

CHAPTER XX.

AND ALL ENDS HAPPILY.

A week had passed and the dreaded but abortive effort to establish an Irish Republic had failed. The wave of Fenian invasion had reached its highest point at Ridgeway, and had been broken into pieces against the wall of defence interposed by the Canadian Volunteers.

Finding himself in a most dangerous position, with his force reduced fully one-half by desertions, and well knowing that he was likely within a few hours at most to be surrounded, Col. O'Neil had beaten a hurried retreat to Fort Erie.

There had been a sharp but quickly decided skirmish at the village on the return of the Fenians to that point, where they found a small detachment of the Welland Battery and the Dunnville Naval Brigade, which had proceeded from Port Colborne by boat under command of Col. Dennis, drawn up in line on the dock.

This opposing force numbered little more than a half hundred men, and the engagement was brief, ending in a victory for the invaders, nearly all the Canadians being taken prisoners. In the mean time the Fenians had requisitioned more food, and their determination to hold out for reinforcements was strengthened by the confidence which came with a full meal.