

the west ; that Commodore Chauncey, aided by Gen. Pike's land force, should invest York and the Niagara frontier ; and that, after succeeding in Western Canada, the two armies should combine with the large force under Dearborn, and make a descent upon Kingston and Montreal.

Sir George Prevost had, in the meantime, arrived at Kingston, and was endeavouring to hasten the equipment of two vessels in preparation there and at York, but men and stores were lacking, Sir James Yeo and his English seamen only arriving in May. Before anything of importance could be done, Chauncey had made his memorable descent upon York, now Toronto,—then, as now, the capital of the Upper Province,—with only too much success. The attack was not unexpected, but the town was defenceless so far as military works were concerned, owing, it is said, to the negligence of Sheaffe. On the evening of the 26th of April, the ominous sound of the alarm-gun was heard, startling the citizens with the dreaded signal of the enemy's approach. Such defence as could be made was made. Sheaffe was there on his way from Newark to Kingston with two companies of the 8th, and the enemy, on landing a little west of the town, met with a brave but ineffectual resistance from both regulars and volunteers. After a sharp contest the British troops were obliged to retire from the unequal struggle,—doubly unequal since the fleet was about to attack the town in front. Sheaffe accordingly retired towards Kingston, and the defenceless town fell into the hands of the enemy, whose advance column, on reaching the Fort, was nearly destroyed by the explosion of the powder magazine, fired by an artillery sergeant named Marshall. The American general, Pike, lost his life in the catastrophe. The ship then building, the dock-yard, and a quantity of marine stores, had been destroyed or removed by the British before deserting the town, and the Americans, previous to evacuating it on the 2nd of May, completed

the work of destruction by burning the public buildings, and plundering the church and the library.

Newark, defended by General Vincent with scarcely 1,400 men, opposed to an American force of 6,000 under Generals Dearborn, Lewis, Boyd, Winder, and Chandler, was the next point of attack. Contrary winds retarded the squadron of 11 vessels of war, with a fighting broadside of 52 guns, till the 8th of May, and then the expedition lingered off the Niagara coast for nearly three weeks, preparatory to the attack on Fort George. The inequality of numbers made the contest almost a hopeless one ; but Vincent would not give way without a fight. A cannonade was opened on the 26th, and next day a landing was effected, which was severely contested ; but the guns of the men-of-war overpowered the most strenuous efforts of the defenders. Even after landing, however, the American troops were three times driven back at the point of the bayonet ; and every mounted officer, save one, had been struck, and every gunner killed or disabled, before Vincent, after a desperate struggle of three hours duration, against a force numbering ten times his own, reluctantly abandoned the defence, spiked his guns, blew up his magazine, and retreated in good order on the strong position of the Beaver Dam, twelve miles from Niagara, on the road to Burlington Heights. Fort George, of course, fell into the hands of the enemy, and, saddest of all, on the sharply-contested field were left the bodies of 445 brave men, only too sorely needed at that juncture to supplement the country's most inadequate defence.

On the same day on which the American squadron landed at Niagara, a small British squadron, consisting of seven armed vessels, sailed from Kingston under the command of Sir George Prevost and Commodore Yeo, to attack the naval post of Sackett's Harbour, which had sheltered and equipped the fleet which Commodore Chauncey had