



Battle of Lake Erie.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SECOND TERM OF MADISON'S ADMINISTRATION.

THE campaign of 1813 opened with considerable military preparations on the part of the Americans. Brigadier-General William Henry Harrison, of the Ohio militia, who had long been the popular governor of the North-western Territories, was placed at the head of a large body of volunteers and militia, from Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. A more gallant army never marched with higher hopes than the 10,000 men under Harrison and Wilkinson, to recover what had been lost by Hull, and even to conquer Canada. General Harrison commanded the right wing, and General Winchester, the second in command, the left. The latter general, while Harrison was lying at Sandusky, detached Colonels Lewis and Allen from the left wing, and sent them to protect the village of Frenchtown, on the river Raisin, from the Indians and Canadians. They fell in with a party of the enemy, and obtained complete success. The advantage which was thus gained inspired the troops under Winchester to join Lewis and share his triumphs, and the general yielded to their desires. He joined Lewis on the 13th of January, with the intention of preserving the position which had been gained on the Raisin. So soon as Harrison heard of the success at Frenchtown, he also set forward to effect a general junction of the army,

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A. D.  
1813.

Opening  
of the  
cam-  
paign of  
1813.



**Bk. VI.** but, it being so early in the season, he was prevented by  
**Ch. 6.** the difficulties of the march from accomplishing his object.

**A. D.** Before he could join Winchester, the latter was attacked  
**1813.** (January 22d) by a large force of British and Indians,  
and completely routed. General Winchester himself and  
Colonel Lewis were taken prisoners. Nor was this the

Defeat  
of Win-  
chester.

greatest calamity. Major Madison, who, with 500 men,  
had succeeded in retaining his position, was induced,  
through the influence of Winchester, to surrender to  
Colonel Proctor, who had promised to treat him and his  
troops with the honourable consideration due to captives.

Murder  
of Ken-  
tucky  
soldiers.

But the savages under Proctor, exasperated at the loss of  
their warriors, demanded vengeance, and he basely sur-  
rendered 500 prisoners, comprising men from the best  
families of Kentucky, into their hands. The next day,  
the whole of them were ruthlessly murdered—one of  
the greatest outrages in the annals of modern warfare;  
and Proctor, who permitted the slaughter, instead of be-  
ing cashiered and disgraced, was made brigadier-general.

Harris-  
son's  
suc-  
cesses.

General Harrison, after this disaster, retreated to his  
post on the Miami, and proceeded to fortify Fort Meigs,  
all further advance upon the enemy's territory being  
necessarily abandoned. Here he successfully withstood  
two sieges, from a vastly superior force under Proctor and  
Tecumseh, and the enemy was compelled to retire. On  
the 5th of May, General Clay, with 1200 Kentucky mi-  
litia, arrived in the vicinity of Fort Meigs, and was or-  
dered to attack the British redoubts, on one side of the  
river, in concert with a sortie from the fort, headed by  
Colonel Miller. The attack was successful; but, instead  
of returning to the fort, as he was ordered, General Clay  
pursued the retreating Indians, until he himself, in re-  
turn, was surrounded and completely defeated. Only a  
small part of his force reached the fort in safety. Thus

ensued another reverse in consequence of disobedience of **Bk. VI.**  
orders, and the North-west was still left open to British **Ch. 6.**  
thralldom and depredation.

The campaign would have terminated before Harrison  
could have matured his preparations to recover what  
Hull had lost, had not the destruction of the British fleet  
on Lake Erie, by Commodore Perry, opened the way to  
the capture of Proctor on the Thames, and the complete  
relief of the entire West from the enemy.

