the water's edge. It was occupied by Douglass's command of United States Bombardiers, the 9th Regiment of United States Infantry, under Captain E. Foster, and two companies of volunteers, numbering in all probably four hundred of all ranks.

Upon the glacis of the southeastern bastion of the fort a small redoubt mounting two guns had been constructed to enfilade the ditch on that flank. This was garrisoned by Captain Fanning's company of United States Artillery. From the left of this battery the intrenchment extended in a southwesterly direction three hundred yards to a salient, from which it ran nearly south about the same distance to a re-entrant, thence southwesterly forty yards to a second salient, and finally south forty yards to the redoubt on Snake Hill. This line consisted merely of a parapet and banquette of earth covered by a shallow dry ditch and *abattis*. It had been constructed in haste by the volunteer corps assigned for its defences, and although the parapet was everywhere six or seven feet in height it varied greatly in thickness. Similarly the ditch, although usually about four feet in depth, varied from six to ten feet in width. The trench and banquette was sheltered from a flank fire by no less than fourteen traverses thrown up at right angles. Much of the ground in front was so low and marshy as to be nearly impassable by infantry, and the edge of the woods had been obstructed by felling large trees. Captain Biddle's company of United States Artillery, with three field guns, the 1st and 4th United States Rifles, General Porter's brigade of volunteers and a party of Indians had been detailed for the defence of this line, which was, however, considered practically unassailable by any large body of troops.

Towson's Battery, or Fort Williams as it was sometimes called, situated upon the Summit of Snake Hill, formed the extreme left of the American defences. This conical mound of sand, rising nearly thirty feet above the level of the lake, had been easily converted into a formidable redoubt, composed of two faces meeting in a very obtuse

angle about the centre of the hill, the right face flanking the intrenchments on that side and the left commanding the approaches along the lake from the west. Each face had embrasures for three guns, and the work of enclosing it in rear had made some progress. A double row of *abattis* was constructed along its front, reaching some distance into the lake. This redoubt was defended by Towson's company of United States Artillery, the 21st and a detachment of the 11th United States Infantry, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel E. D. Wood, chief engineer. The 1st, 22d, 23d, 25th and part of the 11th United States Infantry, were retained as a reserve near the centre of the camp. The principal encampment, grand parade, hospital and magazine had all been protected by traverses of a substantial description, which sheltered them from the fire of the siege batteries. The total loss of the garrison during the two days bombardment had amounted only to ten killed and thirty-seven wounded, among the latter of whom were four officers.

The cheers of the besiegers upon hearing the explosion, and signs of activity which he had observed in their lines, led General Gaines to suspect that an assault might be attempted by them that night, and soon after dark he took the precaution of going the round of his works in person to urge the officers on duty to be particularly vigilant and well prepared. The chief engineer and other staff officers followed in turn, giving such advice as they deemed necessary. All the guns were unloaded and recharged, piles of round and case shot and bags of musket balls were piled beside them in readiness for immediate use. Dark lanterns and port fires were constantly kept burning in all the batteries.

Night set in cloudy and dark and a heavy rain soon began to fall, thoroughly drenching Fischer's column in its bivouac. The remainder of the British troops scarcely fared better as they had scanty shelter. The rain ceased shortly before midnight, but the darkness was little abated. The left and centre columns splashed forward to the trenches, and moving silently beyond took their allotted positions in the ravine within three hundred yards of the fort, apparently without attracting observation.

At the time appointed Fischer's column advanced to the assault in the following order. The forlorn hope, composed of a sub-division of the light company of the 8th, commanded by Lieut. Young and guided by Sergeant Powell of the 19th Light Dragoons. It was followed in succession by the light companies of DeWatteville's and the 100th, a second sub-division of the 8th light company, the grenadiers of DeWatteville's, the 89th light company, volunteers from the battalion companies of DeWatteville's and the remainder of the 8th.

About three hundred yards in front of Snake Hill a strong outlying picquet, commanded by Lieut. Belknap of the 23d United States Infantry, was posted in an oak grove, which discovered and attempted to check their advance by a sharp fire of musketry. It was instantly charged and dislodged with some loss. Belknap himself received a severe bayonet wound in the pursuit. Young pressed swiftly onward until stopped by the *abattis*, when Sergeant Powell led the way without hesitation into the lake, and by wading in places up to their arm pits, and even deeper, although the bottom was slippery and strewn with large rocks, they made their way around the flank of this obstacle and regained the shore behind it. They were promptly followed by about half of the DeWatteville light company, led by Major DeVillatte and Captain Powell. The remainder of that company lost track of their comrades in front and wandered into deep water, where some of them were drowned and the rest had much difficulty in getting back to land. They then attempted to force their way through the *abattis*, in which some of them actually succeeded. But at this instant the guns of the battery and a tremendous discharge of musketry from the whole line struck the grenadiers of DeWatteville's at once in front and flank with such appalling effect that all who remained unhurt turned and ran to the rear with such frantic haste that they literally swept the 89th light company before them for some distance, and communicated the panic to the men of their own regiment, who were behind it. So rapid and steady was the fire from the redoubt that it seemed to be wrapped in a constant sheet of flame. The light company of the 89th continued to keep their ranks with admirable firmness in the midst of this scene of confusion, and, strange to say, scarcely lost a man, but the whole of DeWatteville's Regiment, with few exceptions, became utterly terror-stricken and ran over, beat down, or swept before them the weak fragment of the veteran 1st Battalion of the 8th, who gallantly attempted to stem the torrent of their shameful flight. Upon this confused and struggling mass the unaimed fire from the American works fell with deadly effect, and probably more men were hurt than if they had boldly advanced to the attack. Many disaffected men of DeWatteville's Regiment seized this opportunity to desert their ranks and conceal themselves in the woods and thickets until they could give themselves up as prisoners of war to the enemy. This corps lost thirty-four killed, twenty-seven wounded and no less than eighty-three missing.

Meanwhile Young and DeVillatte, with their followers, not exceeding in the whole fifty men, were attacked by three companies of the 21st United States Infantry, whom they charged and engaged

in a hand-to-hand fight. But the reserve of that regiment having come up, the British party was quickly overwhelmed, and all who were not killed or disabled were forced to make their escape by the route they had come in. Their loss was severe, particularly in the light company of DeWatteville's, which behaved very gallantly. Lieut. Young was slightly wounded but succeeded in making his escape with all the other officers and sturdy Sergeant Powell, whose conduct was distinguished. In company with stragglers from other corps, by whom they were joined, they clung tenaciously to the front of the American works for half an hour, during which they made four or five resolute attempts to surmount them, forcing their way through the *abattis* and even raising their scaling ladders against the scarp of the redoubt, only to find them eight or nine feet too short to reach the crest of the parapet. Finally when this despairing effort failed they covered the retreat of the routed column. In this unequal conflict the light company of the 8th lost Lieut. Noel, one sergeant and fifteen privates killed, Lieut. Young and fourteen privates wounded, and one sergeant and fifteen privates missing, being fully two-thirds of its effective strength. Including wounded men and deserters General Ripley reported the capture of one hundred and forty-seven prisoners on this flank. His own loss was trifling not exceeding a dozen men, and even before the firing ceased he was able to detach four companies to the support of the right wing.

General Drummond did not hesitate to attribute the failure of this attack to the misconduct of DeWatteville's Regiment, and it certainly seems probable that the intrenchments might have been carried had the forlorn hope been properly supported.

The other two assaulting columns lay quietly in the ravine until the boom of cannon and crash of musketry from Snake Hill told them that Fischer's advance had been discovered. They instantly rose from their cover and moved rapidly forward. Their approach was soon detected by an outlying picquet of the garrison posted near the river, who discharged their muskets at random and took to flight. Scott's column followed on their track along the beach, while Drummond, ascending the bank, directed his march straight upon the northeastern bastion. Both moved in close column of sub-divisions or half companies. The steady noise of battle and blaze of musketry and cannon on the other flank, which was reflected from a heavy bank of clouds overhead, indicated that a stubborn conflict was in progress there. The garrison of the works in front was already fully alert, but no attempt was made to check their approach until the measured tread of many men and the suppressed voices of their officers exclaiming: "Close up! Steady men, steady! Steel! Steel!

