CHAPTER XXIII.

The War of 1812-1814.

Sir George Prevost arrived on the 14th September, 1811, and proceeded, as soon as possible, on a tour of the country with a view to inspect its natural defences. He discovered readily that the frontier of Lower Canada had a depth of forest extending to the St. Lawrence and that the population was numerous enough, and willing, to protect it; this he kept as his own command. With regard to Upper Canada, a flat land, but protected by a strong coast line, he allotted it to the British troops and their own militia, with Brock in charge of the civil and military authority. At this moment Lieut.-Governor Gore retired.

"Sir George Prevost was a Swiss officer, who was now promoted from the lieutenant-governorship of Nova Scotia. There the mildness of his rule had won for him golden opinions. He at once adopted in Canada a policy of conciliation, appointed Bédard to a judgeship and other leading French Canadians to positions of trust. In a short time he was as popular with the people of Lower Canada as his predecessor had been unpopular. The result was seen during the war of 1812, when the French Canadian militia fought side by side with their fellow-countrymen of British origin, and exhibited equal ardour in defence of home and native land against the foreign invader."*

"Sir George Prevost, it was soon observed, cultivated a *souplesse,* unbecoming, as some thought, his station; those who had been particularly obnoxious to his predecessor were reinstated in their military rank and taken into his confidence. He placed them, as opportunities offered, in situations of honour, trust and emolument, by that means soothing them, flattering their partisans, and reconciling the mass to unanimity and combined action for the approaching war—a policy, though it gave offence at the time to many, at once equitable, wise, successful."†

*W. H. P. Clement: *History of the Dominion,* 149.
†Christie: *History of Lower Canada,* II., 10.

The House met on the 21st February, 1812. The debates went on with the calmness of the ancient Roman Senate, as if nothing unusual could be apprehended, although the connection between the French and the American governments was no more a mystery. A bill for volunteer enlistment passed along with the renewal of the law concerning aliens, but the latter was modified so as to prevent the council or the governor from committing any arbitrary act. Steam navigation, both for commerce and military purpose; also the means of communication by land, occupied a great portion of the time. Sir James Craig would have been astonished at the patriotic earnestness of this House. The question of appointing an agent in London was examined in all its aspects, with a view to facilitate relations with Great Britain. At the close of the session, 19th May, the news from Europe told of immense preparations for war on the part of Napoleon.

The Assembly had granted £12,000 for drilling the militia, £20,000 for means of defence and £30,000 for the governor's use, should war be declared.

The revenues of 1811 amounted to £75,162 currency; the civil expenditure to £49,017 sterling. The salaries to officers of the legislature, including contingencies, were £3,934 sterling, more. The number of vessels cleared at Quebec was 532, of 116,687 tons, of which 37 had that year been built at Quebec, amounting to 12,688 tons.

Preparations for war on the side of Canada certainly were slight. All the regular troops in the country amounted only to a few hundreds; while the scanty population of Upper Canada could scarcely be expected to afford much help. On Lower Canada the chief dependence had to be placed. From its geographical situation, that province would also be the main base of military operations.

The forces in Canada consisted of 445 artillery, 3,783 regulars, 1,226 fencibles, in all 5,454 men.

The whole number of militia then armed and in any way instructed did not exceed 300 men.

As regards facility of communication with England and the rest of Europe, Canada was on about the same footing as England had been to Rome some two thousand years earlier. The mail between Quebec, Halifax

and New York was only monthly, and even so was subject to irregularity. The mail from England took two months to reach Halifax.

The total population of the two provinces did not exceed 430,000 souls, while that of the United States numbered fully 8,000,000. The fortune of war, however, is not always on the side of large figures; the issue may be governed by some totally different circumstances or conditions. The confidence of the Americans was unbounded. Their secretary of war, Dr. Eustis, boasted in public speeches and official papers that "We can take the Canadas without soldiers. We have only to send officers into the provinces, and the people disaffected toward their own government will rally round the standard." Mr. Henry Clay said in Congress: "It is absurd to suppose we shall not succeed. We have the Canadas as much under our command as Great Britain has the ocean, and the way to conquer on the seas is to drive her from the land. I am not for stopping at Quebec, or anywhere else, but I would take the whole continent from them and ask no favours. God has given us the power and the means; we are to blame if we do not use them." Thomas Jefferson, in the spring of 1812, wrote that "the acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighbourhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching, and will give us experience for the attack of Halifax, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent."

It is due to the wisdom of the Duke of Kent, father of the late Queen Victoria, that we were able in 1812 to provide the militia with a certain number of trained officers of Canadian origin. As early as 1792, His Royal Highness had managed to procure several commissions in the Imperial service for young Canadians of military tastes, and these, after having gone round the world with the British army, were now recalled to Canada in the hour of danger. Mention must also be made of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers, born in the province, and drilled in the regular regiments in which they had enlisted, who made themselves very useful as instructors to the militia. If we took further into account the British officers then serving in the country, it is clear that the rank and file of our forces did not lack the means of becoming familiar with military exercise and tactics; on the contrary, they had such means in abundance. The case

was altogether different with the Americans who were miserably deficient in officers and instructors. Their troops, therefore, could not be brought quick enough to a condition of efficiency, whereas on our side every man soon became a real soldier. In the matter of equipment all, on their side, at the outset, was unpreparedness, while their experience in the way of manufacturing what they required was very limited. In Canada the conditions were different; the stores of the British army supplied all our needs at a moment's notice and for a series of months. After one season of hostilities the Americans perceived that they could not rush matters as they had expected; their operations consequently flagged, and the time lost was never regained, because the affairs of Napoleon in Europe were turning out badly, and upon him they were mainly depending to keep Great Britain on the strain.

