

while, in various directions, the games recently abandoned by the adult Indians were now resumed by mere boys. The whole picture was one of strong animation, contrasting as it did with the quiet of the little post on the island, where some twelve or fifteen men, composing the strength of the detachment, were sitting or standing on the battery, crowned, as well as the fort and shipping, and in compliment to the newly arrived Indians, with the colors of England.

Such was the scene, varied only as the numerous actors in it varied their movements, when the event occurred with which we commence our next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

SEVERAL hours had passed away in the interesting discussion of their war plans, and the council was nearly concluded, when suddenly the attention both of the officers and chiefs was arrested by the report of a single cannon. From the direction of the sound, it was evident that the shot had been fired from the battery placed on the southern or lakeward extremity of the island of Bois Blanc, and as the circumstance was unusual enough to indicate the existence of some approaching cause for excitement, several of the younger of both, who, from their youth, had been prevented from taking any active share in the deliberations of the day, stole, successively and unobservedly, through the large folding-doors of the building, which, owing to the great heat of the weather, had been left open. After traversing about fifty yards of the high road, which, running parallel with the river, separated the council-hall from the elevated bank, the officers found, collected in groups on the extreme verge of this latter, and anxiously watching certain movements in the battery opposite to them, most of the troops and inferior Indians they had left loitering there at the commencement of the council. These movements were hasty, and as of men preparing to repeat the shot, the report of which had reached them from the opposite extremity of the island. Presently the forms, hitherto intermingled, became separate and stationary—an arm of one was next extended—then was seen to rise a flash of light, and then a volume of dense smoke, amid which the loud report found its sullen way, bellowing like thunder through some blackening cloud, while, from the peculiar nature of the sound, it was recognised, by the experienced in those matters, to have proceeded from a shotted gun.

The war of 1812 had its beginning in the manner thus described. They were the first shots fired in that struggle, and although at an object little calculated to inspire much alarm, still, as the first indications of an active hostility, they were proportionably exciting to those whose lot it was thus to "break ground," for operations on a larger scale.

Although many an eager chief had found it difficult to repress the strong feeling of mingled curiosity and excitement, that half raised him from the floor on which he sat, the first shot had been heard without the effect of actually disturbing the assembly from its fair propriety; but no sooner had the second report, accompanied as it was by the wild yell of their followers without, reached their ears, than, wholly losing sight of the dignity attached to their position as councillors, they sprang wildly up, and seizing the weapons that lay at their side, rushed confusedly forth, leaving Tecumseh, and two or three only of the more aged chiefs, behind them. The debate thus interrupted, the council was adjourned, and soon afterwards General Brock, accompanied by his staff, and conversing, through his interpreter, with the Shawnee chieftain as they walked, approached the groups still crowded along the bank of the river.

Meanwhile, after the discharge of the last gun, the battery on the island had