

Lewiston, has been the route most generally approved for such a canal, of which the cost would be enormous. The resulting benefits, however, especially as the population and wealth of the United States increase, might be inestimable, especially in the event of a war with England and Canada.

The Niagara region again became the theatre of war in 1837, when the Patriots undertook to upset the Government of Canada. While the first revolt occurred at York, now Toronto, the entire Canadian bank of the Niagara river was kept in a ferment for several months. Navy Island was at one time the principal rendezvous of the Patriots, and from there, on December 17, 1837, William Lyon Mackenzie, the leader, signing himself "Chairman pro tem of the provincial (a printer's error, which should read provisional) government of the State of Upper Canada," issued his famous proclamation to the inhabitants of the Province.

Without reference to the various intrigues carried on all along the frontier by the Patriots with their American sympathizers, of whom there were, doubtless, a goodly number, the writer would mention only the crucial event of the war, the Caroline episode. It was openly charged by the Canadians that substantial aid was being rendered from the American side to the Patriots, both by private individuals in various ways, and especially by reason of the non-interference of the national and New York State authorities when informed, on credible testimony, that arms and ammunition were being shipped and other aid was being furnished from American soil to the Canadian rebels. This feeling was so bitter on the part of the English that it is not surprising that they seized the first opportunity for retaliation.

A small steamer, the *Caroline*, had been chartered by some people in Buffalo to run between that city, Navy Island where the insurgents were encamped, and Schlosser, on the American side, where there was a landing place for boats and a hotel. They maintained that it was a private money-

making venture, transporting the sight-seers to the Patriot's camp; but from the Canadian's view the real object was to convey provisions and arms to their enemies. On the night of December 29, 1837, the *Caroline* lay moored at Schlosser dock. The excitement of the rebellion had drawn many people to this locality, the little hotel was filled and some persons had sought a night's lodging on the boat.

At midnight, six boats, filled with British soldiers, sent from Chippawa by Sir Allan McNab, silently approached the *Caroline*. The soldiers promptly boarded her, drove off all on board, both crew and lodgers, cut her adrift, set her on fire, and again taking to their boats, towed her out to the middle of the river and cast her loose. And a glorious sight, viewed merely from a scenic standpoint, it was. The clear dark sky above and the cold dark body of water beneath. Ablaze all along her decks, her shape clearly outlined by the flames, she drifted grandly and swiftly towards the Falls. Reaching the rapids, the waves extinguished most of the flames; but, still on fire, racked and broken, she pitched and tossed forward to and over the Horse Shoe Fall, into the gulf below. The whole affair, the incentive therefor, the methods employed, and the manner of the attack caused intense excitement, and once again the Niagara frontier was threatened with war, and the militia along the border were actually called into the field.

Long diplomatic correspondence followed, the British Government assuming full responsibility for the claimed breaches of international law and the acts of her officers. During the *melee* at the dock, one man, Amos Durfee, was killed. A British subject, Alexander McLeod, claimed to have been one of the attacking force, was soon after arrested on American soil and was tried for the murder in New York State, but was finally acquitted. War was wisely averted, but another fateful chapter had been added to Niagara's history.

With the exception of the Fenian outbreak on the Canadian side of the