The establishment of the militia was as follows: Lieut.-Colonel François Vassal de Monviel, adjutant-general; Captain Louis B. Pinguet, assist. adjutant-general; Lieut.-Colonel Ls. Joseph Fleury Deschambault, quartermaster-general; Lieut.-Colonel Charles de Léry, deputy quartermaster-general; Lieut.-Colonel Charles Frémont, assist. quartermaster-general; Captain James Milnes, dep.-assist. quartermaster-general; Captain Louis Charland, ditto; Lieutenant William Berkzy, clerk in the office of the quartermaster-general; Lieutenant John Stewart, deputy paymaster-general; Captain Louis Lévesque, judge advocate; Captain P. A. de Gaspé, judge advocate; François Blanchet, superintendent of military hospitals; Lieut.-Colonel P. de Boucherville, A.D.C.; Lieut.-Colonel M. H. Perceval, A.D.C.; Lieut.-Colonel E. B. Brenton, A.D.C.

Lieut.-Colonels of the militia: Charles de Salaberry, Olivier Perrault; Captains: Edward Bowen, Louvigny de Montigny; Lieutenant and Adjutant: William Andrews.

Incorporated militia: 1st battalion: Lieut.-Colonel, J. P. T. Taschereau; Majors: Pierre Laforce, J. William Woolsey; 2nd battalion: Lieut.-Colonel, P. J. Malhiot; Major, Louis-Joseph de Beaujeu; 3rd battalion: Lieut.-Colonel, James Cuthbert; Majors: C. S. de Bleury, François Boucher; 4th battalion: Lieut.-Colonel, Jacques Voyer; Major, Louis Dunière; 5th battalion: Lieut.-Colonel, Patrick Murray; Major, Louis Guy.

Voyageurs Corps: Lieut.-Colonel, William McGillivray; Majors: Angus Shaw, Archibald N. McLeod.

Also four companies (volunteers) of the 1st battalion of Montreal, Quebec cavalry, Montreal cavalry, corps of guides, five companies of chasseurs.

The stationary militia of the district of Quebec formed fifteen divisions; that of the district of Montreal twenty-one divisions; that of the district of Three Rivers six divisions. The townships had six battalions.

Executive council: Reverend Jacob Mountain, Lord Bishop of Quebec; Thomas Dunn, P. R. de St. Ours, François Baby, James McGill, Chief Justice Monck, P. A. de Bonne, John Young, Jenkin Williams, John Craigie, John Richardson, James Irvine, A. L. J. Duchesnay, James Kerr, Ross Cuthbert, M. H. Perceval, John Mure, Olivier Perrault. By the month of April, 1812, the councillors styled as anti-Canadians had assumed a quiet line of conduct inspired by the actions of the governor and the enthusiastic loyalty of the population. They felt that the future depended entirely upon the good will of the House of Assembly.

The soil of Lower Canada, well adapted to the cultivation of wheat, flax, hemp, etc., supported a rather extensive exportation of those products. Coaltar and masts were also in great demand. Ships continued to be built on the St. Lawrence and sold to England. In those golden days—as they were called—all lines of business were brisk in Canada. The British navy escorted our ships to England, and Nelson, who kept the way clear on the ocean, was immensely popular in the province.

The only cloud in this bright sky was the possibility that the conflict between the regime of Downing Street and the natural tendency of the colony towards self-government might be renewed. It was Canada's ambition and purpose to escape from the bonds of a Crown colony, and the sentiment of the country on this question was strongly reflected and expressed in the debates of the assembly. The political situation had indeed become critical. The antagonism between certain public functionaries and the representatives of the people had reached an acute stage. Sir James Craig had inflamed public feeling by unnecessary acts of rigour, so that, on the very eve of war the country was exasperated against its own govern-

ment. Very fortunately he left in time for a change to take place before the hour of peril.

The younger generation of that day had, of course, no reminiscence of the war of the conquest, and hardly knew anything about the events of 1775, but they were ready to shoulder their guns, as their forefathers had done, for the defence of the country. The democratic spirit so much deplored by Sir Robert Milnes, had not perverted the Canadians to the extent where they could join with the Americans.

If, in some respect, the Act of 1791 can be regarded as a nominal separation of the British and French elements, it happily turned out that the separation was merely in the form of government, as amply demonstrated by the unanimity with which both races joined to repel the American invasion.

Certain information having been received at Quebec, the governor ordered, 28th May, 1812, that four battalions of the militia be incorporated, which was done at a moment's notice. Those enlisted on this occasion were unmarried men between the age of eighteen and twenty-five, making part of the two thousand he was authorized to call, according to the bill of last session. Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, a native of Beauport near Quebec, an officer in the British army, got instructions to organize a corps of *Voltigeurs,* which was done in two days. They did remarkably well during the war and their name is always associated with that of de Salaberry.

The idea of protecting home industries had spread in the New England States for many years, and the result had been the enacting of a tarift against English goods. It soon became evident, however, that a large illicit trade was being carried on across the extensive and almost wholly unguarded Canadian border. Vessels from Great Britain entering the St. Lawrence delivered their cargoes in due form, but afterwards the merchandize was apt to be conveyed clandestinely to the other side of the line, to the serious injury of American manufacturing interests. Mention is made of a certain smuggler who justified his operations by saying that he had "declared war against the United States."

