



Huntingdon



Journal

BY JAS. CLARK.

HUNTINGDON, PA., TUESDAY, MAY 29, 1850.

VOL. XV, NO. 21.

CHOICE POETRY.

COURTSHIP.

BY N. P. WILLIS.

"Oh, Laura! will nothing I bring thee
E'er soften those looks of disdain?
Are the songs of affection I sing thee
All doomed to be sung thee in vain?
I offer thee, fairest and dearest,
A treasure, the richest I'm worth;
I offer thee love, the sincerest,
The warmest e'er glowed upon earth!"

But the maiden, a haughty look flinging,
Said, "Cease my compassion to move;
For I'm not very partial to singing,
And they're poor whose sole treasure is love!"

"My name will be sounded in story—
I offer thee, dearest, my name;
I have fought on the proud field of glory!
Oh! Laura, come share in my fame.

I bring a soul that adores thee,
And loves thee wherever thou art;
Which thrills as its tribute it brings thee
Of tenderness fresh from the heart."

But the maiden said, "Cease to importune;
Give Cupid the use of his wings;
For Fame's but a pitiful fortune—
And hearts are such valueless things."

"Oh, Laura, forgive if I've spoken
Too boldly—may turn not away—
For my heart with affliction is broken—
My uncle died only to-day.

My uncle, the nabob—who tended
My youth with affection and care;
My manhood who kindly befriended—
Has—died—and—has—left—me—his—heir."

And the maiden said, "Weep not, sincerest,
My heart has been yours all along;
Oh! hearts of all treasures are dearest—
Do, Edward, go on with your song."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MEMOIR OF GEN. JOHN MCNEIL, LATE OF THE U. S. NAVY.

BY JEFFERSON SUTHERLAND.

"There is a tear for all that die,
A mourner e'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry
And triumph weeps above the brave.

"A tomb is theirs on every page,
An epitaph on every tongue,
The present hours, the future age,
For them bewail, to them belong."

Gen. JOHN MCNEIL was a native of
Willsborough, New Hampshire; and died
at Washington, D. C. on the evening of
the 24th of February, 1850, in the sixty-
sixth year of his age.

He, (as it is understood,) was a lawyer
by profession, and practiced at the
bar of the courts for a number of years
previous to the commencement of the
last war with Great Britain, when he
received the appointment of captain of
infantry in the United States army; and
sometime previous to the opening of
the campaign of 1814 he was promoted to
the rank of Major of the 11th Reg-
ment of infantry, and joined Brown's
army, with his regiment, at Buffalo,
early in the spring of that year. The
11th Inf. was commanded by Col. John

*These lines are from Lord Byron's "Monody
on the death of Sir Peter Parker," R. N. who
was one of the naval chiefs of the famous Gen-
eral Ross, that died in the shores of the Ches-
apeake in 1814. Capt. P. led an invasion up the
Chesapeake intended to distract the attention of
the American government while the attack was
made upon the city of Washington, and was killed
in an affair with a small force of American
Militia on the Eastern shore of Maryland. He
was the son of the late Rear Admiral Christo-
pher Parker, who (as it is said, for his gallant
exploits in the West Indies) was made a post-
captain at the age of nineteen, and grand-son of
Admiral Sir Peter Parker, one of the most dis-
tinguished of the enemies of our country—and
most active and efficient of those who fought
against our forefathers during the revolutionary war.

