

Land Battles on the Canadian Frontier in the War of 1812-15.—I.

THE first movement of the Americans was to assemble three armies for the invasion and conquest of Canada. The army of the North, of 10,000, under Gen. Dearborn, was directed by way of Lake Champlain towards Montreal. The army of the Centre, 5,000, threatened Canada by way of Lewiston from the New York boundary. This was commanded by Gen. Van Renssalaer. The army of the West, 5,000, under Gen. Hull, was in the vicinity of Detroit.

In 1811 Sir George Prevost succeeded Craig in the rulership of Lower Canada. Gen. Brock at the same time became commander in Upper Canada.

In Lower Canada, in 1812, four battalions were organized. Col. de Salaberry's was near Quebec, Col. de Rouville's near Montreal, Col. Cuthbert's at Berthier, Col. Taschereau's at St. Thomas. A regiment of Voltigeurs, under Major de Salaberry of the 60th Foot, was also recruited and became noted for steadiness and valour.

On July 12th, 1812, Gen. Hull, at the head of 2,500 men of the army of the West, crossed the Detroit river and raised the U.S. flag at Sandwich. He then issued a proclamation inviting the inhabitants to join him, and condemning to death anyone caught fighting with the Indians against him. At the same time he had in his own employ as many Indians as he could enrol. In the language of that day, he expected to "breakfast at Sandwich, dine at York (Toronto), and sup at Montreal."

Gen. Brock, Governor of Upper Canada, set out to oppose Hull from Niagara to Detroit, by land and water, with 730 Canadians and 600 Indians. Some of the militia, in a vessel, reached Amherstburgh five days before Brock arrived. They, under command of Col. Proctor, erected a battery at Windsor, opposite Detroit.

Early in the morning of the 15th August, Gen. Brock, with the 730 militia, crossed the river three miles below the fort in which was Hull's army of 2,500. The 600 Indians had been sent through the woods to come up in rear of the town of Detroit. So determined was the appearance of the Canadians that when they were within half a mile of the fort Gen. Hull sent in a flag of truce, and afterwards surrendered himself and army and the whole territory of Michigan to the British. This occurred on the 16th of August, 1812.

Gen. Hull declared that his army was forced to surrender on account of the capture of Michilimackinac fort on 16th of July previous, by Capt. Roberts, at the head of 200 regular and voyageurs, saying that, in consequence, all the Indians became hostile to him and friendly to the British as the stronger party.

In Oct., 1812, Gen. Van Renssalaer established his camp at Lewiston, on Niagara river, midway between Lake Ontario and the Falls. He had with him 1,500 regulars and 2,500 militia.

On the 13th, Gen. Wadsworth landed at Queenston, opposite Lewiston, and attacked the British position, which was commanded by Captains Dennis and Williams, with some of the 49th Foot, and militia and Indians. The British were forced backward by the number and impetuosity of the assailants; but when Gen. Brock, who had come up in the meantime, led them, they renewed the fight. It was in this charge that Gen. Brock was killed by a shot from the enemy.

Troops and Indians from St. George were hurried to Queenston to the relief of the British. These were commanded by Gen. Sheaffe. The American left was broken by repeated charges of British regulars and militia and thrown back. Van Renssalaer, seeing how slowly reinforcements were advancing, recrossed the Niagara river to hurry them on. But the American troops, who had as yet not been in battle, were sickened by the sight of the wounded who were brought past them and refused to advance. Van Renssalaer then sent boats to bring back his defeated troops from the Canadian side. But in spite of this Gen. Wadsworth's command of 900 men was captured. The British loss in this battle was about 100, the American, nearly 2,000, including deserters and prisoners.

An armistice was concluded the next morning between the British and American commanders subject to the condi-

tion that forty-eight hours' notice was to be given by either party prior to the renewal of hostilities.

After this battle Gen. Sheaffe found that the number of his prisoners exceeded the number of his British and Canadian troops.

The American "Army of the Centre," 8,000 strong, with fifteen pieces of artillery, commanded by Gen. Smyth, was assembled near Buffalo the first part of November, 1812. It is needless to say that he did not feel himself bound by the terms of the armistice, but did not have the manhood to say so. He also added to the appearance of his army a proclamation to the soldiers, in which he bade them remember that Canada would yet be a part of the United States, that its inhabitants were groaning under the pressure of British tyranny and longed to be under the liberty and equality of the American democracy.

On Nov. 28th the troops began to be ready to embark at sunrise for the Canadian shore. Gen. Smyth failed to appear and for several hours most of the troops stood shivering on the strand. The British were assembled on the further side. At length when all was ready for them to cross and they were already on board the boats, the order came for them to *disembark and dine*. Gen. Porter marched away to Buffalo in disgust with his New York volunteers.

On Nov. 28th Smyth called a council whose members disagreed about the time when to cross and attack the British. Canadians, all the while, were busy in erecting batteries and earthworks for their protection.

Smyth gave orders for embarkation the next morning, which was to take place to the music of "Yankee Doodle." But Porter objected to the time and proposed the 1st of December and the place to be Grand Island. Gen. Winder wished to land at Chippawa, from thence to march on Queenston and besiege St. George.

This Smyth consented to do and gave orders for the assembly of troops to take place at the Navy Yard on Dec. 1st. When the hour came only 1,500 were embarked. Tannehill's Pennsylvania Brigade refused to march to the place of departure. The Canadians were aroused by the noise and fired signal guns from Fort Erie to Chippawa, Smyth then hastily called a council of regular officers, excluding those of the volunteers from the conference. The result of the council was an order sent to the troops on board to land and go to their quarters. Then followed the explanation, that the invasion of Canada was abandoned for the present, Smyth declaring that he had received orders from headquarters not to attempt it with less than 3,000 men. The militia, disappointed at not getting cheap glory and plenty of plunder, dispersed and the regular soldiers retired into winter quarters. Three months later Smyth was deprived of his command. This ended the third invasion of Canada.

News reached Col. de Salaberry, at St. Phillips, on November 10th, 1812, that Gen. Dearborn, with 10,000 men, was advancing to Odleton. He sent Capts. Perrault and Duchesne, with two companies of Voltigeurs and 300 Indians, to re-enforce Major Laforce who had two companies of militia at La Cole river. This post was further strengthened by Captain McKay with some of the Voyageurs' corps and 80 Indians. The next day Colonel de Salaberry came up himself with the rest of the Voltigeurs and McGillivray's Voyageurs and four companies of Chasseurs.

The Americans were at this time at Champlain town, two miles distant. On the 20th, 1,400 strong, under Cols. Clarke and Pike, they surprised a guard-hut, but retired immediately after.

On the 22nd, the Governor of Lower Canada gave an order to the militia to prepare for active service. Colonel Deschambault crossed the St. Lawrence at Lachine with four battalions and moved on L'Acadie. One battalion, four companies and a troop of dragoons crossed the same river to Laprairie. General Dearborn, seeing that vigorous means were being taken to oppose his advance, retired into winter quarters at Plattsburg, November 27th, 1812.

The next year, 1813, found the United States armies assembled as follows:—The army of the North, 18,000, under General Hampton, was near Lake Champlain and the southern borders of Lower Canada. The army of the Centre 7,000, under Generals Dearborn and Wilkinson extended its lines from Buffalo on Lake Erie to Sackett's Harbour on Lake Ontario, and the army of the West, 5,000, under Gen.