The greatest concentration of American manufacturing enterprises

was in Massachusetts, and it was there consequently that the spirit of retaliation first found expression. The people of that state shrewdly calculated, moreover, that in case of war they would have the furnishing of the larger part of the equipment required by the troops. The Canadians, of course, as intermediaries in the contraband trade, came in for their due proportion of American ill-will.

In December, 1807, the Jefferson's Embargo Act forbade any vessel to leave an American port, but in March, 1809, this Act was repealed and the Non-Intercourse bill passed, forbidding Americans to trade with Great Britain or France. The Washington cabinet wished to show that they intended to keep neutral between the two powers in the field.

The dispute respecting the "right of search," which had occupied diplomacy for some years, was eventually made the pretext for war. Deserters from the British navy were in the habit of joining American vessels, and, according to international law at the time, the English had the right of stopping foreign vessels on the high seas and searching them for such men. This no doubt was annoying and the ill-will existing in the United States against England converted it into a grievance of the first magnitude. The history of these difficulties is a long and complicated one and may be studied in many well-known works.

There is no doubt that the Americans had closely followed the events of the Craig administration and that they believed every grievance then experienced by the Canadians was a point in favour of the United States.

Sir James had sent (1808) a secret agent to the United States for information as to their resources and condition of readiness for war; but when the bill of cost came to be submitted, the Imperial government refused to pay it, whereupon John Henry, the agent, sold the papers to the United States, which did not improve the *bonne entente* on either side.

Considering the state of political feeling in Canada, it was a question what view the French population would take in case of war. Would they support the British flag? The calculation of the Americans was that at most they would prefer to remain neutral; yet, when the declaration of war reached Quebec, the legislative assembly voted subsidies in excess of what was asked of them, and that promptly and unanimously. The Ameri-

cans proceeded, nevertheless, to form a plan for the occupation of the province, under the conviction that, if they succeeded in this, the upper province would fall into their hands as a matter of course.

It may be news to some readers that Napoleon was associated with the Americans in this matter, and that without the hopes reposed in him the war would never have taken place. This must now be explained, and we shall see further that the war in Canada came to an end because of his defeat.

After the decree of 1806 the whole of Europe was practically closed to British trade, and it became a matter of surprise to find that England nevertheless continued to receive her supplies much as usual. It was some time before it could be recognized that the source of supply was Canada. France, indeed, hardly realized that a colony, which in her hands had been, commercially speaking, so insignificant, should now be playing so important a part in a great crisis. When the fact forced itself on general attention the French Emperor had his plans made for a campaign against Russia, and that was more than sufficient to absorb all his resources, but he knew the deposition of the American people towards England, also their state of mind in regard to Canada, a British possession, promising to be a rival of the United States later on. He was already prepared to give the British troops as much to do in Europe—England being allied with Russia—that he at once conceived the impossibility for his enemy to protect Canada, and it was believed that the defence of that colony alone against an American attack was out of question. The Washington cabinet fell in with the scheme, as if coming from Providence direct. The declaration of war against Russia was signed by Napoleon on the 18th June, 1812, and the same day President Madison signed a similar document addressed to the British government. The news reached Quebec on the 24th.

The force at the disposal of General Prevost was so small that it was out of his power to assume the offensive. He therefore simply awaited attack. Some information must have reached him after a while, to the effect that the enemy had no army in readiness, as we know that it took months to organize one and to render it in small measure effective. That

explains probably the bold step taken by General Brock in marching to Detroit, which he captured and made General Hull prisoner.

General Brock wrote on the 26th June to Captain Roberts, who held a post to the north-west of Michillimakinac, informing him of the declaration of war. On the 8th July Roberts and Toussaint Pothier formed a corps of voyageurs of the North-West Company, and nine days later, with 33 Royal Veterans and 169 voyageurs they took Michillimakinac.

In Lower Canada a line of military posts was established along the frontier from Yamaska to St. Regis, composed of the 41st, 84th, 100th regiments and the Fencibles. During the summer the 103rd and one battalion of the 1st Royal Scots arrived and followed the others to the front. Montreal and Quebec were guarded by the militia.

On the 3rd of July all Americans were ordered to leave Canada. That same day, Lieutenant Charles-Frederic Rolette, a Canadian, who had seen service under Nelson, took the *Cayahoga Pachet* on Lake Erie, "the most valuable papers of General Hull," with his plan of campaign. On the 12th General Hull, with 2,500 Americans, crossed from Detroit to Sandwich; on the 15th Colonel Lewis Cass vainly tried to pass Rivière aux Canards below Sandwich; on the 19th he repeated the attempt, and on the 24th met with still another failure. On the 5th of August, Brock left York (Toronto) for Fort George; on the 8th Hull retired to Detroit; on the 13th Brock reached Amherstburg; on the 14th Tecumseh met Brock at that place; on the 16th Hull surrendered Detroit.

The house of assembly sat for the second time this year from the 16th of July to the 1st of August and expedited the business in a most patriotic manner. The public coffers were drained, and the governor resolved to issue army bills payable either in cash, or in government bills of exchange on London, but the concurrence of the legislature was necessary. Therefore a bill to facilitate the circulation of that paper was introduced, and the liberality of the assembly surpassed the hopes of the executive. £15,000 annually for five years were granted to pay the interest that might become due upon army bills, of which £250,000 were authorized to be put in circulation. They were made current in the revenue, and to have the effect of

legal tender. To defray the expense of the army bill office a further sum of £2,500 per annum was granted.*

Throughout the season of 1812, 399 vessels, containing 86,436 tons and employing 4,054 seamen, cleared from Quebec. Of these vessels 21 were built that year in this city, aggregating 5,898 tons. The revenue mounted to £61,193 currency. The expenses of the civil government to £98,777 sterling, including upwards of £55,000 for the militia forces, and £3,424 due to Upper Canada as its proportion of the revenue. The expenses of the legislature were £3,644 currency, besides the above.