From *Niles's Register*, September 10th, 1814—
The (British) Menalaws frigate, Captain Sir
Peter Parker, had been for some time moving
about in the upper part of the Chesapeake, fre-
quently landing detachments and committing
barbarous depredations on the shore, burning
several houses, wheat stacks, and a pig-pen
with the pigs in the sty! They also seized
some negroes for guides, but whether they car-
ried them off is not stated. About the 20th ult.,
a schooner came up the bay with orders for the
Menalaws to fall down; but Sir Peter said "he
must have a frolic with the Yankees before he
left," and on the 30th at night after drinking
and drinking, they proceeded to land, and made
a circuitous route to surprise Colonel Read, (a
man of the revolution,) encamped in Moor's
field, not far from Georgetown. Roads, on the
eastern shore of Maryland. The Colonel was
apprized of all their proceedings. His force was
about 170 officers and men, (militia) armed with
muskets and a few rifles and two pieces of field
artillery. The enemy disgorged all his forces,
except about twenty men, from the frigate,
which amounted to 230 men, 150 armed with
muskets, and the rest with pikes, cutlasses and
a pair of pistols each. The British advanced
with firmness to the charge—but were met with
equal resolution and courage. The ground was
obstinately contended for nearly an hour, when
the enemy retreated, leaving 13 killed and 3
wounded on the field. It is ascertained that they
carried off 17 others wounded, among whom
was Sir Peter, since dead. The incendiary
captain fell before the artillery, when he at-
tempted to carry it by storm; and was buried
with the usual ceremonies. We had three men
slightly wounded—more killed. Many muskets,
cutlasses and boarding pikes, with a grenade,
a rocket and some poles, supposed to have been
brought to be used in discharging them, were
picked up by the military next day. In the
morning, the lieutenant commanding the frigate
sent a flag on shore to propose an exchange for
the prisoners he supposed we had taken; for on
mustered his crew forty were found missing!

B. Campbell, of Virginia; and while the
forces were concentrating, and in pro-
cess of organization at Buffalo, Major
McNeil acted as chief of the battalion
drill.

In the campaign of 1814, on the
Niagara Frontier, the father of the writer
of this memoir, (Silas Sutherland, now
deceased,) served as a volunteer, and
the writer, then a lad of only nine years
of age, accompanied his father with the
army through the whole of that cam-
paign, and first saw Major McNeil on
the drill ground in Buffalo, acting the
Surwarrow—in Surwarrow boots! and
to no one more than Major McNeil, was
Brown's army indebted for its efficiency
in evolution and the use of the musket.

Major McNeil was in size of body a
competitor with General Scott, to whose
brigade the 11th Inf. with which he
served, was attached, and boasted very
much of his herculean strength, which
he was vain to try with the humblest
soldiers. After the drill of the day,
during the continuance of the army at
Buffalo, a ring was usually formed for
the wrestlers; and the Major claimed to
find no match for himself at the "square
hold." He threw every one, officer and
soldier, who ventured to take hold of
him, while there came with a company
from Maine, a big Sergeant, who seemed
a fair third man with Scott and McNeil.
No sooner did the Major perceive this
Yankee Sergeant upon the drill ground
than he ordered the ring to be formed,
and challenged him in for a wrestle at
"square hold." The Sergeant accepted
the challenge of the Major, and after a
considerable effort for the mastery, the
Major was thrown flat on his back. It
was the first time he had been brought
down, and it was his last wrestle at the
"square hold;" the troops being ordered,
immediately afterwards to cross into
Canada—and at Bridgewater he had a
canister shot put through one of his legs,
near the knee joint, by the enemy, which
quite spoiled his leg for wrestling at
"square hold."

The order for the embarkation of the
troops at Buffalo was issued by General
Brown on the 2d of July, and the move-
ment took place in the evening. Scott's
brigade, (in which the 11th Inf. was in-
cluded,) with the field pieces, battering
train and battalion of artillery, was first
embarked and put off, and at about 3 o'-
clock on Sunday morning, July 3, suc-
ceeded in effecting a landing on the
Canada shore, one mile below Fort Erie,
where the soldiers loosened their knap-
sacks and lay upon their arms till morn-
ing.

After Scott's followed Ripley's brigade;
but for the want of sufficient and con-
venient boats for conveyance it did not
succeed in effecting a landing until near
day light. This prevented the night
attack, (which Brown had intended and
given direction for,) upon Fort Erie; but
by this there was nothing lost, as the
advance of Brown's army had not been
anticipated by the enemy, and his forces
occupying Fort Erie made no further re-
sistance than the firing of two or three
shots from a battery gun, killing one
and wounding two or three others of the
privates of the 25th infantry.

