

CALIFORNIA'S TRIBUTE TO DICKENS.

The following beautiful tribute to the memory of Charles Dickens, by Frank Brett Harte, we are permitted to publish from an advance copy of the *Overland Monthly* for July:—

DICKENS IN CAMP.

Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow:
The roaring camp fire, with rude humour painted,
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and
fainted,
In the fierce race for wealth
Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew.
And cards were dropped from hands to listless
leisure
To hear the tale anew.
And then, while round them shadows gathered
faster,
And as the fire-light fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of "Little Nell."
Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy—for the reader
Was youngest of them all—
But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;
The fir-trees gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp, with "Nell" on English
meadows,
Wandered and lost their way.
And so in mountain solitudes—overtaken
As by some spell divine—
Their cares dropped from them like the needles
shaken
From out the gusty pine.
Lost is that camp, and wasted all that fire;
And he who wrought that spell?—
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire:
Ye have one tale to tell!
Lost is that camp, but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines' incense all the poetic glory
That fills the Kentish hills.
And on that grave where English oak and holly,
And laurel wreaths entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly—
This spray of Western pine!

THE BATTLES OF 1812-15.

XXI.

The defeat and final retreat of General Wilkinson's army after the action at La Colle left the shores of Lake Champlain open to attack and as the Americans were building vessels at Vergennes, on the Vermont shore of the lake, extraordinary precautions were taken to defeat any movement which might have for its object the destruction of those vessels and the arsenals from which they were supplied. Vergennes stands on Otter Creek eight miles from the lake. On the 18th of May Capt. Pring in command of the British flotilla, arrived off the creek; next day a bomb vessel cannonaded a battery erected for the protection of the shipping and stores without effect, and the force had to be withdrawn because there were no troops on board, an oversight quite usual with military operations in which Sir George Prevost was commander in Chief.

Towards the end of March the American force at Sackett's Harbor had been increased to 5500 men, including 1500 serving as marines on board Commodore Chauncey's flotilla, although in January the garrison consisted only of 500 men. As Sir George Prevost could not be persuaded to attack that important post under any circumstances, Sir G. Drummond and Sir J. L. Yeo persuaded him to allow an expedition to be di-

rected against Oswego at which point it was assumed a large quantity of stores had been deposited. As this post formed the connection between Lake Ontario and tide water on the Hudson river a description of its appearance in 1814 will be interesting. Promising that as early as 1756 a series of dams and flash pools had been erected rendering the Mohawk river navigable for bateaux to the Hudson. Between the former and Lake Oneida, or rather its affluent Wood Creek, a short portage intervened; the creek was rendered navigable by the same means as the Mohawk, and thence across Lake Oneida down the Oswego river to the Onondago Falls, distant nine miles from Lake Ontario, the navigation was uninterrupted. This formed the only line of communication with New York and the Hudson and it is still one of the great strategic lines by which the United States could be successfully assailed. The following description of Oswego is from James' "Military Occurrences," Vol. 2. p. 99. and will be interesting:

"Oswego is situated on the river of the same name near its confluence with Lake Ontario, and is distant from Sackett's Harbor about 60 miles. At the mouth of the river there is a safe harbor with two fathoms water the channel to which is completely commanded by a well built fort although not in the best repair, standing along with the Stato warehouses, barracks and a few houses upon the eastern shore of the river having its front towards the lake. The fort is a three sided figure with bastions and ramparts, and contains within its ditches upwards of three acres of ground. The site is elevated about 50 feet above the level of the lake thus rendering the position a very formidable one. On the Western bank of the river stands the town consisting of about thirty houses. 'This river affords the only water communication between New York and Sackett's Harbor.' The course is up the Hudson and Mohawk rivers thence across a short portage to a small stream leading into Lake Oneida, thence down the Oswego into (subject to a slight interruption by the Onondaga falls distant about 13 miles from) Lake Ontario. This readily accounts for the accumulation of naval stores in the warehouses of Oswego and gives to that port an importance which it would not otherwise possess."

On the evening of the 3rd May 1880 rank and file of British troops and Canadian Militia embarked at Kingston and stood over to Oswego, owing to the light winds it did not arrive off Oswego till noon on the 4th. That port had been greatly strengthened and contained a garrison of 340 United States regular troops with upwards of 200 militia. Some desultory skirmishing occurred and as the troops were about to be disembarked a heavy gale from the Northwest compelled the vessels to stand out of the harbour, gain an offing and anchor about ten miles Northwest of the fort. On the morning of the

6th the ships again stood in, the troops, amounting to 770 rank and file, were disembarked and the result of the operation will be found in the following despatch:

H.M.S. PRINCE REGENT,
LAKE ONTARIO, OFF OSWEGO,
May 7th, 1814.

SIR:—I am happy to have to announce to your Excellency the complete success of the expedition against Oswego. The troops mentioned in my despatch of the 3rd inst., viz: six companies of deWattville's regiment, under Lieut.-Col. Fischer, the light company of the Glengarry light infantry, under Capt. McMillan, and the whole of the second Battalion Royal Marines, under Lt. Col. Malcolm, having been embarked with a detachment of the Royal Artillery, under Capt. Cruttenden, with two field pieces, a detachment of the Rocket Company under Lieut. Stevens, and a detachment of Sappers and Miners under Lieut. Garrett of the Royal Engineers, having embarked on the evening of the 3rd inst., I proceeded on board the Prince Regent at daylight on the 4th and the squadron immediately sailed. The wind being variable we did not arrive off Oswego until noon of the following day.

The ships lay to within gunshot of the battery and the gunboats under Capt. Collier, were sent close in for the purpose of inducing the enemy to shew his fire and particularly the number and position of his guns. This service was performed in the most gallant manner, the boats taking a position within point blank shot of the fort which returned the fire from four guns, one of them heavy. The enemy did not appear to have any guns mounted on the town side of the river.

Having sufficiently reconnoitered arrangements were made for its attack which it was designed should take place at eight o'clock that evening, but at sunset a very heavy squall blowing directly on the shore obliged the squadron to get under weigh and prevented our return till next morning when the following disposition was made of the troops and squadron by Commodore Sir J. Yeo and myself. The Princess Charlotte, Wolf and Royal George to engage the batteries as close as the depth of water would admit of their approaching the shore: the Sir Sidney Smith schooner to scour the town and keep in check a large body of Militia who might attempt to pass over into the fort; the Moira and Melville brigs to tow the boats with the troops and then cover their landing by scouring the low point towards the foot of the hill by which it was intended to advance to the assault of the fort.

Captain O'Conner had the direction of the boats destined to land the troops which consisted of the flank companies of DeWattville's regiment, the company of Glengarry Light Infantry and the second battalion of the Royal Marines being all that could be landed at one embarkation. The four battalion companies of the regiment DeWattville and the detachment of artillery remaining in reserve on board the Princess Charlotte and Sir Sidney Smith schooner.

As soon as everything was ready the ships opened their fire and the boats pushed for the point of disembarkation in the most regular order. The landing was effected under a heavy fire from the fort as well as from a considerable body of the enemy drawn up on the brow of the hill and in the woods.

The immediate command of the troops was entrusted to Lieut.-Col. Fischer of the regiment of DeWattville, of whose gallant, cool, and judicious conduct, as well as of the distinguished bravery, steadiness and discipline of every officer and soldier com-