Captain Steel's company!" could be plainly heard. Then the storm burst. The guns of the fort and water battery, literally crammed to the muzzle with case-shot and bags of musket balls, and the muskets of a long line of infantry loaded with "ball and buck" cartridges containing a bullet and three buckshot, opened upon them at short range with fatal effect. The 103d Regiment, crowded together in the defile between the high bank and the water, suffered heavily both in officers and men. Their ranks were soon broken and they fell into much confusion, but by the strenuous efforts of Colonel Scott, Major (afterwards Lieut.-General) Smelt and other officers, they were rallied and the advance resumed. Officers and men fell fast, but when the head of the column gained the point where the high bank recedes from the water, the leading sub-division swerved to the right and led the way towards the supposed opening between the *epaulement* and the bastion, receiving the oblique fire of a body of infantry as they advanced. By this time the 9th United States Regiment, stationed on this line, had been reinforced by the 22d, 25th, the greater part of the 11th and several companies of Porter's volunteers, forming a body of fully one thousand men to occupy a front of about one hundred yards. Captain Eliot fell, desperately wounded, on the edge of the ditch, where he was afterwards taken prisoner. Colonel Scott was shot through the brain on the *glacis*, but carried back to the trenches to die a few hours later. Major Smelt was severely wounded about the same time. For a quarter of an hour their efforts to struggle through the obstructions at this point were continued until many were shot down. Finding that it was impossible to effect an entrance here some of the survivors made their way into the ditch and joined the centre column. Three captains, eleven subalterns, among whom was the adjutant, and 350 non-commissioned officers and men of this regiment, were numbered among the killed, wounded and missing. The garrison along this line did not have a man hurt, and it is doubtful whether the 103d fired a single shot in making the attack.

Although by far the weakest, Drummond's column came nearest being successful. Dashing boldly across the level open plain, as soon as it emerged from the shelter of the ravine, it gained the ditch with little loss. Here the men were pretty well covered from the fire of the fort, and hidden from view by the heavy cloud of smoke from its guns, which hung above their heads and rendered the darkness all but impenetrable. Raising their ladders against the scarp of the bastion, and led by Lieut.-Colonel Drummond and Captain Dobbs, the stormers made their way through the embrasures with loud shouts of "Give the Yankees no quarter!" The gunners abandoned their pieces in dismay, but were soon rallied by their officers, and a des-

perate hand-to-hand fight followed in which many fell. Captain Alexander John Williams and Lieut. Patrick McDonogh of the United States Artillery here died nobly. Observing that a blazing portfire in front of his men threw its light upon their position, Williams sprang forward and extinguished it with his sword, receiving a fatal wound in the act. While desperately defending himself with the rammer of a gun McDonogh was shot dead by Drummond. The rest of their men then took refuge in or behind the stone barracks, from which they kept up an annoying fire of musketry at a distance of only a few paces. Lieut. Charleton, R. A., entering the bastion with a small party of Royal Artillery, soon turned one of the captured guns upon these buildings, from which he fired several rounds. Then the guns of the water battery, and musketry from the adjacent line were directed upon the ditch and captured bastion. To check this a British officer leaped upon the parapet and shouted: "Cease firing! You are firing upon your own men!" For an instant the fire slackened, until a shrill countermand was heard, when it was renewed with increased vigour.

The end of the northeast barrack was built directly across the gorge of the bastion, leaving a passage of only seven feet leading to the parade, which was partly obstructed by masses of stone from its shattered walls. Through this the stormers made their way into the barrack square, expelling all they found there and endeavored to break open the doors of the barracks. A renewed burst of musketry from these buildings showed that they were strongly occupied. By this time the two new bastions had been wholly abandoned by the garrison, and all that side of the fort was in undisputed possession of the storming party. Captain John Barry Glew of the 41st Regiment, who had headed the final successful charge upon the American gun position at Lundy's Lane, was here disabled and the command of the flank companies of that corps devolved upon Captain Richard Bullock, who led them again to the attack of the barracks. The door of one of these was soon forced and his party entered it, only to be driven out again after a stubborn struggle, in which Bullock himself was badly wounded. Fischer's attack had already failed, and reinforcements were being hurried to the fort from the centre and left. The first to arrive was a party of artillerymen under Major Hindman, which united with a body of the 19th United States Infantry under Major Trimble, in an attempt to regain the interior of the fort by the gateway between the barracks. They were easily repelled and driven back into the ravelin, where they were soon joined by Captain Birdsall with his battalion of riflemen. Birdsall headed a second unsuccessful charge through the gate in which he

fell severely wounded. Detachments from the 11th, 19th and 22d Infantry then came up and were formed in rear of Fanning's battery with orders to scale the southeastern bastion and attack the British in flank, while their attention was occupied in front by the force in the barracks and ravelin. This movement was so far successful that they regained possession of the bastion and threw a reinforcement from the 22d Regiment into the nearest barracks. Several attempts made by them to charge through the gorge of the bastion were, however, summarily repulsed. Three companies of the 23d and one of the 19th, detached by General Ripley from the left wing, then came up under Major Brooke and entered the ravelin with the intention of renewing the attack in front. By this time the assaulting column had been much reduced by the steady fire directed upon it. Lieut.-Colonel Drummond had fallen, mortally wounded, and several other officers had been disabled by wounds. The guns and musketry from the intrenchments on the right constantly swept the ditch, rendering it almost impossible for any reinforcement to join it. At the last moment General Drummond sent forward two companies of the Royal Scots from the reserve. They suffered heavily in their advance and few if any of them succeeded in entering the fort. Captain Torrens and thirty-two privates were killed and two sergeants and thirty-seven privates wounded during the short time they were under fire.

Having failed in two attempts to force their way into the barracks the storming party was preparing for another, while the Americans were mustering in force in the ravelin to drive them out of the fort altogether, when an appalling explosion took place in the northeastern bastion. The gun-platform, with its guns and the men engaged in serving it, masses of earth and fragments of stone were hurled into the air in the heart of a cloud of smoke and flame. An expense magazine underneath the platform had become ignited, as the officers nearest it supposed, from a train of powder accidentally dropped in charging and firing a gun against the barracks. A story, however, became current in the British camp later on that it had been exploded with a slow match by a corporal of the United States Artillery, who had disguised himself in the red coat of a British deserter and mingled with the men in the bastion until he was able to accomplish his design and slip away. If this was true the brave fellow must have perished in the explosion, as it is not corroborated by any American account.

The American troops were almost entirely protected from the effects of this explosion by the barracks, but the stormers suffered terribly. Many were killed, some fairly blown in pieces, others crushed beneath

falling masses of stone and timber. Those who remained unhurt were hurled violently from their feet and thoroughly dismayed and bewildered by this unexpected catastrophe. Scarcely an officer or non-commissioned officer remained unhurt, and the men could not be convinced that the explosion was accidental. They imagined that the whole fort was mined and would be blown up under them. Their natural impulse was to fly from that fatal spot, and when the enemy's fire was resumed they became panic-stricken and abandoned the works. Drummond's column had been practically annihilated. The little party of Royal Artillery lost eight men out of thirteen, Lieut. Charleton and others were blown into the ditch, scorched and bruised but otherwise unhurt. The detachment of seamen lost twenty-three, including Captain Dobbs, and three officers out of fifty, the Royal Marines thirty out of ninety. Every officer of the 41st flank companies was either wounded or missing, and only thirty-nine men out of one hundred and twenty escaped unhurt. Sergeant Hugh Clarke of the grenadiers and Private Robert Ball of the light company were particularly commended for their gallant conduct. Of the 104th flank companies twenty-four non-commissioned officers were reported killed or missing, and Captain Leonard, Ensign McLaughlin and twenty-nine non-commissioned officers and men were wounded. Sergeant Smith, the gallant leader of the forlorn hope, received no less than five wounds. Only twenty-six men of these companies returned unwounded.

