

**CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARIES OF THE WAR
OF 1812.**

J. VROOM.

IX.—THE TAKING OF OGDENSBURG.

February 22.—Ogdensburg, on the St. Lawrence, seventy miles below Kingston, was the starting point of some of those frontier raids that annoyed the Canadians without being of any considerable advantage to the invaders. On the sixth of February, 1813, such an expedition set out from that place to attack Elizabethtown, a village some twelve miles distant, since called Brockville in honour of Sir Isaac Brock. The raiders plundered the defenceless village and carried off a number of the inhabitants, returning to Ogdensburg with their prisoners and their spoils.

At that time, Ogdensburg was a little village defended by two forts, one on either side of a small tributary which here enters the St. Lawrence. An important point, because of its commanding situation, it was strongly garrisoned; and it was considered safe, for the British had tried to take it in the fall of 1812 and had failed in the attempt. Directly opposite lay the Canadian post of Fort Wellington, now Prescott, which was held by a garrison of about five hundred men, composed of British and Canadian troops and the Newfoundland regiment.

It happened that the commander-in-chief, Sir George Prevost, came to Fort Wellington on the twenty-first of February, on his way to Kingston. The commander of the fort, Colonel Macdonell, sought and obtained his permission to make a demonstration against Ogdensburg.

Macdonell deliberately exceeded his instructions. On the morning of the twenty-second, as soon as Prevost had left for Kingston, he set out to attack and capture Ogdensburg, as a reprisal for the looting of Elizabethtown, and to put a stop to other raids from that place. He had made an unheeded remonstrance at the time of the Elizabethtown raid, and he now planned to take stronger and more effective measures.

The river between Prescott and Ogdensburg is about a mile and a half in width. After it was frozen, Macdonell had frequently drilled his men on the ice near the Canadian shore, where there was a broad surface favourable to their movements. On this occasion he brought them out as usual

but, in the course of the evolutions, he gradually led them southward until they were near the middle of the river. Then, as rapidly as the deep snow would permit, he advanced in open order against the two forts on the Ogdensburg shore. One division of his forces he led in person; the other was commanded by a New Brunswick officer, Captain Jenkins, of Fredericton. Both Macdonell and Jenkins were officers of that famous Canadian regiment, the Glengarry Fencibles; and by their conduct at Ogdensburg they helped to make it famous. The gallant Jenkins had first his left arm shattered, and afterwards his right, by shots from the enemy's guns; yet he still pressed forward, leading his men in the assault, until he fell exhausted from loss of blood. The defenders, who were about equal to the British in numbers, fought stubbornly; but they were driven from the forts and from the village, and forced to take to the woods where they easily made their escape. Macdonell burned the barracks, and also two armed schooners and two gunboats that were in the ice. He carried off seventy prisoners, eleven guns, and a lot of military stores, while he scrupulously respected private property; and, having accomplished his purpose, he returned to his own side of the river. Ogdensburg was no longer to be dreaded, and sent out no more raids.

By Cobequid Bay, Masstown, N. S.*

Like a forsaken theatre art thou —
The lights extinguished and the actors gone,
Where once Wit, Gaiety and Beauty shone!
Thrice fifty years since their departing bow
Who to the *Fleur-de-lis* had kept their vow,
From Plenty-laden field, and velvet lawn,
And Garden of the Dead, all were withdrawn,
As Fundy's tide swept round their Grief-draped prow.

Where erst light-sandalled Happiness was glad,
With home and sylvan voices everywhere,
Moved marshalled men, each visage passing sad.
They left their humble cross-crowned house of prayer;
And when beyond this tear-soaked strand they sped,
The sable pall of Sorrow here was spread.

— ALEXANDER LOUIS FRASER.

Great Village, N. S.

*The scene of part of the expulsion of the Acadians, 1755. They gathered in their chapel, hence the name of the place, "Masstown," now a quiet country village by Cobequid Bay.