

crossed the creek, being met at every step by a fire from the enemy posted on the heights above, which decimated their ranks but failed to dampen their glowing ardour. The hill upon which the 24th and 28th detachments had taken their position, "actually at this moment," says Thompson, "presented the appearance of a volcano belching forth cataracts of streaming fire, and dense columns of smoke; the air was filled with one continued roar of musketry, resembling the roar of a thousand drums, and as if to add a more terrific grandeur to the scene, the sun shot forth a few partial rays through the dense forest upon the conflicting parties," several of whom beheld this grand fountain of light, that afternoon, for the last time upon earth.

The detachment having passed the bridge which spanned the creek, advanced to the foot of the western hills and within fifteen or twenty paces of the enemy posted behind the breast-work on the brow of the hill, from which was still poured into their ranks a most destructive fire. Here another occurrence of greater moment and of much more appalling nature presented itself to the minds of the brave Regulars and filled them with apprehension, altogether unprepared, as they were, for such an event. The face of the western hill, covered with ice, almost as slippery as glass and concealed by a slight covering of snow, was found to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to climb. The enemy, screened behind the brow of the hill, discharged their fatal rifles with such startling effect as to practically destroy front section of their opponent's advance, and those who followed, says Holmes, "were much thinned and wounded" as the men of the 24th and 28th detachments, from their almost impregnable situation from above, fired volley after volley into the sergemass below.

Many were the brave attempts to overcome this unexpected natural obstacle, and reach the enemy's lines above. Basden himself, at the head of the foremost section, reached a point within three yards of the position held by the adversary, when a bullet, fired with fatal precision, laid him low, dangerously wounded in the

upper part of the right thigh. As the invaders fought behind cover, few, if any of them, were struck during this vain but brave attempt of the British Regulars to carry the hill. The troops were therefore reluctantly obliged to abandon the charge and take refuge in diffused order behind trees at the bottom of the ravine, and at from twenty to thirty paces from the American line, and place their sole dependence upon the rifle.

This change of tactics, nevertheless, was largely neutralized from the fact that the enemy's regulars were now ordered to kneel upon the ground, so that the brow of the heights might protect them as far as possible from their opponents' view. The firing on both sides was still carried on with great vivacity. The cover afforded the British by the trees, however, proved in many cases to be quite insufficient, by reason of their frequently standing in squads behind the same tree, while the enemy discharged their rifles upon them from an extended front. The crisis of the day, at all events, was now over. From the close and rapid firing of the enemy stationed upon the heights, and also from the favored nature of their situation, the British dared not uncover, and under the circumstances, a second charge up the hill was entirely out of the question. On the right flank of the enemy, the Indian attack was from the beginning necessarily weak, although they fought from behind trees, yet owing to the protected character of their antagonists' position, and the inherent inability of the red man to make any such attack as the circumstances of this particular case required, the American lines were at this point also incapable of being carried. On the enemy's left flank, however, the Canadian Rangers and Militia were on the point of scaling the invaders' works, when, through the failure of the front attack by the Regulars, and not being properly supported in consequence thereof, they were also repulsed.

Unable to sustain the unequal conflict, and favored also by the fast approaching shades of night, the British, amid repeated shouts of "Hurrah for Kentucky!" from the detachment of the 28th still ringing in their ears, withdrew, after a close and gallant

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