When the fugitives began to stream into battery, at which General Drummond had taken post, he ordered forward the remaining companies of the Royal Scots to cover their retreat. Day was then breaking and the absolute discomfiture of both columns became fully apparent. The ditch of the fort in several places was choked with dead and wounded. The plain and river side was thickly strewn with bodies. Those who came back unhurt were thoroughly dispirited and exhausted. Drummond's effective force on that line was reduced to less than a thousand men, and a vigorous counter-attack at that moment would probably have driven it from the siege batteries and camp before Colonel Fischer could have rejoined him. General Gaines, however, failed to take advantage of this favorable opportunity, and did not even attempt any organized pursuit beyond his own lines. Many wounded and a considerable number of unwounded men were taken here, and in all he reported the capture of 174 wounded, including seven officers, and 186 unwounded prisoners. Many of the wounded prisoners were fatally hurt. Two hundred and twenty-one dead, including fourteen officers, were found on the field. Drummond officially stated that he lost four

officers and fifty-three non-commissioned officers and privates killed, twenty-four officers, twelve seamen, 273 non-commissioned officers and privates wounded, nine officers, seven seamen and 523 non-commissioned officers and privates missing, but added that the greater part of those returned as missing were supposed to have been killed by the explosion. Six of his battalions, the Royal Scots, 8th, 41st, 89th, 100th and 103d were now so much diminished by their losses in this and former actions as to be entirely unfit for field duty.

The loss of the garrison was comparatively insignificant, amounting only to two officers and fifteen men killed, six officers and forty-six non-commissioned officers and men wounded, and one officer and six men missing.

Fischer's column returned to camp next day about noon in a very exhausted state, and Drummond took immediate steps to strengthen his position. The 82d Regiment was ordered up from York and Burlington, and the 6th reported on its way upward from Kingston was directed to hasten its march. He even contemplated bringing forward another regiment from the latter position, but was deterred from doing so by heavy rains, which made the roads so bad that he concluded this corps could join him by the squadron when it regained control of Lake Ontario, as soon and in much better condition than if it undertook the fatiguing overland march. Besides he was already alarmed by the diminution of his stock of stores and provisions, and any considerable increase of his force without the means of supplying it by water would mean certain distress and hardship. The adjacent district, and in fact the entire province, had been drained of its resources of cattle and grain. Seven thousand Indians, five-sixths of whom were women and children, had to be fed and clothed at Burlington and York, and although some supplies were forwarded from time to time in small brigades of *batteaux*, creeping slowly and cautiously along the northern shore of Lake Ontario in constant peril from the enemy's cruisers, Commissary General Robinson declared that he had little hope that the Right Division could possibly be victualled in these circumstances beyond the middle of September.

The troops engaged in the assault were naturally greatly dispirited and dismayed by their heavy losses, and particularly by the awful effects of the explosion. Drummond himself was much discouraged at first. "It signifies not to the public," he wrote, "to whom the culpability of failure in military matters is attachable the commander at all times falls under censure, however high his character may have been. The agony of mind I suffer from the

present disgraceful and unfortunate conduct of the troops committed to my superintendence wounds me to the soul."

General Gaines was correspondingly elated and declared in his despatch of the following day that he was preparing "to follow up the blow." With this intention he at once authorized Brigadier-General Porter to enlist a force of four thousand volunteers for one, two or three months in Western New York, and assemble them as soon as possible at Williamsville. "I shall not undertake to persuade my young countrymen to come out to the tented field," Gaines wrote to Porter. "They have heard the eloquence of our cannon for some days past. This, I am sure, is fully sufficient to excite their military ardour and call them to the field, where American troops, if true to themselves, will never fail to reap honorable victory over foreign slaves and mercenaries."

General Porter published a fervent appeal to the militia of the "Western Counties" of New York, in which he said: "If the fate of the gallant little army which for six weeks past has been wading through fields of blood for your security, composed in part, too, of your own immediate neighbours and friends, cannot move you to action, I admonish you to recollect that on the support, and the immediate and vigorous support, of that army depends your own security. That army destroyed and your fruitful fields, your stately edifices and your fair possessions are laid waste. Your women and children will feel the weight of the tomahawk. Nay, even liberty itself, without which those blessings are of no estimation in a patriot's heart, will forsake a country so unworthy of her protection." He further declared that during the assault upon Fort Erie the British commander had "400 savages in sight of our intrenchments, ready to leap in should the scales of victory incline to his side and complete the work of destruction, and this same scourge will follow him through the country the moment that the army, its only barrier, shall be broken down. . . . Should the enemy succeed there is nothing on this side Utica can resist his force or escape his ravages."

Ascertaining that General Porter's efforts to enlist volunteers were not likely to be attended by marked success, Governor Tompkins instructed Major-General Hall of the State Militia to order 3000 men from his division into immediate service, in addition to 1000 already detached. At the same time another urgent appeal was addressed to the Indians of Allegany and Onondaga, desiring them to send as many of their warriors as possible to join the American army at once. Several small detachments of regular troops were also pushed forward to Buffalo.

For a day or two afterwards the garrison was busily employed

in repairing the damage caused by the explosion. More than one hundred bodies are said to have been removed from the ruins of the bastion before it could be rebuilt and the gun platform replaced. Mangled limbs and shreds of flesh were strewn everywhere. The body of Lieut.-Colonel Drummond was found on the parade, a "noble looking man," says an eye witness, "his countenance stern, fixed and commanding in death." A copy of the secret order for the assault and a sketch of the works, taken from his person and stained with blood, are still preserved. Contrary to all expectation General Gaines made no immediate attempt to improve his advantage. On the 19th of August the second siege battery, which had been armed with four long guns and a mortar, again opened upon the working parties employed upon the new bastions, while two mortars, which had been mounted in the other battery, began to throw shells into the camp with considerable effect. On the following day Gaines sent out a strong body of infantry and rifles "to look at the British lines." It was quickly driven in by a party of Western Indians concealed in the woods, leaving behind them several rifles, and from the number of scalps taken by the Indians, and dead and wounded men carried into the fort, Drummond estimated that it must have lost forty or fifty men. Gaines rather vaguely admitted the loss of Lieut. Yates and two or three privates killed and two other officers and five or six privates wounded. The next issue of the *Buffalo Gazette*, however, stated that six or seven men had been killed on this occasion.

By this time the spirits of the besiegers began to revive and their commander stated that they "bore the privations and hardships of the service with great cheerfulness." Deserters still continued to come into their lines at the rate of six or seven a day, and said that nothing but fear of falling into the hands of the Indians prevented many more from coming. They also reported that the garrison was in nightly apprehension of the renewal of the assault.

Gabions and fascines were prepared for the construction of a third siege battery in the heart of the woods on the right, within 550 yards from the northwestern angle of the fort, which it was now proposed to breach. The clearance of a site and approaches to it was a task involving much labour, and could not be accomplished without considerable noise in felling timber. An effort to alarm General Drummond for his line of communications along the river was made by moving troops and boats towards Schlosser as if it was intended to attempt the recapture of the two schooners which were lying in Chippawa Creek. This compelled him to detach a field-piece and fifty men to Chippawa, where he directed two companies of militia to be assembled every night. An old battery there was repaired and a

gun mounted. At the same time he determined to construct a permanent bridge across the creek and establish a defensible post with a considerable garrison, as soon as his means would permit. The single company of Royal Artillery present with the division was quite insufficient for the service demanded from it, and the infantry regiments were accordingly required to detach men to serve as additional gunners. But one Provincial officer of artillery drivers remained available for duty. Ammunition for the guns had already begun to fall short, and Drummond anticipated a "most alarming deficiency" of provisions by the beginning of September, particularly in the "grand essential of flour." To avert this if possible, Lieut.-Colonels Nichol and Dickson were sent through the adjacent country to induce the farmers, by their personal influence, to thresh their grain earlier than usual, and the commanding officers of the several regiments of Lincoln Militia were instructed to impress, if necessary, from five to ten bushels of wheat from each person known to possess such a quantity in excess of a sufficient supply for the maintenance of his own family. Payment was authorized at the rate of two dollars and fifty cents per bushel for wheat, two dollars per bushel for rye and fourteen dollars a barrel for flour.

