

woods, leaving clouds of riflemen to cover their retreat. The reserve which ought to have supported the main line were the first to fly, and the Cavalry which should have charged the British scattered in pursuit, turned their horses' heads and galloped off leaving them in possession of the field, 10 pieces of artillery and *very few prisoners*. The loss of the British forces was 65 killed and 191 wounded, out of about 1500 men actually engaged.

Thus ended the battle of Bladensburgh from which it is evident none of the American officers understood their business and none of the men fought well except the seamen of Commodore Barney's flotilla who manned the guns, and many of whom were cut down or bayoneted in defiance of the artillery, their Commandant being wounded and taken prisoner in this engagement; the British did not use artillery from the fact that they had none of larger calibre than a six-pounder which would have been useless under the fire of the powerful American batteries; there was no manoeuvring, it was a "soldier's battle," if by that expression is to be understood the military instinct which makes the trained soldier act as part of a machine moved by the volition of a single mind; here, as on another memorable occasion, they literally commanded themselves. If General Winder did not know how to manoeuvre troops General Ross *did not do so*, and consequently there was little to choose between them—the battle was won by the troops alone, and the loss of the light brigade caused by the delay in supporting them was owing to General Ross's indecision.

To Rear Admiral Cockburn's restless energy is due an immediate advance on Washington with the third brigade which had not been engaged; General Ross moved forward, and at 8 p.m. halted on an open piece of ground two miles from the city—both officers, with a detachment of soldiers, moved forward to reconnoitre, and on arriving opposite some houses they closed to consult each other as to whether it would be advisable to enter the city after dark, when a volley from one of the houses killed one man and wounded three of the General's escort, and also killing his horse; upon this an immediate advance was ordered—the houses and Capitol or Legislative buildings burned, and the magazine in the Navy Yard was blown up at the same time by the Americans themselves, during the night the President's house, the fort and public works at Grenleaf's point were also destroyed; and on the 25th the rope walks, the great bridge across the Potomac, the arsenal including a large quantity of small arms and heavy ordnance, a frigate of 1600 tons on the stocks nearly ready for launching, and the 22 gun Corvette Argus ready for sea (the two latter being burnt by order of the President) were destroyed. The established value of Public property thus wasted amounted to £365,463 sterling.

The beaten American army had begun to

recover their senses and to reassemble in the vicinity of Washington in force, troops began to come in from the rural districts as soon as the news of the capture of the chief city reached the people, as a natural consequence their courage was aroused and they hurried with the ardour of the gallant race from which they were sprung to avenge so galling an insult: before midday on the 25th nearly 12,000 men were encamped in the vicinity, and but for the intervention of a storm it is quite possible the British would have been attacked by a vastly superior force, and problematical whether they could have effected a retreat at all; taking advantage of the confusion caused by the hurricane the British decamped at 8 p.m., consigning their wounded to the care of Commodore Barney, to whom his parole was given, and by a forced march throughout the night succeeded in evading the American troops, reaching Benedict on the 29th and embarking on board the fleet on the following day. Notwithstanding the destruction of public and private property and the exasperation consequent thereon, the wounded were treated with the greatest care and tenderness, and when finally recovered generously released and sent on board the British fleet.

It was stated that Captain James A. Gordon was detached in the Sea Horse, 38-gun frigate, accompanied by the 35-gun frigate Euryalus, the bomb ships Devastation, Etna Meteor, the rocket-ship Eurebus and a small tender, up the Potomac to Alexandria; this squadron got under way on the 17th August, and without aid of pilot began ascending the intricate channel of the river leading to the capital of the United States. On the 18th the Sea Horse grounded and could only get afloat by shifting her guns to the tender. On the 25th while passing the flats of Maryland point a squall struck the squadron, the Sea Horse had her mizzen-mast sprung and the Euryalus having had her sails clewed up to receive it had her bowsprit badly sprung and the head of her topmast fairly wrung off, within 12 hours the squadron refitted and was again under way. On the 27th, in the evening, after each of the ships had been aground not less than 20 times, and being obliged to haul themselves off by main strength, and for the last five days with the exception of four hours been employed in warping a distance of not less than 50 miles, the squadron arrived abreast of Fort Washington. The bomb vessels immediately commenced shelling the fort, on which the garrison retreated, but the firing continued till a shell ignited the magazine which blew up with tremendous explosion. On the 28th, at daylight, possession was taken of the fort designed for the protection of Alexandria, and as soon as the destruction of the guns (27 in number) were accomplished, the squadron proceeded up the river, but were met with proposals of capitulation from the Town Council, but were not listened to till the ships were in a position to enforce the

very humiliating conditions imposed, which were, that—"the Americans should raise all the vessels which had been scuttled and place them in the same state as they were when the British squadron passed the Kettle Bottoms, the owners were directed to load their own vessels and to send on board their rigging and stores without delay, the whole to be delivered to Captain Gordon in perfect order." "Any infraction of the flag of truce was to be followed by the vessels opening fire on the town." On the 31st, the 18-gun brig Fairy, which had fought her way up the river, arrived at Alexandria with orders for Capt. Gordon's return. On the same day the squadron weighed, attended by *twenty-one* sail of prizes, many of which had been sunk, raised, masted, loaded, and fitted for sea in the course of *three days*. Contrary winds compelled the laborious process of warping to be resorted to, and a day's delay was caused by the grounding of the Devastation; taking advantage of this circumstance the Americans relieved from all danger by the retreat of the army from Washington determined to destroy the squadron if possible, for this purpose three fire vessels and five row boats advanced to the attack of the Devastation, but were defeated by the boats of the squadron. Meantime the Americans had been constructing batteries further down the stream, but had been interrupted by the Fairy and Meteor, with a couple of gunboats, although, finally, they mounted 11 guns of heavy calibre on their works and had constructed a furnace for heating shot. On the 3rd Sept. the wind coming to the Northwest the Etna and Eurebus succeeded in getting down to the scene of action, where they were joined by the frigates and prizes on the 4th, but the Devastation in spite of all exertions still remained five miles higher up the river. Another attempt was made to destroy her by fire-ships, but the boats of the squadron again saved her, compelling the American boats to seek shelter in a narrow creek under some guns from which the British in vain attempted to dislodge them, suffering some loss in the operation.

On the 5th at noon the wind coming fair and every suitable arrangement being made, the Sea Horse and Euryalus anchored within musket shot of the batteries, while the whole of the prizes passed outside of them. The three bomb vessels, with the Fairy and Eurebus firing as they passed, anchored below the batteries for the purpose of facilitating the operations of the frigates. At 3 P.M., having completely silenced the fire of the American batteries, the Sea Horse and Euryalus cut their cables and the whole squadron (the Devastation having been hove off) proceeded to the next position taken up by the American troops, who had ten batteries, mounting from 14 to 18 guns, on a range of cliffs about a mile in length, and under which the ships were obliged to pass. The Eurebus grounding under the