In September a battalion of Chasseurs was raised at Montreal; also a corps of Voyageurs among men of the North-West Company. Gananoque, in Upper Canada, was raided by the Americans. In reply to that, the British attacked Ogdensburg, but without success. On the 9th of October, two American vessels were taken near Detroit.

"On the 13th of October, 1812, General Van Rensselaer, before daybreak, sent 600 men across the Niagara River to Queenston. Captain Denis with a few men tried in vain to prevent their landing. After the Americans were heavily reinforced, General Brock came up from Fort George, and while charging up Queenston Heights was shot, and also Lieut.-Colonel McDonell. In the afternoon General Roger H. Sheaffe drove some of the Americans over the Heights, and took the rest, 900 men, prisoners."†

By this time the advance of Napoleon on his way to Moscow looked like a triumphal march; nothing had yet thrown any doubt on the final success of that campaign.

The American army of Detroit having been beaten and dispersed and that of the centre repulsed; the third one made a raid on St. Regis but retired before the advance of the Voyageurs.

General Dearborn, with nearly 2,000 men, attacked Odelltown, near Lacolle, but Major de Salaberry drove him back to Champlain, Nov. 20th. On the 22nd all the militia was called to arms. Two days afterwards the regulars captured a post at Salmon River close to St. Regis. The militia returned home on the 27th.

*Christie: *History of Lower Canada*, II., 15.

†James P. Taylor: *Facts of Canadian History*, p. 94.

News from Europe showed that the French army had fallen into a trap and was not likely to return from Russia without meeting with great disasters.

The assembly met for the third time this year, on the 29th December, and promptly renewed the Army Bill Act, which authorized the circulation of £500,000; a grant of £15,000 was made to equip the militia; £1,000 to provide hospitals, and £25,000 for general purposes of defence.

A duty of two and a half per cent. upon all merchandise, provisions excepted, imported into the province, and two and a half per cent. additional upon merchandise imported into the province by persons not actually resident therein six months previous to such importation, was imposed for the support of the war.

A motion was put before the House by Mr. Lee to inquire into the expediency of preventing the judges of the Court of King's Bench from voting in the legislative council of the province—a step which followed naturally the expulsion of the judges from the legislative assembly. After some debate the matter was postponed.

During this session Mr. James Stuart attacked the government because of his dismissal by Sir James Craig, from the solicitor generalship. The *Mercury* criticised his new attitude in terms certainly severe, but not deserving the definition of "a false and scandalous libel and manifest breach of the privileges of the house of assembly," as expressed in a motion of Mr. Lee. It was ordered that the editor, Mr. Cary, be taken into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, whom, however, he evaded, and, after the session (16th February) he wrote an article explaining that he had been absent, "but cannot understand in what manner his presence could have been useful in assisting the members of the House in their vocation of framing laws."

In January, 1813, Colonel Proctor, with 500 soldiers and 800 Indians, under Roundhead, defeated General Winchester at Frenchtown, Detroit frontier, and made him and 495 of his men prisoners. On the 6th February, Captain Forsyth crossed the St. Lawrence from Ogdensburg to Brockville and carried off 52 prisoners. On the 22nd of the same month, Major George Macdonell, with 480 men, crossed from Prescott to Ogdensburg, and,

after a sharp fight, took the place, which was defended by Forsyth. The same day Sir George Prevost left Quebec to visit Upper Canada.

The 104th regiment, New Brunswick regulars, marched from Fredericton to Quebec through the snow-covered wilderness (March).

Captains Barclay, Pring and Finnis, with five lieutenants of the Royal navy, arrived over land from Halifax, with some seamen and went immediately to Kingston.

On the 27th April, 1813, the Americans took York (Toronto) and burnt it, but their general, Pike, was killed by an accidental explosion. General Sheaffe was succeeded by General de Rottenburg in the command of Upper Canada (19th June).

On the 1st of May, Proctor attacked Fort Meigs, but failed to take the place. Sir James Yeo, with 450 seamen, arrived at Quebec, 5th May and took charge of the naval operations on Lakes Ontario and Erie. Fort George was captured by the Americans on May 27th. On the 29th Governor Prevost and Sir James Yeo assaulted Sackett's Harbour, but as Prevost checked an assured success by an order to retreat the expedition was a disgraceful failure.

On the 3rd of June the Americans attempted to occupy Isle aux Noix in the Richelieu River, but without success.

The Americans were defeated (5th June) at Stoney Creek and two of their generals—Winder and Chandler—captured. There was a naval engagement in the Bay of Burlington (7th June) where both fleets withdrew.

On the 10th of June the Watteville regiment arrived at Quebec. The capture of Colonel Boerstler and his men at Beaver Dam (24th June) was followed (4th July) by the taking of Fort Schlosser and the burning of Black Rock (11th July) by our troops. On the 20th the Americans captured a convoy near Gananoque; the main depot of provisions for the upper province was transferred to Lachine.

Colonel Murray took Plattsburg (31st July) and Captains Everard and Pring destroyed four American vessels outside of Burlington, Vermont.

The movements of the Americans during the summer of 1813 were very slack, as the situation of the French Emperor continued to be precarious, but as soon as it became known that he had won three or four battles in

Germany, they advanced in force on Upper and Lower Canada—early in the autumn of the same year.

The naval battle at Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie, 9th September, was a victory for the American flag.