**A. D.**  
**1813.**

This event, one of the most signal and fortunate during **Perry's**  
the war, took place on the tenth of September. The **victory**  
American squadron consisted of nine vessels, carrying **on Lake**  
fifty-four guns; the British, of six vessels and sixty-three **Erie.**  
guns. The battle began at eleven o'clock in the morn-  
ing, and, at first, was unfavourable to the Americans, the  
flag-ship of Perry, the Lawrence, being disabled by the  
fire of two ships of equal size with which she contended,  
and from which she could not escape on account of the  
lightness of the wind. The gallant commodore, instead  
of surrendering, left his ship, in an open boat, amid  
a heavy and destructive fire, and passed unhurt to the  
Niagara. The wind then rising, Perry succeeded in  
bringing the whole squadron into action; and, in three  
hours, his victory was complete. The loss of the Ame-  
ricans was twenty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded,  
while the British loss was much greater. The prisoners  
amounted to 600, exceeding the whole number of Ame-  
ricans engaged in the action.

This great victory of Perry over Barclay extinguished  
the power of the British on the Lakes, and opened a  
passage to the territory which had been surrendered by  
Hull. General Harrison, assisted by the governors of  
Kentucky and Ohio, succeeded in collecting an army of  
7000 men, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, and which,



Bx. VI.  
Ch. 6. embarking on Perry's fleet, reached Malden the 27th of September. This great force filled General Proctor with consternation, and he took to flight, after destroying every thing which came in his way. General Harrison pursued and overtook the retreating enemy, the 5th of October, on the river Thames, about eighty miles from Detroit. Here Proctor, with Tecumseh, posted himself, and prepared for the attack, when flight was no longer possible. Both armies engaged with determined courage, and the Americans gained the day. Tecumseh, the most celebrated Indian warrior that ever raised his arm against the white men, was killed, and, on his death, the Indians fled; and the English, with the exception of Proctor, who, with 200 dragoons, succeeded in escaping, laid down their arms. Had the forces been more equal, the victory would have been more glorious. Its result, however, was great, for the north-western country was regained, and the way prepared for a more effectual invasion of Canada.

Harrison resigns his commission. Upon this decisive battle, General Harrison embarked for Buffalo, after discharging a great part of the volunteers who had so honourably served, and leaving Colonel Cass, with a detachment, at Detroit. Soon after, while reposing on his laurels at home, in Ohio, he resigned his commission, in consequence of a disagreement with the executive, which, against his expectation, was received

His military reputation. The victory of Perry on the water and of Harrison on the land gave occasion for great public rejoicings, in all the chief cities of the land. Harrison was the first to turn the tide of adverse events, for which he obtained the nation's gratitude, and finally the highest honour in its power to bestow. He, however, was fortunate, rather than great—for his successful campaign will bear no comparison, in military genius, with that which achieved the conquest of Mexico under Scott and Taylor.

While Harrison was recovering the ground lost by Hull, a series of disasters occurred on the Atlantic seaboard. England, engaged in her gigantic struggle with Napoleon, had no leisure to bestow much attention upon the contest in America, comparatively of trifling importance; nor could she spare either troops or naval armaments. British naval forces, especially, did not appear on the American coast in any formidable numbers, until after the war had been declared for more than a year. But early in 1813, Admiral Warren, with two ships of the line, four frigates, and several smaller vessels, took possession of Hampton roads. Soon after, in March, Delaware Bay was occupied by a considerable force; and, indeed, the whole coast was pretty effectually blockaded by British fleets, consisting of six seventy-four-gun ships, thirteen frigates, and eighteen sloops of war. The Americans had no armaments capable of withstanding this great naval force, although several gallant actions had been performed by single ships. The American privateers had seized hundreds of British merchant vessels. The Peacock had surrendered to the Hornet, commanded by Captain Lawrence, while the President, under Rodgers, the Congress, under Smith, and the Essex, under Porter, had carried terror into every sea.

The arrival of British fleets on the American waters was attended with most disgraceful depredations. The English acted altogether like unlicensed buccaneers, wherever they found themselves unchecked by opposing forces. They burned hamlets, villages, and towns, along the coast. They destroyed mills, bridges, foundries, stables, and cottages. They seized pleasure boats, oyster smacks, and market shallops. All these ravages, whose only effect was to irritate, were encouraged by Admiral Cockburn, afterwards a favourite of the prince regent.

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Ch. 6.A. D.  
1813.British  
fleets.American  
navy.Depredations  
of the  
British.