On the 20th, the American brigs blockading the mouth of the river, were blown out of sight by a violent gale, and Captain Dobbs seized this opportunity to send a number of boats to York for provisions, but the blockading vessels returned to their station two days later. The Albany *Argus* records a smart skirmish on the 21st, in which the garrison of Fort Erie lost four officers and fifteen men killed and wounded.

On the morning of August 24th Drummond was joined by the 82d Regiment, about 500 strong*, and learned that the first division of the 6th would probably arrive at York that day. The outposts were at once pushed closer to the enemy's works and the bombardment recommenced with as much vigour as the scanty supply of ammunition would warrant. By this time the schooner *Porcupine* had resumed her position off the American camp, bringing a reinforcement of ninety men of the 21st United States Infantry. Deserters reported that the garrison was preparing for a fresh assault by laying mines and fougasses in the ditch and scarp. As the British outposts approached the enemy's lines desertion from them, mainly from De Watteville's Regiment, materially increased, and more men were lost in this way in a few days than during the whole of the preceding operations.

About 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the 25th Major Brooke of

*This corps mustered 590 rank and file when it landed at Quebec in May, 1814.

the 23d United States Infantry, a very ardent and courageous officer, who was in command of their picquets, perceiving a small British picquet very near the fort, and having a working party felling trees in the wood beyond, reinforced the picquets with one hundred men of his own regiment, under Captain Wattles, and made a sudden attack upon this outpost, driving it away and capturing a number of rifles. He then advanced rapidly in the direction of the working party, but was met and repelled by the picquets of the 82d Regiment. Two privates of that corps were killed and thirteen wounded in this affair, and on the part of the Americans Captain Wattles and two privates were killed and five or six wounded. It was remarked that the loss of the 82d Regiment was greater than it should have been because they were not expert in taking cover, this being their first experience in the woods. Accordingly, after this, when men of this regiment and the 6th were placed upon picquet duty they were accompanied by some of the Glengarry Light Infantry and Incorporated Militia until they acquired experience in bush-fighting. During the night several deserters from the 23d United States Infantry came in, making in all seventy within a month.

That evening Major Brooke, accompanied by two dismounted dragoons, crept quietly forward from the American works, carrying a lighted lantern enveloped in a watch coat, and succeeded in passing the British picquets unobserved, and approaching within a few paces of the fatigue party employed on the new battery. Brooke then climbed a tree and fastened the lantern, still covered by the coat, among its branches. After he descended to the ground the coat was withdrawn from the side of the lantern next the fort by means of a rope attached to it for that purpose, which was made fast, and he returned to the camp unmolested. Guided by its light the American guns then opened fire upon the working party with considerable accuracy, until the lantern was discovered and extinguished.

The batteries at Black Rock continued to give so much annoyance that Drummond again began to consider the expediency of despatching a force across the river to destroy them, and boats were actually ordered up from Fort George for that purpose. The Americans at that place, however, at once took alarm and removed their depot of stores into the interior and the design was abandoned. Deserters reported that the besieged were losing from ten to fifteen men daily from the bombardment, and sometimes many more. The new siege battery was completed on August 29th, and armed that night with two long 18-pounders, a 24-pounder carronade and an 8-inch howitzer. It began firing next morning at daylight, apparently with effect, but the officer in charge was directed to restrict his fire to the annoyance

of the garrison, and not to throw away any ammunition in an attempt to effect a breach prematurely. By that time General Drummond had become satisfied that the intrenchments in front of him were very formidable indeed. "He, (General Gaines,) has been unceasingly employed," he wrote that day to the Governor-General, "in strengthening his position by every means in the power of an active, laborious and ingenious enemy to devise and execute. He has had his whole force at work day and night, and has thrown up such an accumulation of mounds of earth, of batteries and breastworks as will certainly cost us many men to dislodge him from, and which bid defiance to our shot."

The two new bastions had then been completed to a height of fifteen feet above the parade, and armed with several heavy guns. The log building behind the curtain connecting them had been much strengthened. Casemates of logs and underground chambers for the protection of the gunners, had been constructed and all the traverses extended and heightened. The battery upon Snake Hill had been converted into an enclosed redoubt. The number of guns mounted upon the works had been increased to twenty-seven, and the most careful preparations were made for repelling another assault. In spite of all their precautions the garrison continued to suffer considerably from the high angle and ricochet fire of the British guns. On August 27th Lieut. Felton of the New York Volunteers was killed, and about twenty men were either killed or wounded. The large chimney of the house in which General Gaines had established his headquarters was visible in the new battery, and became a mark for the gunners. On Sunday, August 28th, a shell struck it, and bursting inside wounded Gaines so seriously that he was obliged to resign the command to Brigadier-General Miller, who was almost immediately superseded by Major-General Brown, who had nearly recovered from his wounds. The total loss of the besieged, from the 16th of August to the 1st of September, was reported to amount to fifty-nine killed and one hundred and forty-seven wounded. The wastage from disease and desertion had also been considerable. Late in the month a detachment of the 11th United States Infantry arrived from Burlington, Vt., but the return of the 31st August showed a total effective strength of only 119 officers and 2127 non-commissioned officers and privates, indicating a reduction of 500 or 600 men since the opening of the siege batteries.*

	* Officers.		N. C. O. and privates.	
Dragoons.....	1	.....	27	
Bombardiers, etc.....		.....	34	
Artillery corps.....	10	.....	206	
First Brigade.....	39	.....	725	
Second Do.	42	.....	698	
Porter's Do.	16	.....	220	
First and Fourth Rifles.....	11	.....	217	
	119		2127	

By this time General Drummond had made up his mind that an assault in daylight would be more likely to succeed than one by night, as the garrison was known to be constantly on the alert after dark, and he hoped it might be surprised in the daytime. With this intention he ordered the 97th Regiment to join him as soon as possible, and learning that the British squadron would not be able to sail from Kingston for some time, he also directed the 90th Regiment to commence its march upwards. Major-General de Watteville joined him on the 1st of September, and the 6th Regiment, consisting of about 500 effective men, marched into camp on the following day. From the *Buffalo Gazette* of August 30th he learned that a large body of militia was already assembling there, and it was reported that two regiments of regular infantry and a body of riflemen were also near at hand.

The 6th Regiment immediately volunteered to work that night upon a fourth battery, which had been traced in front of his right picquet, 550 yards from the western face of the fort, which was designed to breach the curtain and log-building connecting the two new bastions and to demolish the stone barracks.

While this was being completed the American vessels blockading the mouth of the river disappeared, and the communication with York across the lake was again re-opened, enabling Captain Dobbs to remove the sick and wounded to that place and bring back a much needed supply of provisions and stores.

There could no longer be room to doubt that the New York Militia were assembling in great numbers. Brigadier Daniel Davis of Genesee county had ordered his entire brigade into service without authority, and it had been accepted. The force upon the march was actually reported to be considerably in excess of the number required and was estimated at between 4000 and 5000 men. Confident in their numbers they were said to be in excellent spirits and perfectly willing to cross the river, but many of them were poorly armed and equipped. Few of the Indians responded to the call, as they were suffering from smallpox. Generals Porter and Brown went to Buffalo to superintend the movement of these troops across the water. Forty large scows had been specially built for this purpose, and the armed brig *Lawrence* and the schooners *Lady Prevost*, *Caledonia* and *Porcupine* had opportunely arrived with 320 regular infantry and a company of riflemen from Sandusky. There was accordingly ample means of transportation.