On the 26th September Proctor left Sandwich beginning his retreat by River Thames, but followed by General Harrison he was defeated at Moravian Town and retired to Burlington Bay, on the 5th October. Never, during the whole of that war had the Americans displayed so large a force or arranged better plans. The news from Germany was to the effect that Napoleon had recovered his military power and that Great Britain was too deeply engaged in the conflict to assist Canada.

Massachusetts contributed in the second campaign more recruits than any other single state, and New England more than all the combined Southern States.

The campaign, towards the autumn, assumed a more systematic and menacing character on the frontier of Lower Canada. Two armies, under Wilkinson and Hampton, were in readiness at Sackett's Harbour and Lake Champlain to march, one by the St. Lawrence and the other by River Chateauguay, so as to effect their junction at Isle Perrot and enter Montreal, an open town without a garrison. The first of them which moved forward was met on the Châteauguay by de Salaberry.

James Wilkinson, born in 1757, had been at the siege of Quebec in 1775 under Arnold. He continued to serve as aide-de-camp to General Horatio Gates, and was voted a pair of spurs and a riding-whip for his slowness in transmitting important messages!

Wade Hampton was born about 1753 and served during the War of Independence. In 1784 his standing made him a politician of some importance. In 1809 he was a brigadier at New Orleans; then, in 1812, he was made a major-general and directed to take command of the army organized by Izard. His wealth, his conceit, his drinking habits and his hatred of Wilkinson must be taken into account when judging the Châteauguay campaign.

General Hampton, with 5,000 men, entered Lower Canada on the 20th of September. The whole of the militia turned out immediately, but

before their arrival, Odelltown was captured. Then he marched in the direction of Isle-aux-Noix, but was stopped by Captain Joseph Mailloux with a handful of militiamen and Indians. One of the American regiments was composed of negroes who became "white with terror" when they saw the Abenaquis. A company of the 4th battalion of militia under Captain Joseph-François Perrault reinforced Mailloux and was followed by Salaberry with 150 men. On the 22nd Hampton retired beyond the frontier, with his 4,053 regulars, 1,500 militiamen and 10 cannons. On the 26th he came back through another road, but was opposed by de Salaberry with a loss of 100 men. For a month he was unable to do more than follow up the detachment which de Salaberry kept on his front constantly skirmishing, attacking and often stopping his advance. It was only on the 21st of October that he reached Dewitteville and took a very much needed rest with his troops. That day, Wilkinson made a demonstration against Kingston, but without effect.

Governor Prevost, who was at Kingston, ordered Major George Macdonell with his new corps of 600 Fencibles, nearly all Canadians, to go down and wait for him at Ste. Martine on River Châteauguay.

Salaberry arrived on the 22nd at a place which he considered most defensible and set at work felling trees to protect his entrenchments. Three days later he received news of the naval affair of Put-in-Bay and the defeat of Proctor on the Thames. All Upper Canada, except Kingston, was in the hands of the enemy. The cast of the last die rested with him and his little band of followers. Prevost, Watteville and Macdonell, with his 600 men were at La Fourche on the 25th. Prevost refused to let the Fencibles go any further. Macdonell, in a state of rage, started alone and joined de Salaberry.

The English River falls into the Châteauguay seven miles below the Bryson* Creek where de Salaberry was preparing to fight. At the junction (La Fourche) or fork of the two streams, Sir George Prevost and Major-General de Watteville had their headquarters.

That same day, Hampton moved forward and sent 1,500 men under Purdy to cross the Châteauguay River and gain a ford little below de

*Mr. Bryson settled there in 1818.

Salaberry's camp, in the hope of turning his position. At twilight, Prevost and Watteville inspected the works of de Salaberry and went back saying there was no appearance of immediate danger, therefore, that no reinforcements were necessary.

By 10 o'clock next morning Hampton was in front, attacking the *abatis*. Purdy soon arrived in the vicinity of the ford. From that moment, till after 4 o'clock in the evening the attacks succeeded one another on the front of de Salaberry, on his right, and on his left, near the ford. Every particular of that famous day is now on record,* but for want of space we cannot insert them here.

It was 5 o'clock when the Americans withdrew from the ground and night was coming on. De Salaberry prepared for the pursuit, but Prevost and Watteville arrived unexpectedly and countermanded the order, as they believed the enemy would return with reinforcements the next day. De Salaberry declared in plain terms that they were retreating for good.

That retreat was disastrous and would have been total destruction had the pursuit taken place. Hampton's force of infantry was certainly 7,000 strong, besides 200 or 250 cavalry and 10 or 12 field pieces. He lost 500 men. On the side of the Canadians 5 men were killed, 14 wounded, 4 were missing—and 2 officers wounded.

A remark from the pen of Kingsford deserves to be noted here: After Sackett's Harbour, Prevost seeing that he had made a blunder by stopping the troops at the very minute of victory, caused his adjutant-general to write him a letter on that subject, which he merely transmitted to the Imperial authorities without comment, as a matter of no special importance. After Châteauguay, seeing that he had made another mistake, but a somewhat different kind, he wrote the official report himself, taking care to state that the affair was an advantage won by some of his "advance picquets" in the bush. And that was all. The real facts concerning Châteauguay were brought to the knowledge of the War Office four years later by Lieut.-Colonel George Macdonell—then de Salaberry was made a C.B., an honour also conferred on Macdonell for the taking of Ogdensburg.

Apart from the fact that 300 men fought at Thermopylae and at

*Sulte: *La Bataille de Châteauguay*, 1899, p. 128.

