

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARIES OF THE WAR OF 1912.

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XXIII.—*The Loss of Fort Erie—The Battle of Chippewa—The Occupation of Moose Island—The Capture of Prairie du Chien—The Burning of St. David's—The Battle of Lundy's Lane.*

July 3.—Fort Erie, at the outlet of Lake Erie, stood on the west bank of the Niagara River, nearly opposite Buffalo. At the opening of the campaign in the last year of the war, it was a weak position occupied by a garrison of about a hundred and fifty men. General Brown, who had succeeded to the command of the United States forces, had at Buffalo an army of four thousand or more, ready for another invasion. Early in the morning of the third of July, he sent one brigade across the river below the fort; while another, which he commanded in person, landed above it. A combined attack was made, and after a very brief resistance the fort surrendered. It was an easy victory for the invaders, who strengthened the fort without delay and made it the centre of their military operations. They abandoned it four months later, when the war was practically over.

July 5.—General Brown planned to move northward from Fort Erie, clearing the Canadian bank of the Niagara as he went; and finally to dislodge the British from their two strongholds at the mouth of the river—Fort George, on the Canadian side, and Fort Niagara, on the New York side. His advance brought on the battle of Chippewa.

The Chippewa or Chippaway Stream, now called Welland River, enters the Niagara about two miles above the falls. Here, on the fifth of July, General Riall, who commanded the British in the absence of General Drummond, advanced with less than two thousand men to meet the invaders. The field was stubbornly contested; but Riall's command, largely outnumbered, was defeated with heavy loss—if, indeed, it may be called a defeat when it checked the onward march of the invaders for two days, thus giving time for Riall's reinforcements to arrive, and leaving the issue to be decided three weeks later by the battle of Lundy's Lane.

July 11.—Up to this time, hostilities along

the coasts of Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had been confined to petty privateering and the occasional capture of a merchant ship with a valuable cargo. Suddenly, on the afternoon of the eleventh of July, a British fleet under the command of Sir Thomas Hardy appeared at Eastport, and occupied that place without resistance. The British, however, did not take Eastport; they took Moose Island. Eastport was a Massachusetts town in the District of Maine; Moose Island, according to the British contention, was a part of the Parish of West Isles in the Province of New Brunswick. Moose Island was in Eastport; or a part of Eastport was on Moose Island. If the inhabitants did not wish to remain there, they might move off. Many chose to move to the mainland portion of their township, now the town of Lubec; but others remained and became for a time good British subjects.

The British occupation continued until 1818, when the troops were recalled to Halifax, a boundary commission having decided in 1817 that the island rightfully belonged to Massachusetts.

July 19.—While, nominally, the occupation of Moose Island was not an aggression, but merely a reoccupation of British territory, there was at the same time an aggressive movement in the west, where the British force that had taken possession of Michilimackinac at the beginning of the war still held that post. Like the taking of Moose Island, it was a small matter compared with what was going on at Niagara; yet it should not be overlooked, as it shows the extent of the war.

And of all the marvellous doings in that strange border war, surely one of the most remarkable was the courageous weakening of the little garrison at Michilimackinac, which was in constant danger of attack, to send out an expedition for the reduction of Prairie du Chien, five hundred miles away, at the junction of the Wisconsin River with the Mississippi, where nothing was at stake but the interest of their Indian allies. To them, nevertheless, the interest of the Indians was an imperative demand; and therefore before the end of June the detachment was on its way, accompanied by five hundred Indian warriors.

That such an expedition, taking with it only