The fourth siege battery was finished and armed on the night of September 4th with three heavy long guns and an 8-inch howitzer and heavy mortar, but General Drummond decided not to unmask

and open it until a sufficient supply of ammunition could be brought up from Fort George, and the arrival of the 97th Regiment would enable him to make an assault in force. The remnant of the 103d Regiment had already been detached by him to protect the line of communication from Chippawa to Burlington, and the brig *Charwell* and schooners *Vincent* and *Netley* were lying at York in readiness to embark the 97th as soon as it arrived there.

On the 5th of September a smart skirmish took place with an American picquet, composed of a subaltern's command of the 11th Infantry, which was successively reinforced by a detachment of their 21st Regiment and a battalion of New York Volunteers. This force was finally driven in with considerable loss by the picquets of the 82d Regiment. "Nothing could exceed the gallantry and good conduct of all the troops," Drummond wrote on this occasion, "their impetuosity was with difficulty restrained." Lieut.-Colonel Joseph Willcocks of the Canadian Volunteers, late a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, then in command of Porter's brigade, and Lieut. Roosevelt of the New York Volunteers, were killed in this affair.

At daybreak on the 7th their main picquet upon Buck's Road was cleverly surprised by a force detailed for that purpose under Captain R. D. Patteson of the 6th Regiment, and conducted by Captain Powell of the Quartermaster General's Department. It was composed of a company of the 6th Regiment and one of the Glengarry Light Infantry, who were joined at Platow's house near the concession road by the infantry picquet and a troop of the 19th Light Dragoons under Captain Eustace. Advancing quietly under cover of the darkness they rushed upon the out-picquet with such success that not a man escaped. An officer and thirteen men were killed on the spot and seven privates wounded and taken. The remaining picquets immediately ran for their works, but were supposed to have lost several men from musketry. One private of the 6th was killed and another wounded. Sergeant Powell of the 19th Dragoons was again specially mentioned for distinguished conduct.

On the following day heavy rain began to fall, which continued with little intermission for thirteen days. The roads leading from the camp to the siege works soon became almost impassable, and the trenches were filled with water which could scarcely be drained away. Up to this time the British troops had been remarkably healthy, but they now began to sicken in numbers, particularly in the 82d Regiment. Desertions also steadily increased. On September 9th the arrival of eleven deserters in the American lines is reported, one of whom belonged to the Royal Scots, which was considered a "remark-

able circumstance." Desertion from the garrison on the contrary almost ceased and Drummond found much difficulty in securing any trustworthy information, although the few deserters who made their escape at this time invariably reported that an offensive movement was contemplated, either by a sortie or by landing a force from Black Rock in his rear.

Owing to the scarcity of ammunition the bombardment was almost discontinued. It was found that direct fire from so few guns had little effect upon the enormous mounds of earth which had been thrown up, and there were but eighty rounds of shell remaining for the two mortars.

In a skirmish which took place on the 9th two privates of the Royal Scots were killed and Lieut. Grant of that corps was wounded. On the night of the 10th a large body of militia and volunteers was ferried over. Next day this was made known to Drummond by a deserter, who estimated their number at 2,500. Another detachment was passed over that night, increasing the aggregate of those who crossed to more than 3000. General Brown had at first intended to make a sortie early on the morning of the 11th before his adversary could obtain any information of the arrival of these troops. With this view he assembled a council of war on the 9th, but General Ripley strongly opposed the proposal and a majority of the officers present voted against it. This project was accordingly abandoned for a time, and the militia were encamped in a sheltered position, where they were provided with tents.

A few days before an express messenger from Kingston to York had been intercepted and taken on the road near Presqu' Isle by a boat's crew from Sackett's Harbour. The contents of his letter-bag were at once sent to General Brown, by whom they were received soon after the council of war had adjourned. Among them were two letters from Sir George Prevost to General Drummond, written at Montreal on August 26th in reply to Drummond's official and private letters of August 15th, describing the disastrous repulse he had sustained, and severely criticising and censuring the General for risking a night attack and removing the flints from the muskets of the troops engaged.

"It is not in reproach of its failure," the Governor-General said, "that I observe to you that night attacks made with heavy troops are very objectionable, principally because chance and not skill too frequently decide the contest, and that at night difficulties and dangers are ever magnified, particularly when they present themselves unexpectedly, and in the latter case the best disciplined troops are placed only on a level with raw and undisciplined troops."

He concluded with the information that the 90th and 97th Regiments had been ordered to join his division, expressing the hope that when these reinforcements reached him he would be able to effect the expulsion of the American army. General Brown lost no time in despatching a messenger to meet Major-General Izard at Sackett's Harbour and urge him to move to his relief at once and strike Drummond in the rear by landing near the forts at the mouth of the river, which he suspected to be very weakly garrisoned. The entire number of troops under Drummond's command, available for field service, he very correctly estimated not to exceed three thousand unless the 90th or 97th Regiment had joined him, which he did not think likely. His own effective regular force he said exceeded two thousand men, and he might be able to place twenty-five hundred behind breastworks. Porter's division of militia and volunteers was roughly estimated at three thousand.

As none of the British troops were provided with tents, and the temporary huts they had erected were insufficient to shed the rain, their condition became extremely wretched. There was no depot of provisions nearer than Fort George and the roads were almost impassable. The earth became so thoroughly soaked with rain that two of the bastions of Fort Niagara actually slid into the lake, together with the clay bank upon which they stood, throwing that post entirely open on the water front. At that season of the year there was little prospect of the roads again becoming hard, and all kinds of forage had been absolutely exhausted for ten miles around the British camp. To add to General Drummond's embarrassment at this time the American brigs which had been blockading the river unexpectedly resumed their station just in time to prevent the transportation across the lake of the 97th Regiment, which arrived at York on September 10th. This corps was accordingly obliged to undertake the tedious and exhausting march around the head of the lake, and could not be expected to join him before the 17th or 18th.

Probably Drummond would have then decided to abandon the siege if he had been able to collect a sufficient number of horses to remove his heavy artillery, which he did not feel disposed to sacrifice. He accordingly resolved to maintain his position in the hope that the arrival of the 97th Regiment, with a supply of ammunition, would enable him to deliver a successful assault. Rumors of the enemy's intention to make a sortie reached him from time to time but did not much disturb his equanimity.

"I have strong grounds for thinking the enemy will risque an attack," he wrote to Sir George Prevost on the 14th, "an event, which from the necessity of defending my batteries in the first

instance with the picquets alone, I shall have to meet under every possible disadvantage, yet I am very much disposed to hope may be the most fortunate circumstance that can happen, as it will bring us into contact with the enemy at a far cheaper rate than if we were to be the assailants, and may at the same time, I trust, bring to a happy crisis a campaign which has been marked by a series of unlucky circumstances as well as of late severe hardships and privations on the part of the troops, which I am happy in repeating have borne themselves with the utmost cheerfulness, and have evinced a degree of steadiness and spirit highly honourable to them."

In this opinion he was confirmed by the ease with which a sortie of four hundred riflemen and volunteers at daybreak that morning had been repelled by the picquets alone. The officer who led the attack was killed and one man made prisoner. For the purpose of defending his batteries from a sudden assault the infantry was then divided into three brigades, numbering less than a thousand rank and file, each of which occupied the trenches and furnished the picquets in turn, while the other two remained at the camp.

Torrents of rain fell almost incessantly for the next three days, converting the low ground into a succession of shallow ponds. The American troops being fairly sheltered from the storm in houses, subterranean chambers and tents, which had been lately provided with floors, suffered far less from the weather than the besiegers and were maintained in comparative good health and spirits, while deserters from the British lines reported that the troops occupying them were fatigued, miserable and much discouraged and that General Drummond was already contemplating the removal of his camp to some healthier situation.

