

CHAPTER III.

FORT ERIE — SITUATION AND ARCHITECTURE — SURRENDER —
 SIEGE — RUINS — WATERLOO — BLACK ROCK — RIVALRY —
 GENERAL PORTER — TONAWANDA — VILLAGE AND CREEK —
 CATFISH AND AGUES — SCHLOSSER LANDING — CHIPPEWA —
 CREEK — BATTLE-GROUND — FORT SCHLOSSER.

“In crumbling ruins on the lake-laved shore,
 Its shattered walls and bastions ivied o'er,
 Stands a stern fortress that has oft withstood
 The fiery brunt of battle, blushing blood,
 Its curtains, parapets, and ramparts gray
 War-wasted and corroding by decay.
 On frowning battlement and salient stone,
 Has time the unfinished work of foeman done;
 And creeping plants, and blooming wild-flowers wave,
 Where floated proudly once the banner brave.”

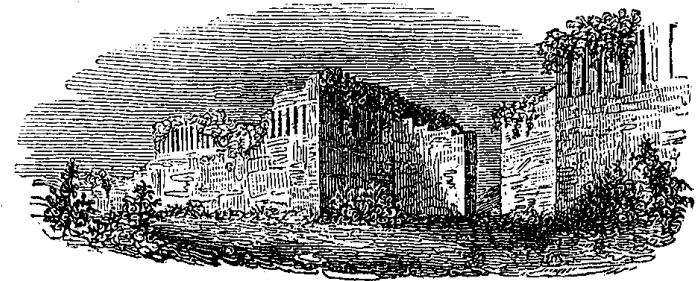


OPPOSITE to Buffalo, at the efflux of the river, and on the Canada side, stand the ruins of Fort Erie. This fortification, originally built by the French about a century ago, was a small but extremely well planned and constructed post, and must have been considered of no little importance by those who were at the trouble of its erection. All its defences were laid out and arranged in the exactest style of art; and the masonry bears witness, even at this distant date, to the solidity with which it was put together.

The curtains and other walls were grouted with a cement of water-lime, evincing the greatest care for durability, and none for expense. The bastions were all flanked with this admirable stone work, and the whole surrounded by a deep ditch, further strengthened by pointed stakes, firmly and thickly planted in the fosse, inclining outward, and rising just above the water, with which it was nearly filled. The fort was evidently designed by an able engineer, and might have been regarded as a miniature model of military architecture. Every avenue of approach, was enfiladed or exposed to a cross fire, and nothing seems to have been omitted that could contribute to the annoyance of a besieging foe, or the protection of its little garrison. By the Indians, it must have been deemed impregnable.

Fort Erie was, during the late war, the scene of some of the most memorable exploits of the Republican army. It was surrendered on the third of July, at the first summons, to General Brown who, with a force of five thousand men, invaded Canada in 1814, by Major Buck, the officer in command; and the British garrison, consisting of one hundred and thirty-seven men of the Eighth, or King's Regiment, became prisoners of war. The troops under General Brown, after

advancing upon Fort George, and fighting the celebrated battles of Chippewa and Niagara, fell back upon this point, and sustained a siege, remarkable for the gallantry with which it was pressed and repelled. Subsequently, the British forces having retired to winter quarters, the fort was abandoned and demolished, the campaign ended, and the American army having gained nothing but glory by the invasion, returned to their own country.



RUINS OF FORT ERIE, U. C.

The fortification is now entirely in ruins, deserted and desolate; but its ancient defences may still be traced out, and the little hillocks that dot the plain below, each marking a soldier's grave, attest the obstinacy with which the attack was urged, and the assault repulsed.

WATERLOO is a pleasant little village on the bank of the river a mile and a half below Fort

Erie, and opposite to Black Rock, with which it is connected by the ferry. It has probably sixty or seventy houses, and four or five hundred inhabitants. From this place to the Falls, the road runs along the bank of the river, and the scenery is extremely picturesque. Horses and carriages may be had for excursions to Fort Erie or the Falls, on livery, at reasonable rates.

The village of **BLACK ROCK** on the American side of the strait, and two miles below Buffalo, comprises some two hundred houses, and contains about two thousand inhabitants. It is composed of two divisions or hamlets, separated by the distance of one mile. The lower village is therefore three miles from Buffalo, and is commonly call "The Dam," from its vicinity to a structure of that kind, erected to raise the water for the benefit of the harbour and canal. The pier is two miles long, and commencing at Squaw Island, terminates at a small island or reef called Bird Island, opposite Buffalo. By means of the pier and dam, the water in the harbour is raised several feet above the river, thus creating water-power to an extent almost unlimited. There are a number of fine mills in constant operation.

Black Rock was formerly the rival of Buffalo, and maintained for several years a sort of doubtful

ascendancy. In those days, the harbour at Black Rock was thought by many people to be far superior to that of its competitor; and large appropriations were obtained for it, almost before any attempts were made at improving the port of Buffalo. But the current of the river, and the dangers of the channel from large sunken rocks, difficulties that could not be entirely overcome, gave its rival a decided advantage, and prevented its becoming a place of much business. It is



however, destined to no inconsiderable importance as a manufacturing town. It was founded about the same time with Buffalo, and was burnt by the enemy in 1813. The principal ferry over the river is at the upper village, and is connected with Buffalo by rail-road. The Niagara Falls Rail-Road runs through both divisions of the place.