Bk. VI.  
Ch. 6. But the British soon attempted something more serious than the destruction of barns and fishing boats. On the A. D. 22d of June, Admirals Warren and Cockburn, with the 1813. seamen and marines of their fleets, joined by two or three thousand infantry, under Sir Sidney Beckworth, made an Attack of  
Craney  
Island. attack on Craney Island, near Norfolk, but were severely and effectually repulsed. This repulse was revenged by an attack on Hampton, a small fishing town in Hampton roads, which was more successful, and gave occasion to wanton barbarities that would have disgraced savages. Silver was plundered from communion tables. Women were outraged by indignities which are worse than death. The churches were desecrated. The sick were murdered in bed. Stores and shops were plundered. Slaves were stolen, and either sold in the West India markets, or incorporated with the troops. These outrages, however, produced such general disgust, that the opposition to the war was abated, and Congress was urged to more decisive measures. Direct taxes were imposed, and heavy duties laid on refined sugar, sales at auction, retailers' licenses, stamps, carriages, and sundry other articles. But we return to military operations in Canada.

General  
Pike at-  
tacks  
King-  
ston. General Armstrong, the Secretary of War, had designed to attack Canada at Kingston, on Lake Ontario, where the English naval and land forces were concentrated. Commodore Chauncey commanded the lake, and had succeeded in confining the British naval forces in the harbour of Kingston. General Pike was the officer selected to make the attack. On the 25th of April, his forces, amounting to 1600 men, were transported by Chauncey's fleet towards Kingston, and landed about three miles from York, or Toronto, as it is since called, the provincial capital. The Americans successfully accomplished the disembarkation, and succeeded in capturing the place; although, by

the explosion of a powder-magazine, General Pike was Bk. VI.  
Ch. 6. unfortunately killed. After stripping York of the booty, General Dearborn re-embarked, and attacked and carried A. D. Fort George. This exploit consumed a month, and was 1813. an insignificant object compared with an attack on Kingston, which, with the great forces of the Americans at the time, might have been captured.

The attack on York left Sacket's Harbour in a comparatively defenceless state, and, in the absence of the troops, it was attacked by a British force of about 1000 men, while Fort George was carried by the Americans. The British, however, were repulsed, and the place remained in the hands of the Americans. But this repulse was the last American success in 1813 on Lake Ontario or the St. Lawrence. Indecisive and unfortunate results still seemed to attend the American arms in that quarter. The war was carried on at enormous expense, and more money was expended for ship-building than would have been required to transport large armies to Halifax. The American troops remained inactive most of the time in camp, decimated by disease and unwholesome food; and prices for provisions were so high, that, at one time, flour cost \$100 a barrel. The commander-in-chief, General Dearborn, was incapacitated, by age and infirmities, for his duties; but he resigned at last, and was succeeded by General Wilkinson.

But he did not prove a more efficient commander, and a succession of reverses sullied the glory of the American arms. At Forty Mile Creek, on the 3d of June, the Americans were beaten in an action, and Generals Chandler and Winder were taken prisoners. Three weeks later, Colonel Boerstler, with 600 men, was attacked by a body of English and Indians, and compelled to surrender at discretion. Nor was any offensive operation made

Ameri-  
can re-  
verses.

Success-  
es of the  
English.



Bk. VI. after Boerstler's capture, while the enemy was as active  
Ch. 6. as our forces were sluggish.

A. D. On the 20th of August, General Wilkinson arrived at  
1813. Sackett's Harbour, with instructions to capture Kingston.

Arm-  
strong  
at head-  
quarters His forces were deemed ample, having the control, in various stations, of 11,000 men. On the 5th of September, the Secretary of War himself arrived at the head-quarters of Wilkinson, to concert measures for the conquest of Canada. But his plan of attacking Kingston was now abandoned, and it was resolved to proceed to Montreal. Two columns were accordingly concentrated at Grenadier Island and Plattsburg, respectively commanded by Generals Wilkinson and Hampton, for the invasion of Canada.

Descent  
of the  
St. Lawrence.

