

CHAPTER XX.

Of all the battles that were fought during the war, none could be compared with that of Lundy's Lane for the

The battle of Bridgewater, or Lundy's Lane, and its results.

obstinacy both of attack and defence exhibited on both sides. At Chippewa the contest was decided principally by musketry, but at Lundy's-lane the Americans, for the first time, ventured to cross bayonets with British troops, and the issue of the combat then taught them, whatever their moral courage, their physical inferiority to British and Canadian troops.

This battle may almost be styled an impromptu engagement, inasmuch as the American General, in ordering the advance in the first instance, was without correct information, as to the force opposed to him. This we learn from Wilkinson, who distinctly states that it was reported to General Scott, "that the enemy could not be in force," and that, consequently, that officer "pressed forward with ardor," to attack the British.

If ever one army was fairly beaten by another, the battle of Lundy's-lane furnishes us with such an instance; that is, if remaining in possession of the field while your adversary retreats precipitately and in disorder, be considered as a proof of victory; General Drummond was attacked by a superior force, and, through the gallantry of his troops, he not only sustained his position, but, on the next morning, when General Ripley* received instructions from General Brown to make another attack, he was found so well prepared to repel it, that the attack was not made; the front, too, shown by the British being so formidable, that a retreat on the part of the Americans was found necessary, this retreat not being, as Ameri-

can writers represent, orderly, but marked with the destruction of military stores of various kinds.

That the American loss was severe can be proved by the fortunate admission of Ingersol, who says, † "Those who had sunk exhausted, those gone to take care of the wounded, the numbers who, in all battles, stray from their places, those left in camp when the rest went out to battle; all those diminutions left, in the judgment of reliable officers, not more than a thousand fighting men embodied, when they were marched back to Chippewa." That the loss was so severe, we, cannot, for a moment believe, when we consider the numbers of the Americans engaged; we can only, therefore, look on this statement of Ingersol's as an attempt at an excuse for the retreat of a superior body before an inferior.

If ever a writer earned a pension from his devotion to his "country's cause," Ingersol is that man. Nothing has sufficed to withstand the onslaught of his pen on the character and morale of the British, and a few extracts, taken in connection with Drummond's despatch, will not be found unamusing. We are first informed, page 99, that "General Brown, when the victory of Bridgewater, so far as could be judged from all circumstances, was complete, was with difficulty supported on his horse as he retired to Chippewa." We presume that Mr. Ingersol on reading over this paragraph considered it necessary to account for General Brown and his army's retreat to Chippewa, accordingly on page 100, we find it stated that "The struggle was over. Pride of success was supplanted by bodily exhaustion, anxiety

* Wilkinson, Vol 1. Appendix 9.

† Page 99, Historical sketch of the second war.