

officers, it will be well for them then in the present case to direct their attention towards clearing the character of one of their most distinguished men from the stain of dishonor resting on it.

To return, however, from our digression, to

Second descent upon
York by Chauncey.

Commodore Chauncey, whom we left just after his appearance, a second time, before York. This place being left by Colonel Battersby's departure with the Glengarry fencibles, undefended, the Americans landed without opposition and took quiet possession. The first thing done was to lay hold of everything, in the shape of stores, that could possibly be construed into public property, and the decision resting not with a court of judicial enquirers, but rather with men not overburthened with scruples, it may be easily inferred that some private property did by *mistake* find its way to American owners. Their other acts seem to have been attended with the same evidences of republican license, as they opened the gaol and liberated the prisoners, some of whom were in confinement awaiting their trial for capital offences. The few men in the hospital who were so ill as not to bear moving, even in the opinion of American prisoner-hunters, were paroled—the others were removed as trophies won at the "second battle of York." The public store-houses were then all destroyed, and by *mistake* some of the store-houses of the inoffensive inhabitants with large quantities of provisions, were first sacked, and afterwards burnt. This was a fair day's work, and accomplished without so much fighting or loss of life as the capture of the *depôt* at Burlington would have occasioned. A commander of energy or daring would, perhaps, have been scarcely satisfied to leave himself open to the charge of having been frightened by a handful of men, and prevented, in consequence, from accomplishing an enterprise of some importance. Commodore Chauncey, however, knew better, and as we suppose he must have been the best judge of the value of his character, we leave our readers to form their own estimate of the affair. A second landing was made on the next day, and an *expedition* fitted out which proceeded a *mile or so* up the *Don*, under the pretext of searching for public stores. The real object was to procure fresh

provisions *cheaply* for the shipping. Having succeeded in all their objects, towards evening they embarked, and the fleet sailed for Niagara taking with them, or having destroyed, five guns, eleven boats, with a quantity of shot, shells and other military stores. Sir George's dispatch* will bear out all we have asserted relative to the injuries inflicted by the enemy on private individuals, by whom, indeed, this visitation was almost entirely felt. This is a circumstance which must not be lost sight of by the reader, as we shall soon have to show how loud was the outcry raised by both the American people and government when retaliatory measures were adopted by the British. Christie mentions a curious coincidence, viz :—that on the very day the American commander and his troops were burning the barracks and stores at York, Lieut.-Col. Murray was no less actively employed on the same business at Plattsburg—we shall, however, have to treat of this in its proper place.

The American fleet remained quietly at Niagara until the appearance of the British fleet on the 8th of August. Sir James had sailed from Kingston, on the 31st of July with supplies for the army, and having duly landed them, he looked into Niagara in hopes of tempting Commodore Chauncey to leave his anchorage. The challenge was accepted and the Americans bore down on the British line with whom they manœuvred for nearly two

* From Sir G. Prevost to Earl Bathurst.

Head-quarters, Kingston,
Upper Canada, August 8th, 1813.

My Lord,—I have the honour to acquaint your lordship, that the enemy's fleet, of 12 sail, made its appearance off York on the 31st ultimo. The three square rigged vessels, the *Pike*, *Madison*, and *Oneida*, came to anchor in the offing; but the schooners passed up the harbor, and landed several boats full of troops at the former garrison, and proceeded from thence to the town, of which they took possession. They opened the goal, liberated the prisoners, and took away three soldiers confined for felony: they then went to the hospitals, and paroled the few men that could not be removed. They next entered the store-houses of some of the inhabitants, seized their contents, chiefly flour, and the same being private property. Between 11 and 12 o'clock that night they returned on board their vessels. The next morning, Sunday, the 1st instant, the enemy again landed, and sent three armed boats up the river *Don*, in search of public stores, of which being disappointed, by sun-set both soldiers and sailors had evacuated the town, the small barrack wood-yard, and store-house, on Gibraltar Point,