

was seen proceeding down the river, and all chance of passing between the mill and the American shore was cut off.

On the morning of the 10th, the British, having received intelligence subsequent to the reduction of the post, were ordered to work as quietly as possible. During the forenoon, an actual reconnaissance was made, the personnel being marched out between files of regulars, and conducted to Fort Wellington.

The following account of the battle is from a summary given by a British officer who was present, and also the official reports:—

Early in November, 1838, rumours had been very generally circulated, of an intended descent upon some part of the frontier of the Johnstown District, by brigands, who, it was well known, had been organizing on the American shore, for that purpose; but, from the secrecy of their proceedings and the extent of line (65 miles) to superintend, it was impossible to form a correct opinion as to the exact spot. Circumstances, however, induced Colonel Young, commanding the District, to imagine that Brockville or Prescott would be the point of descent; he accordingly took every precautionary measure of which his resources would admit. Towards the 9th of the month, the reports on the subject gained still more credence, and scarcely a doubt remained that the period of invasion was not far distant. At this time, the whole force at Prescott (headquarters) consisted of thirty-five effective men, of the Lancaster (Glengarry) Highlanders, under Captain George Macdonnell; four weak companies, 1st and 2nd Battalions of Grenville Militia, hastily collected, under Captains Dunham Jones, Fraser, Henderson, and Thomas; a few men of an independent company, which Captain Jessup had just been authorized to form; and fifty of the townsmen, under Captain McMillan, amounting altogether, to about 150 rank and file. This small and, for the greater part, undisciplined band, was nightly 'under arms, either as piquets, or ready to move in a moment on any point. About 2 o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 12th, a suspicious sail was descried coming down the river, unusually close to shore, by the double sentries posted on the most prominent wharf, one of whom ran in immediately to apprise the commanding officer, who had left the spot but a few minutes before. The night being extremely dark, and it blowing hard, Colonel Young, supposing she would by that time be abreast of the town, ran down to Fraser's wharf, not far distant, and reached it just in time to assist in frustrating the efforts of the schooners (two being lashed together) to grapple with the wharf. He

hailed without receiving answer, with a pistol, the intention of the schooner to drop down to McMillan's wharf, the boats of which were lashed together, and to land a few boats, being, it was supposed, she was on the alert, and having them in readiness to land as well as McMillan's party. The schooner, however, although the boats were lashed together, could have jumped on board. Colonel Young threatened to fire into them, when a reply was received from the schooner, "Charlotte of Toronto; George Mosser," at the same time, putting the helm down, and standing across the river, towards the American shore. The vessels separating immediately afterward, and the night being very dark, they were soon out of sight. In a short time after, the American steamer *United States* came down, and went into the port of Ogdensburg, immediately opposite Prescott; and about an hour before daylight, the small British steamer *Experiment*, with one 12-lb. cannonade and one 3-lb. carriage-gun, commanded by Lieutenant Fowell, of the Royal Navy, arrived from Brockville, with Colonel Duncan Fraser and the volunteers on board, and, having ascertained that the schooners were in the American waters, returned, and anchored in front of the town for its protection. The news, spreading rapidly through the town, the militia of every class turned out to join the troops, and intense anxiety for daylight is not to be conceived. Every eye was on the strain, and, at the first sight of two large schooners (one aground, the other covered with men, were seen at anchor in the American waters, near Ogdensburg, and about three-quarters of a mile from Prescott). The proximity of a formidable enemy was no longer doubtful. Soon after sunrise, numerous boats, crowded with men, passed frequently between the American shore and the vessels, and an immediate attack upon the town was naturally expected. Between 7 and 8 A. M. the *United States* was observed getting up her steam, and shortly afterwards, three gentlemen, of Prescott, returned from Ogdensburg, where they had gone to ascertain the real state of things, informed us that the *United States* was in possession of the Patriots, and that the mob had overpowered the authorities, and that they had taken possession of two guns (one 12- and 3-pounders) in charge of the Volunteer Artillery there. At the same time, a person came on board, and stated that his brother, assistant engineer of the vessel, was obliged to superintend one of the engines, two men standing over him with pistols, and that the best men in Ogdensburg, were getting wood on board, to enable her to cross over and take Prescott.