Châteauguay, the comparison cannot be maintained — though often attempted by the fête-day orator or poet. The Greeks of Leonidas were killed to the last man and their defeat opened the country to the Persians, whilst the Canadians won the battle at a ridicuously small cost of killed and wounded with the result that the province was saved from the invasion.

The 300 men may be roughly represented as 140 Voltigeurs, 80 Chasseurs and 72 Fencibles—total 292—but those actually engaged under fire were as follows:—,

Voltigeurs	140
Chasseurs	80
Fencibles	72
Company Daly	50
Indians	22
	364

First line, 240 men. We may calculate that 100 or 120 men assisted that line as a flying corps. The reserve was about 125 militiamen and the same number of Indians. These figures are as high as they can possibly be put. The second reserve of 600 Fencibles was kept at Ste. Martine by Prevost and Watteville.

"With the exception of Macdonell, Ferguson and three or four others, there was not a person of British blood in the field," says the historian Kingsford.

Here are the names of the officers who bore the brunt of the action at Châteauguay: De Salaberry, Michel O'Sullivan, Jean-B. Juchereau-Duchesnay, M. L. Juchereau-Duchesnay, G. R. Ferguson, J. M. Longtin, Charles Daly, Philippe Panet, G. M. La Mothe, J.-B. Bruyère, B. Schiller, B. Lécuyer, W. D. Johnson, P. D. Debartzch, L. Levesque, J. Hebden, Louis Guy, Charles Pinguet, George Macdonell.

General Wilkinson remembered on the 3rd of November that he was bound to go and meet Hampton near the mouth of the Châteauguay River in order to fall on Montreal and take the place, which had no defences and hardly any garrison. Seeing him on the march for that purpose, General

de Rottenburg, in command at Kingston, detached some companies of the 49th regiment under Lieut.-Colonel Charles Plenderleath and as many from the 89th under Lieut.-Colonel Joseph Warton Morrison, with a few of de Salaberry's Voltigeurs, to follow the Americans. Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Pearson, advised of this movement, left Prescott with the flank companies of the 49th, a number of Canadian Fencibles, a few Voltigeurs, a battery of artillery (militia), some dragoons (militia) and a band of Indians. He joined the two other corps, the whole being about 800 strong—but Wilkinson marched with 10,000 men, and was three miles below Ogdensburg on the 6th when he embarked on the St. Lawrence, and the next day landed his troops on the Canadian side of that river. Morrison was close behind him, and on the 9th he captured a military depot in the woods. On the 10th the American rear-guard passed Chrysler's Farm with the British on their heels. General Boyd selected a favourable spot on the 11th and wheeled backward offering battle. It was a sharp contest, cleverly conducted and lasted four hours. The Americans were double the number and lost a quarter of their force; so did the British. When night came, Boyd abandoned the fight to retire on the main army. On the 12th Wilkinson had the whole of his forces at Cornwall. What would have been the result if Hampton at that moment could have arrived at the rendezvous? Surely the capture of Montreal—but somebody had done away with Hampton.

Then to Cornwall came the certain news of the defeat of the 26th October. This incredible information paralyzed the enemy. So incredible in reality that Prevost and Watteville could not believe it at the time. So incredible that Hampton was stunned by it on the other side of the line. By the first quick movement of his life, Wilkinson crossed the St. Lawrence at St. Regis and re-entered the United States. The militia of the province were sent home on the 17th November.

Major-General de Rottenburg was relieved of the command of Upper Canada, early in December, by Lieut.-General Drummond, who proceeded from Kingston to York (Toronto) and thence to River Niagara. General McClure burnt Newark, abandoned Fort George (12th December) and retired to the United States. Six days later Fort Niagara fell into the

power of the British, who advanced into the country and occupied several small places to the great consternation of the enemy.

By this time news from Germany was not favourable to Napoleon. His famous defeat at Leipsic (19th of October) made the outlook somewhat gloomy for the Americans, and during the winter of 1813-1814 their operations were at a standstill. At the opening of Parliament in Paris, 19th December, 1813, Napoleon said that "the American Republic continued with success the war against Great Britain." This was probably an allusion to the battle of Moravian Town (5th of October) by which Upper Canada was considered lost to the British.

The legislature sat at Quebec from the 13th of January till the 17th of March, 1814. The authorized issue of army bills for £500,000 was extended to £1,500,000. Debates took place respecting the militia law, without effecting any change in it. A bill to disqualify the judges from being summoned to the legislative council passed the lower House, but was rejected by the council. As in the preceding session, the council refused to consider a bill to grant His Majesty a duty on the income arising from civil offices, and pensions, to be applied for the defence of the province. Another proposition concerning the appointment of an agent in Great Britain was also laid aside by the council. A vote of thanks to Lieut.-Colonels de Salaberry and Morrison passed unanimously. The "rules of practice" of the courts of justice were examined under a motion of Mr. James Stuart, and this constituted a censure of Chief Justice Jonathan Sewell, and other judges, all supposed to exercise partiality in the discharge of their functions. There was a touch of the old affair of *Le Canadien* in the subject. It was a very serious debate, which lasted a long time. Things went so far that the governor proposed to refer the case to the Imperial authorities, and Mr. Sewell left for England to meet the charges in question.

The general elections for the eighth (8th) Parliament took place in April, 1814, and the returns gave 36 Canadians, 14 English-speaking members. Mr. Ryland wrote on the 12th May next: "Immediately after the prorogation of the legislature (17th March) the most respectable English members publicly declared their determination not to offer themselves as candidates at the ensuing elections. That election is now over and the returns

are precisely such as we expected under the impression produced throughout the province by the proceedings of the late assembly. . . . Still, however, the country is not lost. It is not yet in a state of insurrection against His Majesty's government; it may still be preserved to the Crown without having recourse to the bayonet. But the remedy must be immediate."