These reports determined General Brown to revive his project of a sortie against the siege works to dismantle them, and "roughly handle" the brigade upon duty in the trenches before the supports could come from the camp to their aid. With this purpose he directed his own batteries to open fire on the 15th and 16th, and sent out two strong fatigue parties of experienced axemen, drafted from the militia, to mark out and prepare a road by which infantry could advance through the woods from Snake Hill to the rear of the extreme right of the British by blazing trees and cutting away the underbrush. These parties succeeded in approaching unheard and unseen within one hundred and fifty yards of the trenches, and thence returned to their own lines, removing the brushwood and other obstructions as they went along. Two parallel roads, about thirty yards apart, were thus cleared.

Learning that the brigade, including DeWatteville's Regiment,

would again be upon duty in the trenches on the 17th, it was accordingly decided to make the contemplated sortie early in the afternoon of that day when the supports and reserves would be at their camp, presumably asleep and unprepared for an attack.

On the morning of the 17th the whole of the garrison was paraded and the columns of attack were formed with instructions to move off precisely at noon. General Porter was given command of the left division, which was designed to turn the right of the British position. Its advance guard was composed of the 1st and 4th United States Rifles under Colonel Gibson, and a small body of Indians commanded by Captain Fleming. The remainder of this division advanced in two parallel columns upon the roads cut through the woods for that purpose. The right column, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel E. D. Wood, consisted of the 1st and 23d Regiment of United States Infantry, a dismounted detachment of the 2d United States Light Dragoons, and Dobbins's, Fleming's and McBurney's regiments of New York Militia. The left column, commanded by Brigadier-General Daniel Davis, was composed of Churchill's, Crosby's and Hopkins' regiments of New York Militia. Brigadier-General Miller was instructed to move the 9th, 11th and 19th United States Infantry in small detachments by a circuitous route from the centre of their lines into the ravine on the north side of the fort, where these troops were to remain concealed until the attack on the left began. The 21st and a detachment of the 17th United States Infantry were held in reserve in the new bastions, while the 25th United States Infantry, the bombardiers and corps of artillery were detailed to garrison the works during the sortie. The sun was shining when this movement began but the sky soon clouded over and the rain recommenced. General Brown himself accompanied General Porter's division, which advanced unseen until within a few rods of the right of the British works, where they were quietly formed under cover of the intervening woods. At twenty-nine minutes before three o'clock Brown gave the signal for the attack and made haste to join General Miller's troops in the ravine. Before he reached their position the steady roll of musketry announced that the action had begun and General Miller was at once directed to assail the batteries in front.

Passing around the end of the *abattis* and entrenchments, Porter's columns wheeled to the right and took both picquets and supports fairly in the flank almost before they had time to stand to their arms, and swept them before them with ease. A log blockhouse on the right of the works, occupied by a detachment of the 8th Regiment, was surrounded and the neighbouring works occupied in overwhelming force by the triumphant assailants, who immediately pushed

forward against the next battery, and line of breastworks, held by the Regiment *de Watteville*. Again their onset was so sudden and impetuous as to be irresistible, although this corps in general made a much stouter resistance than had been anticipated, but being assailed at once in front and in flank many of them were quickly shot down or taken prisoners and the remainder dispersed. Lieut.-Colonel Fischer and twelve other officers were wounded, Majors De Villatte and Winter, Adjutant Mermet, three captains, two subalterns, nine sergeants and 148 rank and file were captured. The occupants of the blockhouse defended themselves gallantly for some time, but were eventually compelled to surrender also. Within half an hour from the time they began the attack the Americans were in undisputed possession of the two batteries on the right and the adjacent trenches and had commenced dismantling the works. The remainder of the British picquets with their supports had retired to the batteries next the river, whence they began a fire of musketry. The brigades in reserve were already approaching upon the roads leading from the camp, which rain and much travel had converted into an almost impassable quagmire. Drummond himself accompanied the advance, and observing that the Americans were in possession of some of his works he directed the Royal Scots and 89th Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel Gordon, to move through the woods to regain the intrenchment on the right, while the 82d Regiment and a wing of the 6th moved upon Battery No. 2, and the Glengarry Light Infantry was thrown into the woods in front to check the further advance of the enemy, who were pushing forward against Battery No. 1. The latter corps, moving by the centre road, extended into the woods on either side and attacked the American riflemen in flank with much gallantry. They were driven through the trenches and pursued to the *glacis* of the fort, losing heavily in their retreat. Lieut.-Colonel Pearson, commanding the light demi-brigade, who directed this movement, was severely wounded at the moment of success.

As soon as General Brown perceived that his troops were giving way and in some danger of being cut off he ordered the reserve to move out to their support. This force soon became warmly engaged in the open ground. General Ripley himself was dangerously wounded, and the 21st Regiment lost two officers and a good many men in covering the retreat. Meanwhile the guns in the captured batteries had been spiked and dismounted and their carriages cut down. The magazine in the new battery was blown up by Lieut. Riddle of the 15th United States Infantry, who was badly burnt by the explosion. The troops who had carried these works were in much confusion and not properly covered by outposts, so that the

approach of the British reserves was unobserved until they were close to them. Then the order to retire was given, which they attempted to execute without engaging. Seven companies of the 82d Regiment, led by Major (afterwards Lieutenant-General) Henry Adolphus Proctor, supported by three companies of the 6th Regiment under Major Taylor, instantly charged Battery No. 2, while Lieut.-Colonel Gordon with the Royal Scots and 89th advanced against Battery No. 3. The falling rain and intervening woods screened them until at close quarters, when they plied the bayonet with deadly effect upon the disorderly crowd of fugitives, whose arms had been generally rendered unserviceable by the rain. Several American officers and many men were killed or wounded and a considerable number made prisoners. The remainder retreated in great haste to the ravine, where they rallied, but ultimately withdrew into their entrenchments under cover of the musketry of their reserves and artillery fire from the fort. Their losses had been severe, particularly in officers of rank. Brigadier-General Davis was left dead on the field; Lieut.-Colonel Wood was mortally wounded and taken prisoner. Colonel Gibson of the United States Rifles also died of his wounds. Major-General Porter, Brigadier-General Ripley, Lieut.-Colonel Aspinwall and Major Trimble were among the wounded. Lieut.-Colonel Churchill, Major Wilson and ten other officers were taken prisoners. This heavy loss in officers was largely attributed to their distinctive uniform, which made them conspicuous. General Brown's official report acknowledged a total loss of seventy-nine killed, 216 wounded and 216 missing, but there is reason to believe that this return was incomplete as far as the militia was concerned. One American account relates that McBurney's Regiment went into action with 176 non-commissioned officers and privates, of whom only seventy-six returned unhurt, and out of twelve officers engaged eight were killed or wounded and three missing.

But aside from the serious damage done to the siege batteries they had succeeded in inflicting a severe blow upon the covering force. General Drummond reported that he had lost three officers, seven sergeants and 105 rank and file killed, seventeen officers, thirteen sergeants, one drummer and 117 rank and file wounded, and thirteen officers, twenty-one sergeants, two drummers and 280 rank and file missing. General Brown on the other hand asserted that he had captured twelve officers, twenty-three sergeants, one drummer and 349 rank and file. Two-thirds of this loss fell upon the 2d Brigade, which had occupied the trenches. Lieut.-Colonel John Gordon of the Royal Scots, commanding the 1st Brigade, was mortally wounded, and Lieut.-Colonels Fisher and Pearson were disabled from further active service.

