

APPENDIX V

and he often related how the General was impressed with the wonderful personality of the great chief.

As Lieutenant he served in Captain Durand's company of 5th Lincoln Militia at the Battle of Queenston Heights. He was attached to Brock's staff as a special aide, to supervise the laying of the batteries. Shortly before the Canadians were driven from the heights, General Brock found that in firing at the Americans who were coming across the river the bullets were flying short, and he gave the order to Colonel Williams to cease firing, but Colonel Williams, mistaking the order to mean "retire," began to retire by Niagara. Sir Isaac remarked, "That's effective," but Captain Birney, noticing Colonel Williams' movement, remarked, "But, General, you did not mean to retire!" "By no means," answered Sir Isaac. "Oh, for one to bring them back!" "May I go?" offered Birney. "By all means go, Birney," ordered the General, whereupon Captain Birney ran down the steep slope of the heights as fast as he could. On the way down he noticed the mullein stalks being cut off, and stepping on a slippery spot he fell violently on the broad of his back.

At this he heard a great cheer, and looking up saw the cause of it all. The Americans were in possession of a portion of the heights, and their sharpshooters, thinking they had succeeded in intercepting him in his errand, had set up a cheer, but Birney was soon afoot, and came up with Colonel Williams, who upon seeing Birney, called his men to halt, and enquired, "What's the matter, Birney? Orders from the General?" Birney, being entirely out of breath, from his efforts and fall, could not answer, and Colonel Williams further enquired, "Did the General not order us to retire?" Birney shook his head. "What, then?" asked Colonel Williams. "To cease firing," Birney managed to whisper. At this the Colonel uttered an oath and smote himself a terrific blow on the forehead with his fist.