

THE SIEGE OF FORT ERIE.

Between sunset and midnight on July 25th, 1814, the stubbornly contested battle of Lundy's Lane was fought within view of the Falls of Niagara, between an American army, under Major-General Jacob Brown, consisting of about 4000 men, and a British division of inferior force, under Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond, which had advanced during the day in two columns from Fort George and the Twelve Mile Creek to occupy the junction of the roads where the action took place. The declared intention of the American commander was to force his way by the shortest route to Burlington Heights, where he expected to be met by the American squadron from Sackett's Harbor conveying siege artillery and a reinforcement of infantry. The British General wished to avoid an engagement until he could bring up the whole of his available field force but refused to yield the favorable position he had secured. Both armies lost heavily in this action, and when it ended the survivors had literally fought until they were able to fight no longer. Brigadier-General E. W. Ripley, who had by that time succeeded to the command of the American troops in consequence of the disablement of two senior officers, Major-Generals Brown and Scott, by severe wounds, found his forces so much scattered and disorganized that he gave orders for them to assemble and retire to their camp behind the Chippawa, about three miles distant, leaving his adversary in possession of the field and a considerable number of his dead and wounded. Such a movement on the part of an invading army is necessarily a confession of defeat, and although Ripley succeeded in removing most of his artillery without molestation and left few unwounded prisoners behind him he decided next morning that it would be unwise to renew the contest, and after a faint demonstration against the British position again retired behind the Chippawa and destroyed the bridge. Generals Brown and Scott and other wounded officers were sent across the Niagara and some heavy baggage was thrown into the river to facilitate the retreat to Fort Erie, which was begun shortly after noon and continued until midnight without molestation, the rearguard breaking down all the bridges along the road to prevent pursuit.

When this army had entered Canada three weeks before it was officially reported to consist of 5,000 men. Since then it had been