As soon as Ripley had effected a land-
ing with his brigade, which he did early
in the morning at a place about a mile
south of the Fort, Brown caused the
woody ground in the rear of the post to
be scouted by a small body of Indians,
which he had then succeeded in getting
over from Buffalo, and commanded an
approach to be made to the enemy from
the right and left. Having closed his
forces upon the Fort, ready for attack,
Brown sent a flag to Major Burke, the
British commander, with a demand for
the surrender of the works of defence
and garrison, and granted him two hours
in which to decide upon an answer. In
the mean time a battery of 183 was
brought up and planted. But those guns
were not fired, as at the expiration of the
time allowed, Major Burke sent a
notice of his capitulation to Brown, and
surrendered the works, with some guns,
ammunition and whiskey stores, together
with the forces, amounting in the ag-
gregate to 137.

On the morrow after the capture of
Fort Erie, having garrisoned the place,
Brown pushed forward Scott's brigade
towards Chippewa; & Ripley's with the
battalion of artillery and battering train,
followed close in its rear. General Por-
ter, having effected a crossing from
Black Rock immediately after the cap-
ture of Fort Erie, also closed up, on
the morning of the 5th, with the army,
which on the evening of the fourth of
July had encamped on the south side of
Street's creek, a small stream of water
embedded in a ravine, and emptying in-
to the Niagara river a mile or so above
the mouth of the Chippewa. The en-
campment rested its right on the river's
bank, and was formed with the 1st, or
Scott's brigade in front—the 2d, or Rip-
ley's in the centre—and the 3d, or Por-

ter's in the rear, with the Artillery bat-
talion, Major Hindman, on the right, and
the Light Dragoons, Captain Harris, on
the left.

A considerable force of the enemy,
commanded by Major General Riall,
were entrenched on the left bank of the
Chippewa, having taken up their posi-
tion with a view to dispute the advance
of the American army; and early in the
morning of the 5th of July several of
Brown's advanced pickets were attacked
by the enemy's Indians and light
troops, and some brisk skirmishing en-
sued.

Conceiving it to be General Brown's
intention to turn his flank, or in the at-
tempt to bring him to an engagement,
and with a confidence in the more per-
fect discipline of his own troops, Riall
resolved to make a sortie and meet the
Americans on the field, where his charge
as he believed, would be irresistible to
their new levies and volunteer militia;
and accordingly for opening the ball
early in the afternoon.

At mid-day, the enemy had advanced
his light troops along the lines of wood-
land which capped both Chippewa and
Street's creek and around the left flank
of the American encampment driving in
our pickets, and showing themselves on
the very flanks of the American line.
With a view to punish the enemy for his
insolence, Brown directed the advance
of Porter's brigade, with orders to take
the wood and keep out of the enemy's
sight, with the hope of bringing his light
troops scouting on the left between Por-
ter's line of march and the American
camp, and intending thus to challenge
the enemy to leave his defences and
come to action. Scott's and Ripley's
brigades were called to arms, and Brown,
accompanied by Scott and Ripley and
Captain Harris of the Dragoons, advanced
to a house situated on the north of
Street's creek, from whence their glasses
could take in a view of the enemy's
line.

It was about 4 o'clock P. M. when
Porter's brigade was put in motion,
which took ground to the left as it passed
from the American line, and advanced
to the attack of the enemy's light troops
with promptness and spirit; the wood
was soon cleared, and their opposing
force driven back upon Chippewa. But,
at the moment Porter was about to de-
bouch in front of Chippewa, he was met
by an overwhelming force of the enemy,
and in turn compelled to retreat. At
this moment it was discovered by Brown,
that the enemy was making a sortie from
his work at Chippewa, and he command-
ed Scott to forward his brigade at once
upon the field and take order for battle,
and Ripley to advance with his brigade
so as to be within supporting distance.

General Brown continued at his ad-
vanced post scrutinizing the operations
of the enemy, until he saw their columns
advancing in quick step upon his line,
when he retired, in order to give direc-
tions for the movements of the troops in
the rear, and meeting Scott at the head
of his column, as it was about to cross
the bridge over Street's creek, he re-
marked to him—"You'll have a fight
sir."