The 97th Regiment, which joined Drummond on the following day, barely sufficed to replace his losses, and he became convinced that it would no longer be possible for him to maintain the siege with a force which did not much exceed two thousand effective rank and file, suffering great privations from the want of tents, proper clothing and shoes, while fatigue and exposure to the protracted wet weather had much increased the number of the sick. So many men had been displayed by the Americans during the sortie that he estimated their available force at five thousand. It was also reported that troops were moving up the lake, apparently with the intention of attempting to gain his rear by the road leading from Point Abino to the river, and he learned that Major-General Izard's division had arrived at Sackett's Harbour from Plattsburg, whence they might easily be transported to the head of the lake in a couple of days by the American squadron, which still had command of Lake Ontario. He accordingly determined to retire behind Black Creek, where he would be secure from any turning movement and the work of withdrawing his artillery began at once. By great efforts the siege guns were removed behind Frenchman's Creek on the 18th and 19th, without the slightest molestation. The 8th and De Watteville's Regiments were despatched to reinforce the garrisons of the forts at the mouth of the river in consequence of an alarming report from the engineer officer that it seemed probable if the rain continued the remainder of the works at Fort Niagara would come down, and it was not possible to do anything to check or repair the damage during the wet weather. On the night of the 21st, shortly after tattoo was sounded the remainder of the division commenced its retreat in a drenching rain, leaving their huts standing and fires burning. This movement was not discovered by the Americans until daylight, when their picquets were pushed forward to the edge of the plain opposite Black Rock, which was still occupied by the British outposts. After exchanging a few shots they retreated to their entrenchments and during the afternoon Drummond's rearguard quietly retired across Frenchman's Creek and destroyed the bridge. A cavalry picquet was left there to watch the fords and another stationed upon the Point Abino road, supported by a company of the Glengarry Light Infantry near its junction with the river road at Andrew Miller's house. The remainder of that corps, with the battalion of Incorporated Militia and a body of Western Indians, were quartered at Palmer's, two miles further down the river, while the 97th Regiment, with two field pieces was stationed at Black Creek. The 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots, with a six-pounder, occupied Street's Grove, and the 6th with the remainder of the field artillery lay at Chippawa. The 82d Regi-

ment was cantoned at Lundy's Lane and the 89th with the flank companies of the 104th at Queenston. Major-General de Watteville, who was put in command of all the troops on the south side of Chippawa Creek, made his headquarters at Gonder's house, one mile below Black Creek, and Drummond established his at Forsyth's near the falls. Major-General Stovin, who had just arrived from Kingston, commanded the troops at Queenston and the forts. This distribution of his troops would enable Drummond to reinforce either flank quickly if it was threatened with attack or retire behind the line of the Chippawa if necessary. The troops were comfortably lodged in houses and barns until materials could be collected for the construction of barracks. Instead of paroling the militia prisoners, of whom nearly two hundred had been taken, as had been the practice in the past, they were sent to Montreal with a recommendation that they should be detained as long as possible, to deter others from volunteering for service in Canada. Deserters from the American regular regiments soon began to arrive at the British outposts, who reported that many of the militia had already recrossed the river.

No hostile movement took place on either side until September 29th, when a patrol of the 19th Dragoons, consisting of a corporal and six troopers, was surprised and taken upon the Ridge Road by a large party sent out from Fort Erie for that purpose. In retaliation Captain P. L. Chambers, in command of a party of dragoons and the light company of the 97th Regiment, succeeded in capturing a forage master and three dragoons at Haun's, near Point Abino, two days later, while a larger party, led by the "traitor Markle," late a member of the Legislature of Upper Canada, barely escaped.

About the same time General Drummond received information that Major-General Izard's division had arrived at Batavia, and made immediate arrangements for withdrawing behind the Chippawa. By the assistance of parties of the Incorporated Militia nearly all the grain on the south side of that stream had already been threshed and removed and orders were given to the farmers to drive away all their cattle at once. On October 3d the Royal Scots and 97th retired, leaving the light companies of the 6th, 82d and 97th, the Glengarry Light Infantry, a squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons and one field piece, under Lieut.-Colonel Battersby, in advance along the river between Chippawa and the mouth of Black Creek, where a small field work had been thrown up. Captain Dobbs was instructed to man one of the schooners lying at Chippawa and anchor her near the foot of Grand Island to prevent the enemy from passing the river there. Meanwhile the Incorporated Militia were incessantly employed in the collection of supplies.

General Izard's division of nearly 4000 men sailed from Sackett's Harbour on September 21st, and disembarked next day at the mouth of the Genesee River. On the 24th it began its march overland to Buffalo, but was so much retarded by rain and bad roads that it did not arrive at Batavia until the afternoon of the 26th. General Izard then learned the result of the sortie from Fort Erie and decided to move by the Ridge Road to Lewiston and besiege Fort Niagara. General Brown arrived next day, when it was arranged that he should send all his heavy artillery to Lewiston and march with the remainder of his division upon Chippawa. Izard confidently declared his expectation of regaining the "shamefully lost fortress of Niagara" after a few days of open trenches, but did not resume his march until October 1st, and reached Lewiston on the morning of the 5th, encamping his men some distance from the river to evade observation. Generals Brown and Porter came there next day to urge that the proposed investment of Fort Niagara should be abandoned and the whole force united in Canada south of the Chippawa. A reconnoitering party sent out the night before had returned with the information that the British outposts had been drawn in and that the defences of all the forts were being strengthened in anticipation of an attack. Izard then agreed to march to Schlosser and pass the river in boats to a point some distance above Chippawa, where he was to be joined by Brown's division.

The presence of a considerable body of troops at Lewiston had already become known to Drummond. In the course of the night of the 5th many lights and watchfires in rear of that place were seen by the sentries at Queenston, and early next morning they succeeded in discovering a large encampment. During the day a party of mounted officers was observed several times to approach the river as if reconnoitering.

On the 8th General Izard marched to Schlosser, but finding that the boats lying in Cayuga Creek would not be sufficient to carry more than a quarter of his men at once and that the passage of the river would probably be disputed, he abandoned his design of crossing there, and after lightening his train waggons by transferring most of its load to the boats, he continued his march towards Black Rock. He was delayed for several hours at Tonawanda Creek, over which he was obliged to rebuild the bridge, but eventually succeeded in passing all his troops across the Niagara at Black Rock on the 10th and 11th.

Drummond had been kept fairly well informed by spies and deserters, from whom he learned that the 17th United States Infantry, two hundred riflemen and three hundred dragoons, had arrived at

Fort Erie from the west, and that a fresh draft of two thousand New York Militia had been seen on the march to Buffalo. When these arrived it was estimated that Brown's division would number six thousand effective men, of whom nearly one-half would be militia or volunteers. Horses had already been brought over to draw the artillery. Izard's division was reported to consist of six regiments of regular infantry. Their plan of operations could only be guessed at, but he suspected that while the main body engaged his attention in front a considerable force might be sent in the Lake Erie squadron to turn his flank by way of Grand River or Long Point.

The bridge over Black Creek was destroyed and all the troops withdrawn but fifty men of the Glengarry Regiment. The remainder of that corps fell back to Street's Creek and the 6th retired to the bridge head at Chippawa. The Incorporated Militia was stationed at Weishuhn's in the fork between Lyons Creek and the Chippawa, where a field work was being constructed to enfilade the approaches to the bridge. The right of this position was observed by small parties of dragoons and militia posted along Lyon's Creek as far as Cook's Mills, and along the Chippawa to Brown's Bridge, sixteen miles from its mouth. The Indians were sent forward into the woods in front. The Royal Scots, 82d and 97th were quartered along the road from Bridgewater Mills to Stamford Village in such positions that they could be easily concentrated at Chippawa in two hours. Lieut.-Colonel the Marquis of Tweeddale was stationed at Queenston in command of a brigade consisting of the 89th and 100th Regiments, the flank companies of the 104th, one troop of the 19th Dragoons and two field guns. All the baggage was removed to the mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek, where a small depot of provisions and ammunition had been established, and the sick were sent away to York and the Forty Mile Creek. The inhabitants were thoroughly hostile to the invaders, and could be relied upon to do everything in their power to retard their advance and deprive them of supplies. On the 11th, when it became known that Izard's division had crossed the river, the whole of the militia was called out and arrangements were made for the immediate concentration of all the troops at Chippawa upon firing a signal gun from the heights at Lundy's Lane, to be repeated at Queenston. Every effort was made to complete and arm the fortifications at Chippawa and Weishuhn's.