The former lingered at Sackett's Harbour until the latter end of October, and thus gave the enemy time to fortify their posts on the river; and a fortnight more was consumed before his forces were fairly embarked, in 300 boats, upon the St. Lawrence. The descent was calamitous, in consequence of shoals, rapids, fogs, storms, bad pilots, and the enemy's guns. Moreover, from jealousy between Wilkinson and Hampton, there was no co-operation; and when Wilkinson, after many perils, arrived at St. Regis, where Hampton had been ordered to meet him, he received a communication from Hampton stating that, in consequence of the sickly state of his troops and the want of provisions, he had fallen back to Plattsburg. This conduct of Hampton was fatal to success, and the whole expedition was necessarily abandoned.

Thus terminated the campaign of 1813, in the North, disastrously and ignominiously, for want of concert and ability among the great leaders of the enterprise.

In the South, however, the successes of General Jackson somewhat atoned for misfortunes at the North. The campaign was carried on mainly by volunteers and militia

from Georgia, Tennessee and the Territory of Mississippi, Bk. VI.  
against the Indian foes, instigated and armed by the Eng- Ch. 6.  
lish and Spaniards. Of these, the Creeks, Choctaws, A. D.  
and Seminoles, were the most noted and uncompromising 1813.  
warriors. The chief agent of England, in inflaming Indian animosities, was Tecumseh, who performed a journey from North to South, in order to enlist the various tribes in one desperate league against those who occupied their ancient hunting grounds, and to secure the long lost rights of Indian freedom.

On the 13th of August, 1813, at Fort Mimms, on the Massa-  
acre at  
Fort  
Mimms. Alabama river, not far from Mobile, occurred one of those horrible massacres which are consequent upon the atrocities of Indian warfare. The garrison in this place, commanded by Major Beasley, from an overweening self-confidence, was surprised by a body of 800 savages, who had been furnished with arms by the British, and 160 people were barbarously murdered, with every indignity and cruelty that Indian ingenuity could suggest. The news of this massacre spread consternation throughout that part of the country, and the great body of the settlers, being without any means of defence, fled to Mobile, which had been seized by General Wilkinson in the spring.

The massacre at Fort Mimms called for prompt and vigorous measures, and Georgia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, acted with great decision. A force of 3500 men was placed at the disposal of Andrew Jackson, who detached, on the 3d of November, General Coffee, with a brigade of 900 men, and a squadron of cavalry and mounted riflemen, under Colonels Allecorn and Cannon, to the Tallushatchee towns, where they routed the Creeks with such slaughter, that scarcely any escaped. This blow was followed by a succession of conflicts with other Indian bands, in a campaign of six months, which Defeat  
of the  
Creeks.



Bk. VI.  
Ch. 6. so prostrated their power, that they at last took refuge in entrenchments, and were finally overthrown, in March, 1814, by the storming of their fortress, by General Jackson himself, at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers.

Ruin  
of the  
Creeks.

After completing the destruction of the Creeks, General Jackson returned to Tennessee in triumph, and was made a brigadier-general, and major-general by brevet, in the regular army.

General  
Pinck-  
ney.

General Jackson was greatly aided in the subjection of the Creeks by General Pinckney, of South Carolina, one of the most eminent statesmen and accomplished gentlemen of the country. He served as a captain in the Revolutionary war, was selected by Washington to succeed John Adams as minister to London, in 1794, negotiated a treaty with Spain, in 1795, afterwards was a prominent member of Congress, governor of South Carolina, and major-general of the regular army. He first met Jackson in the wilds of Alabama, at an old French fort, to dictate terms to a conquered people.

Treaty  
with the  
Indians.

By the treaty which Jackson imposed, the Creeks yielded up a large part of their country to the United States, and agreed to hold no intercourse with either British or Spanish garrisons. The tribe was ruined — a fact which we should deplore, had any tribe of North American Indians, thus far, since their early contact with Europeans, shown themselves capable of civilization. That they are a doomed race, learning few of the arts and all the vices of the white man, preferring their forests to all other pleasures, and hating all improvements, is one of the most mysterious as well as one of the best attested facts of all history.