No, the country was not lost, but Mr. Ryland and his friends had done everything in the world to prevent it from remaining faithful to Great Britain. No, the Canadians were not against His Majesty's government, but they wished to get rid of the "family compact," so called at the time. Besides, what is the meaning of the retirement of ten English-speaking members of the preceding Parliament, since ten others were elected in 1814, as shown by the tabular statement published in this chapter? No change apparently—unless that the new English-speaking members were more inclined to follow the policy of the Canadian than the ten who had retired. This is what Mr. Ryland calls, "what we expected," with a grin of disgust.

The revenues for 1813 were £99,602 currency; the expenses £183,033 sterling, including £121,366 on account of militia service. Vessels cleared from Quebec were 198, with a tonnage of 46,514, and employing 2,230 men. Eight of these vessels were built in Quebec, tonnage, 2,658.

"The most active exertions were made during the winter 1813-14 to be prepared for the ensuing campaign. Stores of all descriptions were forwarded to Kingston, from Quebec and Montreal, on sleighs, at prodigious expense. The second battalion of the 8th regiment marched through the woods from Fredericton to the St. Lawrence, in the month of February. A reinforcement of 220 seamen for the lakes came by the same road."*

The strength of the six battalions of embodied militia amounted to 3,893 men, exclusive of the Voltigeurs, the Fencibles, the Frontier Light Infantry, and other militia and provincial corps.

"A movement of the American forces in the neighbourhood of Lake Champlain, towards the end of March, gave room to expect an invasion of the district of Montreal. Brigadier-General Macomb, with a division of the

*Christie: *History of Lower Canada*, II., 178.

American forces from Plattsburg, crossed Lake Champlain upon the ice and entered St. Armand, where he remained some days without molestation, while General Wilkinson prepared for an attack upon the outposts of Odelltown, and the Lacolle Mill, a stone building which had been converted into a blockhouse. On the morning of the 13th March (General Macomb having suddenly withdrawn from St. Armand and rejoined the main body) the American forces, consisting of 5,000 men, commanded by General Wilkinson in person, entered Odelltown. Major Handcock, commanding the blockhouse, received intelligence at 8 o'clock in the morning, of the approach of the enemy, and immediately sent off a despatch to the Isle-aux-Noix for a reinforcement, from whence a picquet of the 13th regiment, under the command of Captain Blake, was despatched to his aid. The enemy halted for a short time at the village, and then made a demonstration upon Burtonville with a part of their force. Their advance in that direction was checked by part of the Grenadiers of the Canadian Fencibles, under Captain Cartwright, and a few of the frontier light infantry, under Captain Barker. At 1 o'clock the enemy was seen deploying in the neighbouring wood, with the intention of surrounding the blockhouse; a fusilade was immediately commenced which they did not return for some time, but appeared determined to carry the place by assault, as they advanced cheering. The heavy fire obliged them to relinquish their plan and retreat to the wood, where they were completely sheltered. A twelve pounder was brought to bear upon the building, but, so badly served that during a cannonade of two hours and a half, only four shots struck it. The gun being within the range of musketry the artillerymen suffered severely, and in fact were unable to take aim with any degree of precision. The flank companies of the 13th regiment were ordered to charge the enemy in front. They advanced as far as the wood in line, but the difficulty of marching through the snow against a galling fire in front, compelled them to retire to the blockhouse. The Grenadiers of the Canadian Fencibles, and a company of the Voyageurs, just now arriving from Burtonville, Major Handcock ordered them to support the flank companies of the 13th regiment in a second charge, to which they advanced in column of section. The Americans had now concentrated their whole force close to the gun, but did not

attempt to fire until the British had advanced to within twenty-five yards of their centre and were completely flanked on both sides. The first discharge of musketry, from the enemy, was so effectually destructive that these companies were entirely broken and compelled to retreat in disorder. All attempts to rally them were ineffectual and they were recalled by bugle to the blockhouse. The gun was spiked by the enemy during the first charge. The Americans exhausted with cold and fatigue, finding it impossible to carry the place without heavy artillery, which, from the state of the roads, could not be brought forward, withdrew in good order from the contest at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, without being pursued in the retreat. The force in the mill, when attacked was 160 men. The reinforcements which arrived during the action, amounted to about 200 men. The British loss was 10 men killed and 4 missing, and 2 officers and 44 men wounded. It is said the Americans lost 13 killed, 30 missing and 123 wounded. Having failed in the attempt to carry a blockhouse scarcely deserving the appellation of a military post, the enemy fell back upon Champlain town, from whence they soon retired to Plattsburg.''*

The campaign of 1814 consisted principally of a series of skirmishes, raids, captures of small posts on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and the Niagara district. The battle of Lundy's Lane, 25th July, was a more serious affair, where the British kept their ground. Altogether, the advantage remained on their side from the spring to the fall of that year.

The arrival at Quebec—in July-August—of 16,000 men of the Duke of Wellington's army, sent from France by way of Bordeaux, after the abdication of Napoleon, set aside all future danger, still the hostilities continued in Upper Canada.

The governor determined to gain some laurels for himself by invading the State of New York, and he directed an expedition against Plattsburg, which failed miserably because of his own mismanagement.

The troops and embodied militia were sent into winter quarters on the 10th of December.