Spreading out between the positions
of the two armies and bounded by the
river on the east, and on the west selved
by the wood, lay a plain, cleared up as
for a field of combat. The wood leading
from Chippewa to the Waterloo ferry
cut this plain near the river's shore, and
along this road advanced a column of
the enemy, glittering and glowing in the
sun, with their red cloth and brass
equipments, led by the Marquis of
Tweeddale. One line farther to the west
came the Royal Scots, bright and bound-
ing, over the plain, headed by Lieut.
Colonel Gordon; and at their right ad-
vanced another and smaller column of
red; and red and green stretched along
the skirt of the wood. These con-
sisted of Major Evan's command of the
King's Own, with detachments of the
Glengary Light Infantry, (in green,)
and of the Incorporated Militia, (in red.)
The object of the main column of the
enemy was to seize the bridge over
Street's creek; and if successful in this,
the American forces would have been
compelled to retire.

At the moment Scott showed the head
of his column in the field, the enemy
opened his battery upon it. Scott and
Campbell crossed the bridge together at
the head of the 11th Inf. in column of
companies, and advancing some rods to
the left oblique, formed line to front on
the right company. Next over the bridge
came Jessup with the 25th Infantry and
moved round Campbell's left, which was
at the moment of coming into line inflad-
ed by a musket fire from the enemy's
light troops, which had advanced under
cover of the wood and closed with the
foe in that direction. Towson had al-
ready begun to answer fast and well the
boogies of the British guns, when Leav-
enworth with the 9th Inf. and a detach-

ment of the 22d, (Brady's) crossed the
bridge, pushing Towson forward on his
right with three guns, while he formed
a line considerably to the right and in
advance of that of the 11th Inf. Soon
after taking position in the Chippewa
road, the carriage of one of Towson's
guns was struck by an 18lb shot from
the enemy's battery, and thrown out of
service; and about the same moment
Colonel Campbell was hit with a musket
ball in the knee, breaking the knee-joint;
and he falling from his horse was taken
to the rear. The command of the 11th
Inf. then devolved on Major McNeil,
who was on the left of the battalion—not
mounted. A lieutenant doing duty on
the right immediately proceeded to the
left and announced to Major McNeil
that—"Colonel Campbell was wounded!"
"That takes me to the right!" responded
the Major, and moved thence with
strides of three and a half feet, as it
was said, and mounting Colonel Campbell's
horse, commanded—"Forward—11th!"

At this stage of the action Brown re-
turned to the field, with Captain Harris
and about 30 Dragoons as an escort, in
order to have the general supervision of
the movements of the advance forces.

While the enemy's columns are ad-
vancing, his guns, which were mostly
pointed at the 9th and 23d, were work-
ed with spirit. But a lucky hit by Tow-
son, which occasioned the explosion of
one of the enemy's magazine wagons,
lulled the rage of his artillery for a time.
It was aimed to pelt Leavenworth's line,
because it more particularly covered the
bridge over Street's creek, and had Tow-
son's guns on its right, but, though ter-
ribly mauled, the 9th and 22d stood firm
as veterans.

Intending to give but a single dis-
charge from their muskets, and to ply
the steel, the enemy's columns deployed
—fired—and charged!—while the lead-
ers shouted—"They are nothing but
Buffalo militia—give them the bayonet!"

Obtaining to the front some rods of
ground, McNeil had halted his battal-
ion; and with a view to relieve his left
flank, which had been galled by the en-
emy's light troops scattered along the
wood, (which Jessup had then taken in
hand), as well as to obtain a position on
which to form a line oblique to the en-
emy advancing upon the right, he threw
his line into echelon, by companies half
wheel to the right, as the first step to
move forward his flank, and the extreme
companies were on the march for the
new line, when the near approach of the
enemy demanded them to deliver their
fire, and McNeil, from his companies
echelon poured into the ranks of the en-
emy streams of lead as through a funnel,
while with a noise to be heard above the
musket's rattle, he shouted—"Now give
it to them! Take vengeance on them,
boys!" and under the well directed fire
of the 11th Infantry, the Royal Scots
shook—wavered—and finally broke and
run! with the yelping Yankees at their
heels. The left of the enemy was very
roughly handled by the 25th Inf. led by
Jessup; and all of the British forces
which were left to do so, fled behind the
Chippewa.

In acknowledgment for his gallant
conduct in the battle of Chippewa, the
Government at Washington conferred
upon Major McNeil the brevet of Lieu-
tenant Colonel.