The tide of naval triumphs, thus far nearly uninterrupted, was arrested by the loss of the frigate *Chesapeake*,

(June 1st, 1813,) in Boston harbour. The *Chesapeake* was commanded by Captain Lawrence, a gallant and heroic commander, and had been challenged by Captain Brooke, of the *Shannon*, one of the most efficiently armed ships in the British navy. The *Chesapeake* was chiefly manned by new recruits, whose officers were disabled by sickness. Lawrence, unfortunately, without considering the disadvantages under which he laboured, accepted the challenge, and put to sea, much against the inclination of his men. The two ships were soon in conflict, and a desperate fight commenced, in which, owing in part to some mishap, the *Chesapeake* was early disabled, boarded by the British, and taken, when nearly all the officers were either killed or wounded. The gallant Lawrence, though wounded, fought with desperation, and his memorable words, "Don't give up the ship," have become the motto in the American navy. He was killed soon after, and his ship was obliged to strike to the victorious enemy, whose loss also was very considerable. The victory caused much exultation among the British, as they had heretofore in this contest been remarkably unfortunate in naval combats. Another triumph soon followed, to solace them still further. The American sloop *Argus*, on the 14th of August, surrendered, after a severe conflict and the loss of Captain Allen, to the *Pelican*, a vessel of superior force. But this loss was compensated, soon after, on the first of September, by the capture of the British brig *Boxer* by the schooner *Enterprise*; and also, the capture of the schooner *Highflyer* by the *President*. Several valuable prizes were also taken, about this time, by American privateers, which, like the national ships, maintained the honour of the American marine, notwithstanding the large naval force then employed by England.

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1813.

Loss of  
the Che-  
sapeake.

Death of  
Law-  
rence.

Capture  
of the  
Boxer.



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Ch. 6. The year 1813 closed without any other signal and important actions, either on the land or water. At this period, opposition to the war, in New England, was more fierce than at any preceding time; and, in Congress, Mr. Webster uttered the sentiments of his party with tremendous power, opposed, however, by the scarcely less splendid and more popular eloquence of Calhoun,—both of whom made themselves conspicuous in the debates connected with the war, and began to occupy a commanding position in the national councils, which position neither was destined afterwards to lose.

Opposition to the war.

Preparations for another campaign. The second session of the war-Congress began December 5th, 1813, with disappointed expectations. Harrison's successes and Jackson's victories over the Indians did not compensate for the failure of the expedition against Canada. Great Britain had rejected the proffered mediation of Russia, and was making preparations for more extended hostilities, while a third of the country was still averse to the war. Under these circumstances, President Madison recommended a most stringent embargo and non-intercourse law, which was passed by Congress. It was, however, repealed a few months afterwards (April, 1814). A loan of twenty-five millions of dollars was authorized, and laws were passed for the augmentation of the army and navy.

We should not, perhaps, close this chapter without adverting to the profound sensation occasioned both in Europe and America, by the very decided success which crowned the arms of the United States in her naval combats with Great Britain. The latter nation seemed to have entirely lost sight of that special aptitude for all exploits, whether peaceful or warlike, connected with life upon the ocean, which distinguished the Americans, alike in their colonial condition and in the war which secured

their independence. The intervening time from the Revolution to the war of 1812, had been marked almost continuously by a series of naval triumphs on the part of Great Britain, which nearly annihilated the squadrons of the other European powers, and left her mistress of the seas.

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Navy of the United States. It was therefore with a mingled feeling of surprise and mortification, that Englishmen contemplated the recent humiliation of their flag, in repeated combats with American ships of war. For the first time in her naval history, Great Britain enjoined it upon her officers to be extremely cautious in giving battle to American frigates, and always to avail themselves of superior force in so doing, whenever it was attainable.

The Americans exulted in the same proportion. The people resolved upon having a navy, and measures were devised to place upon the ocean a respectable force, efficient alike in striking at the enemy in the open sea, and in guarding our bays and harbours against his predatory incursions.