On the morning of the 13th Major-General Izard, who had assumed command of the American army, began his advance, leaving a competent garrison to occupy the entrenchments at Fort Erie, under Major Hindman of the artillery. His force was organized into two divisions, one composed entirely of regular troops, numbering 3,500

rank and file under Brigadier-General Bissell, the other consisting of two thousand regulars and eight hundred volunteers under Major-General Brown. In the afternoon his advance guard came in contact with the outpost of the Glengarry Regiment at Black Creek. After some desultory firing across that stream this party retired, leaving the houses and stacks of forage in flames and removing the inhabitants with them. The Americans halted for the night and began to build a bridge. Next day they advanced as far as Street's Creek, their progress being delayed by the necessity of constructing bridges over several small streams on the road to bring forward their artillery. The Glengarry Light Infantry retired deliberately "in the most perfect order and with the utmost regularity," forming at nightfall a chain of outposts in front of the bridge-head on the south side of the Chippawa. Several hours on the morning of the 15th were occupied by General Izard in building a bridge over Street's Creek, and when this was accomplished he passed over his whole force and advanced in line, covering a front of about a mile and a half from the river to the woods near the mouth of Lyon's Creek, driving the British picquets within their works. A field piece was planted on the river road and opened fire without eliciting any reply. The movement of waggons and troops to the rear led him to suspect that Drummond was preparing to retreat, and six guns were soon brought into action. As the works were still unfinished and some of the artillery mounted upon them fully exposed to view, the effect of the fire of these pieces could be plainly discerned. Several of the British guns were seen to be struck and very few shots were returned, one of which, however, killed four men and badly wounded Major Lush, the Judge Advocate of Izard's army.

Next morning the bank of Lyon's Creek was reconnoitred for a crossing place, and strong columns of infantry were assembled on the plain, but the cannonade was not resumed. Towards noon General Izard received the disconcerting information that the American squadron had retired into Sackett's Harbour to seek protection under the guns of its batteries, and that Sir James Yeo was again in full control of Lake Ontario. At one o'clock he began his retreat, and the British cavalry and light infantry at once moved out in pursuit. When they reached the site of the American camp at Street's Grove it was discovered that a quantity of stores had been destroyed and some provisions abandoned. Shortly afterwards two large row-boats that had been sent to Schlosser for supplies returned to the Canadian shore, and one of them, containing a day's provisions for a brigade of troops, was captured. Izard retired as far as Black Creek, leaving all the bridges along the road intact, and halted there for the night.

Next day General Drummond received information that Yeo's squadron with a reinforcement of five hundred men of the 90th Regiment had been sighted from Fort George, and that a body of American infantry was moving towards Cook's Mills on Lyon's Creek by a road running inland from the river. This force, which consisted of nearly a thousand men made up of detachments from the 5th, 14th, 15th and 16th United States Infantry, a company of riflemen and a party of dragoons under Brigadier-General Bissell, although delayed by the horrible condition of the roads, which rendered it impossible for them to take any artillery with them, succeeded in surprising a militia picquet at that place and captured the officer commanding it. The passage of Lyon's Creek was then effected without opposition, and a position occupied on the further bank. This movement turned the right flank of the British advanced line and seemed to indicate an intention of forcing the passage of the Chippawa higher up and penetrating into the country beyond the Beaver Dams in the direction of Burlington. A demi-brigade, composed of the 89th and 100th Regiments, and the flank companies with a field piece, under the Marquis of Tweeddale, was sent over to Weishuhn's redoubt with instructions to push forward the 100th and three companies of the 82d, with the field gun, to the support of Lieut.-Colonel Myers, who had his headquarters at Misener's house on Lyons Creek about seven miles from its mouth. Myers was directed to feel the enemy closely and ascertain their numbers and intentions. Orders were at the same time despatched for the immediate destruction of Brown's Bridge and the movement of a body of militia, under Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, in that direction to oppose any attempt which might be made to pass the Chippawa. Major-General Stovin was also instructed to advance from Fort George and the marines of the squadron if Yeo would consent to land them. Drummond then intended to add the 6th Regiment to the force under Lieut.-Colonel Myers and endeavour to crush Bissell's brigade before it could retire or be reinforced.

During the night part of the Glengarry Light Infantry were thrown forward and came in contact with the American outposts, when some desultory firing took place. Myers with the remainder of his force, amounting in all to 750 men, advanced at daybreak. After proceeding for three miles along the road upon the left bank of Lyons Creek the American outposts were discovered occupying the right bank of a ravine, which ran into the creek a short distance east of Cook's Mills. Part of the Glengarry Regiment which formed Myer's advance guard crossed the head of the ravine and succeeded in turning their left flank, while the remainder of that corps attacked them in front. After a brisk skirmish their light infantry retired

upon their main body, which was posted in a thick wood some distance in rear, while the 5th United States Infantry, under Colonel Pinckney, crossed Lyon's Creek and moved along the edge of the woods with the intention of taking the British in the flank and capturing their field piece. Myers at once retired some distance in the hope of drawing them out into the open ground, which had the effect of inducing them to advance to the skirt of the woods and display two strong columns on his left and one on his right, which began a heavy fire of musketry. To this Myers replied, mainly with his field piece and rocket section, with considerable effect on their close formation. In half an hour, perceiving no intention on their part to leave the shelter of the woods, where he did not consider it advisable to attack them, Myers withdrew his troops to these cantonments, keeping his outposts close to their position to observe their movements. In this affair he lost only one man killed and thirty-five wounded, including Captain McMillan of the Glengarry Light Infantry. General Bissell reported the loss of twelve killed, fifty-four wounded, including five officers, and one prisoner, but claimed to have successfully repelled the attack made upon him. On the morning of the 20th he was joined by a reinforcement of two regiments of infantry, but believing that he was likely to be soon attacked by a superior force he commenced his retreat the same day without destroying the mills or any private property except a quantity of grain which he was unable to remove, which led Drummond to remark that the enemy had throughout his advance been "studiously cautious in abstaining from his burning and plundering system" so noticeable in the earlier part of the campaign. Next day a party of American troops advanced within view of the fortifications at Chip-pawa, probably with the object of covering the retreat of their army from Black Creek, which began at noon that day. Meanwhile Drummond had decided to move against them with his whole force available for service in the field, which was organized for that purpose into two brigades, one consisting of the Royal Scots, 90th, 97th and flank companies of the 41st, and De Watteville's, with three field guns under Major-General Stovin, the other composed of the 6th, 82d, 89th, 100th, Glengarry Light Infantry, Incorporated and Sedentary Militia with three guns commanded by Major-General de Watteville. With these troops he began his advance at daylight on the 23d, but learning from his cavalry scouts that the entire American army had fallen back to the heights opposite Black Rock, and the weather having turned very cold during the night, he returned to his cantonments. General Izard began to recross the river at once, but was delayed by a strong gale from the southwest, lasting two

days, and it was not until November 1st that his last brigade of infantry succeeded in getting over. This convinced him that it would be imprudent to retain possession of Fort Erie during the winter, and he gave orders for its destruction. The artillery was accordingly removed and mines were run under the bastions to assure their complete demolition. On the morning of the 5th the garrison embarked after setting fire to the barracks, and the mines were exploded, totally destroying the bastions and the Snake Hill redoubt. A dragoon, who had deserted from the American picquet guard a few nights before, had already given Drummond information that led him to suspect that the place would soon be evacuated, and he despatched Captain FitzGibbon of the Glengarry Regiment to reconnoitre it. That officer arrived upon the ground soon after the explosion of the mines, and rode quietly through every part of the deserted and dismantled works, around which so much gallant blood had been shed to no purpose.



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