

THE DEATH OF BROCK.

A CANADIAN LEGEND.

Addressed to the School-boys of Canada.

BY COL. WILLIAM F. COFFIN, OTTAWA.

SCENE—*Queenston Heights.*

Outlook—from the Village of Queenston to the south—with Lewiston Heights on the left. The river Niagara rolling down on the left front, and the Queenston Heights, surmounted by Brock's Monument, on the right front and right.

Carminis personæ—Gaffer Sicord (1) an ancient Militia-man of 1812, and his great grandson, Isaac Brock.

GAFFER SICORD *log.* :

COME hither, little son of mine, come hither, Isaac Brock,
You ask me to repeat the tale of that fierce battle shock,
Wherein your noble namesake fell, on yonder mountain side,
Who gave his life for Canada, and, having saved it, died.

Ah, well do I remember, through the mist of sixty years,
That morning in October, so full of hopes and fears,
When manfully, yet nervously, the invading foe we met,
And those who lived our prisoners were before the sun had set.

We knew that they were coming, as they never ceased to boast,
And we saw their swarming thousands crowd along the opposite coast.
We were but as a handful (2)—and we knew not where or when
The blow might fall; but, when it came, why, we were there and then.

We were on outpost duty—headquarters in our rear,
At Fort St. George, six miles below, but we knew that Brock was there;
Of course we lay upon our arms—that morn ere dawn had broke,
The hum and tramp of mustering men the coming blow bespoke:
We heard them through the misty screen which shrouded shore from shore,
And the rolling in the rulloch of the fast approaching oar.

Each man was up in no time—at his post with silent tread—
“Fix bayonets,” “handle cartridges,” was all the Captain said,
When, from the point below us here (3), our eighteen-pounder spoke,
And the silence of the misty screen, with startling nearness, broke—
A wild shriek—louder curses—the word of hoarse command—
Up rose the mist—and a fleet of boats lay headed for the strand!

1. Gaffer—a word not familiar to the Canadian vocabulary, but good old Anglo-Saxon, being “a term of respect, applied to an aged man,” at present obsolete—*See Worcester.*

2. The whole force at General Brock's disposal, to cover a frontier of 36 miles, did not amount to more than 1,200 men, including militia. The American General, Van Renselaer, to guard about the same distance on the other side, had 6,000. Thus the British force, scattered along the line, was exposed to be cut off in detail. The defect of the position at Queenston was its distance from support; but this was unavoidable, and only to be met by sagacity, foresight, and activity, which Isaac Brock eminently possessed.

3. Vromont's Point. The gun, at this point, the service of which had great effect on the events of the day, was commanded and directed by a Quebec lad—John Sewell—a son of the well-known Chief Justice Sewell, U. E. L. He was then in the 49th Infantry. He died two years since, at Quebec, at an advanced age, having been Commandant of Quebec up to a short time before his death.