The house of assembly met on the 21st January, 1815, and closed on the 25th March. Mr. J. A. Panet having been called up to the legislative coun-

*Christie: *History of Lower Canada,* II. 181.

cil, Louis-Joseph Papineau was elected speaker of the assembly. The Militia Act was revised and amended by admitting substitutes. A grant of new duties upon tea, strong spirits, and goods sold at auction, was made to His Majesty, to supply the expenses of the province. One thousand pounds were granted for the encouragement of vaccine inoculation. Upwards of eight thousand pounds were appropriated for the improvement of the internal communications of the province. A further sum of twenty-five thousand pounds was granted for the purpose of opening a canal from Montreal to Lachine. A bill was also introduced to allow a salary of one thousand pounds currency to the speaker of the house of assembly, and the same for the speaker of the legislative council, but this provision, for reasons unknown, was not carried out. A renewed attempt was made to appoint an agent in London, but this matter was left over for the consideration of the governor. Some debates took place relative to the English civil laws, the re-instalment of Louis XVIII. on the throne of France, and on this occasion there was a manifest change in the temper of Canadians with regard to Napoleon. Before the fallen enemy harshness disappeared, whilst the English-speaking press was more severe than ever against him.

The House was still sitting when the treaty of peace (signed at Ghent on the 24th December, 1814) between Great Britain and the United States was officially announced to them, on the 1st of March, by a message from the governor.

The boundaries of Canada remained undisturbed.

The reader can now see how closely this war was linked with what was going on in Europe, and judging by the attitude of the Americans after the arrival of reinforcements at Quebec in 1814, it is reasonable to conclude that no hostilities would have been attempted in 1812 on the Canadian frontier if England had been free from war in Europe.

It is quite true that if war had been declared when England's hands were free and without any regard to the success of Napoleon, the Americans would probably have thrown a much larger army than they did across the border, but in that event the British army would have been available for the protection of our country.

After the proclamation of peace the United States immediately repealed the Non-Intercourse and Non-Importation Acts.

The entire amount of army bills (issued by Canada) outstanding in March, 1815, was £1,249,996.

The embodied militia were disbanded and the legislature granted 80 days' pay to the officers. The Voltigeurs received 25 days' full pay; "the officers to continue to receive pay until further orders, but no allowances." The Frontier Light Infantry, the same gratuity as the Voltigeurs. The Voltigeurs were paid to the 24th March. An annuity of £6 was granted to such Voltigeurs and militiamen as had been rendered incapable of earning a livelihood. A small gratuity was also made to the widows and children of those who had been killed during the war; and the assembly in an address to the Prince Regent, recommended that a grant of lands should be made to such Voltigeurs and militiamen as had served in defence of the province. The Prince Regent approved (1818) the granting of lands provided application was made before the 1st May, 1823. This delay was extended to the 1st May, 1824, then to the 1st August, 1830. By a proclamation of the 22nd February, 1837, it was announced that the applicants registered before the 1st August, 1830, would receive either land or scrip, and on the 1st August, 1838, Lord Durham appointed John Davidson and Tancrède Bouthillier to act as commissioners in this matter. Registers and papers concerning these grants are in the Crown Lands Department, Quebec.

The assembly of 1815 voted the governor £5,000 sterling for the purchase of a service of plate. The legislative council refused to concur in this and so the vote was not carried into effect.

Of the Acts passed during the session there was one granting £500 to Joseph Bouchette to assist him in publishing his geographical and topographical maps of Canada.

Among the measures introduced this session was a bill for the appointment of commissioners to examine the accounts of the receiver-general, and for counting the cash in the treasury. That officer, Mr. Caldwell, presented a petition complaining of the insufficiency of his salary. This bill was presented by Mr. Lee, but fell through.

The same gentleman also made an attempt to carry a measure for the improvement of the roads in the vicinity of Quebec, by establishing turnpikes, which, however, the farmers and population in the surrounding parishes being opposed to, did not succeed.

The revenue for 1814 amounted to £204,550 currency, and expenditure £162,125 sterling, including £111,451 on account of military services, and £5,474 to Upper Canada, for its proportion of duties. The expenses of the late general election came to £339, and those of the legislature, not included in the above, to £3,693 currency.

The number of vessels cleared from Quebec was 184, bearing 38,605 tons, including seven built there, in all employing 1,889 hands.

The English-speaking population had no sympathy for Sir George Prevost. The military detested him. He left for England on the 3rd April, and his successor, *per interim,* Sir George Drummond, arrived at Quebec the same day and assumed charge of the administration. Sir George died in England a few months later.

The most disastrous effects of the war were felt in the manufacturing states of New England, and there the peace party was loudly clamouring for the cessation of the fruitless struggle. Trade, navigation and commerce were ruined. The public treasury, whose revenue was mostly from customs duties until 1812 was empty, and a loan of twenty million dollars had to be raised.

"The Americans did not annex a single foot of Canadian territory. They did not gain a single permanent advantage. Their exposed seaboard was attacked at every point. Their capital was destroyed, their annual exports reduced from £22,000,000 to £1,500,000; three thousand of their vessels captured; two-thirds of their commercial men became insolvent. A vast war tax was incurred, and the very existence of the United States imperilled by the menaced secession of the New England States. The right of search and the right of neutrals, the ostensible, but not the real cause of the war, were not mentioned in the treaty of peace."*

We must not forget that war causes many changes in the economy of a nation. In this case the United States learned how to provide for them-

*Dr. F. W. Campbell: *The War of 1812-1814,* p. 45.

selves in the way of manufactures, and the lesson was not lost. A similar effect was produced in Canada by the development of her natural resources consequent on demands which the war created.