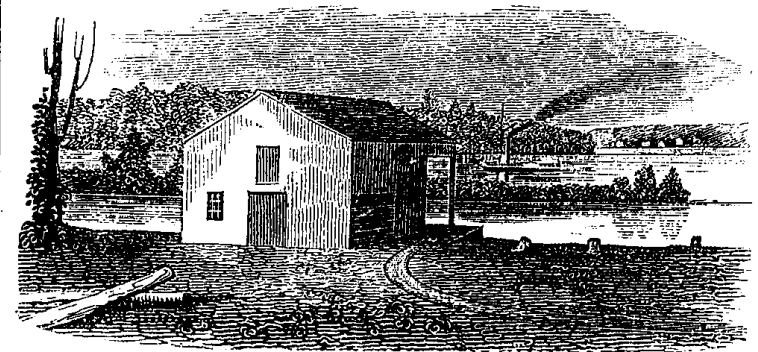
General Porter was, until quite recently, the principal land-holder at Black Rock, and for many years resided at the upper village, where he had a splendid mansion, which is now occupied by Lewis F. Allen, Esq. a gentleman favourably known for his agricultural enterprise and writings. General Porter has removed to the Falls, where he has large possessions, and a princely dwelling.

The village of TONAWANDA is nine miles below Black Rock, and lies on both sides of the creek of the same name, at its confluence with the strait. At this place, the Erie Canal, leaving the river, enters the creek, which it follows to Pendleton, twelve miles distant. Tonawanda is a pleasant thriving village, and contains about twelve hundred inhabitants. WHITE-HAVEN, mills and hamlet, occupying the site of the proposed Jewish city of Arrarat, founded by the *soi disant* Grand High Priest, M. M. Noah, then a Judge of Israel, but now a judge of the Court of Sessions, New-York, is on Grand-Island, directly opposite.

Tonawanda, the aboriginal name of the creek, is an Indian word, signifying "*swift running water.*" There was doubtless a touch of native irony in this appellation, for the creek is a deep *sluggish* stream. It has been dammed over for the benefit of the canal, by which a beautiful cascade

is formed. It is about eighty yards in width, is crossed by a long wooden bridge, on which the rail-road passes, and is the boundary between the counties of Erie and Niagara. The place is somewhat celebrated for its cat-fish and agues, both of which are said to be caught here in great abundance. We are by no means satisfied that this dignity is quite deserved; if true, however, it enjoys a monopoly of the honour and profit.

SCHLOSSER LANDING is nine miles below Tonawanda, and two miles above the Falls. An old



SCHLOSSER LANDING.

store-house, and tavern are the only buildings at this point. It is the landing place for steam-boats from Buffalo, and visitors to the Falls are conveyed thence in carriages. This place is celebrated as being the spot where the Caroline lay at the

time of her destruction. Navy-Island is opposite, and Grand-Island, the Canada Shore, Chippewa, the head of the rapids, and Iris-Island are all within view. The rail-road runs along the river but few rods from the shore.

CHIPPEWA lies on the bank of the river, at the mouth of Chippewa Creek, two and a half miles above the Falls. With the single exception of Waterloo, it is the only village on the Canada side above the cataract. It is a flourishing place—a port of entry—and has a very tolerable harbour. The stream is spanned by a wooden draw-bridge one hundred yards long, and is navigable about twenty miles up, for vessels of two or three hundred tons burthen. Steam-boats from Buffalo land here, and the journey to the Falls is continued in carriages, which are in waiting. The population of the village is estimated at two thousand persons. The view of the rapids, and scenery above the Falls, is very fine. The battle-ground is two miles above, on the Buffalo road.

Chippewa is the lowest point to which the upper portion of the Niagara strait is navigable. From Queenston to this place, goods are carried by land, and the road has from the old French times, been called the Portage. The two villages are now connected by a rail-road, but recently

completed. It was at Chippewa that the troops and munitions of war were collected to oppose the Navy-Island patriots; and here the expedition against the Caroline was fitted out and despatched, which resulted in the death of Durfee, and the destruction of that vessel.

The only streams of any considerable size that flow into the Niagara river, are the Tonawanda and Chippewa creeks. Of the former we have before spoken, and to the latter, no particular interest attaches. It is about twenty rods wide at its mouth, and forty or fifty miles in length. About ten miles of the Welland Canal, which affords a water communication, navigable for vessels of one hundred and fifty tons burthen, between the Lakes Erie and Ontario, are formed by this stream. No small portion of the rich western trade, finds its way to the North and East, through this canal, in the construction of which, the people of Canada have shown a spirit of enterprise, that is like to be well rewarded, and may eventually lead to other important works of internal improvement.

FORT SCHLOSSER, or rather its remains, now scarcely to be distinguished, is a mile below the Landing, on the American side. It was a mere stoccade, built in the old French war, upon lines slightly raised above the river banks. The site of

the fort is on a gentle elevation, between the road and the river, in a cultivated field, where the plough and the harrow have done their work so well, that hardly a trace of this once noted military post is now to be discovered.

Another mile and we are at the village of Niagara Falls, with a bounding pulse, the roar of the cataract in our ears, and a feverish impatience in our breasts.

