

Although victorious at Detroit, Brock had great misgivings for the safety of the Niagara frontier. Brigadier-General Van Rensselaer was stationed there with a strong force, and prompt action was, in Brock's mind, the only thing that could save Canada at that point. But an armistice was agreed on between the foes, and Brock had to go to Niagara, and remain there, deploring the inactivity that only gave his enemies a chance to concentrate their forces and get in supplies. But the armistice was of short duration, and early in October the two peoples were at war once more.

A spy who had ventured into the British camp brought to Van Rensselaer the false information that Brock had left Niagara for Detroit. The American general knew the spirit of the man opposing him, and hoped in his absence to take the strong position known as Queenston Heights. This spot, one of the most picturesque in Canada, is a noble plateau rising two hundred and fifty feet above the turbulent Niagara River. It is to the West what Quebec is to the East of Canada, a natural fortress that a few brave men might defend against an army. But Van Rensselaer had a strong force, and did not hesitate to attempt its capture.

On the 11th of October he made an effort to cross to the Canadian shore, but utterly failed. Two days were spent in preparations, and by the 13th all was ready. Early in the morning, before the autumn sun had risen to glorify the gorgeous foliage of the maples, the thunder of cannon was heard resounding above the furious roar of the river. General Van Rensselaer, at the head of a few brave fellows was attempting the passage. Two companies of the 49th, and two hundred soldiers of the York militia were energetically opposing them. An eighteen pounder, on a place of vantage on the cliff, swept the river with a deadly fire; but the Americans protected their men by a strong battery of four pieces, and the first detachment was soon across with but little loss. Busily the boats plied, and before long thirteen hundred men were drawn up in order of battle. It was to be a fight to the death. General Van Rensselaer was no coward, and though wounded in four places, cheered his men on to the conflict.

Brock was at Fort George. He had been expecting an attack, and when at daybreak he was aroused by the roar of cannon, he knew that Queenston Heights were in danger. In a few minutes