Immediately after his defeat upon the
plains of Chippewa, Riall broke down
the bridge over the creek in his front,
and retreated to Fort George. Brown
followed with the American army, and
on the 20th of July encamped in rear of
the enemy, attacked his pickets, and

drove them in, and amused the Fort with
a few shot and shell. But, Riall having
his eye upon the lake, from whence he
was expecting reinforcements, he would
not allow himself to be coaxed beyond
his trenches.

Having received co-operation from
the American squadron on the lake, un-
der the command of Captain Chauncey,
and learning that the enemy was ex-
pecting large reinforcements from King-
ston, on the 22d of July Brown fell back
with his forces and encamped at Queens-
town; and entertaining some fears for
the safety of his supplies at Schlosser,
he detached Lt. Col. Swift, with about
250 New York Volunteers, with orders
to cross the Niagara, and to take post at
the Five-mile Meadows, below Lewis-
town, and there to meet and hold in
check any marauding party which should
be sent out from Fort Niagara, or from
across the river, as a demonstration a-
gainst Schlosser.

Having made his precautionary ar-
rangements, Brown continued his retro-
grade, and on the 24th of July encamped
with his forces above Chippewa, near
the battle ground of the 5th. This
movement placed him within reach of
his supplies at Schlosser.

About mid-day of the 25th, informa-
tion was brought to Brown at Chippewa
that the enemy had begun to show his
forces, in considerable numbers, at
Queens-ton, and on the heights above—
and that four of his ships on Lake On-
tario had arrived from Kingston, and
anchored in the mouth of the river, from
which troops were being disembarked.
Before noon of the same day, Lieut. Col.
Tucker at the head of the 41st regiment
of the enemy's forces, which had formed
part of the garrison at Fort George,
with 400 of the 89th regiment, Lieut.
Col. Marion, had crossed the river, land-
ing near Fort Niagara, and moved for-
ward to attack Lieut. Col. Swift, in-
tending the capture of the American
stores at Schlosser. Of this movement
Brown had also received information,
and well knowing that Swift's command
was in no way sufficient to hold in check
the forces sent against him, and there-
fore advised that the baggage and stores
at Schlosser, and on their way thither,
were in danger of immediate capture;
and as the increase of force of the en-
emy had placed much at hazard on the
opposite side of the Niagara, he conceiv-
ed that the most effectual method for
calling the enemy from his object, was to
put his own troops in motion for
Queens-ton. Accordingly the American
forces were got under arms, and Scott's
brigade, with Towson's battery, Harris'
Light Dragoons, & a company of moun-
ted volunteers wheeled into column, and
with a terrible burst from the bugle,
drum and life, spread their colors, and
flauntingly moved on along the Queens-
town road. The sky was clear, the at-
mosphere calm and quiet, and the sun
with a softened light hung in the verge
of the Western hemisphere, and the
ceaseless roar of the cataract came to
the ears of all with an ominous sound.

If the enemy appeared in his front,
Scott had been directed to report to the
commanding general, and to call for as-
sistance if that was necessary. Upon
arriving near the falls of Niagara, Scott
received information, by his videttes,
that the enemy was in force directly in
his front—a narrow piece of wood only
intercepting his view.

As it had been anticipated by Brown,
the advance of Scott's brigade upon the
Queens-ton road, brought back the forces
of the enemy which had been thrown a-
cross the Niagara to threaten the depot
of provisions at Schlosser.

It was about six o'clock in the even-
ing when Scott arrived at the Falls and
obtained a knowledge of the enemy's
position; and despatching Assistant Ad-
jutant General Jones to communicate
with Brown, he moved forward with his
column, except the 26th Inf. which he
detached to his right, cleared the wood,
and commenced the action. Immedi-
ately upon receiving information from Col.
Scott, Brown ordered forward Ripley's
and Porter's brigades. As the columns
of these crossed the bridge at Chippewa,
the boomings of field pieces and rattle of
musketry proclaimed the action to have
become general; and without waiting
for the supporting columns of Ripley
and Porter, Gen. Brown advanced to the
field of battle.

The army had taken a position for the
night, intending on the morrow to have
attacked the Americans in their camp
before daylight. His center was estab-
lished on a rise of ground west from the
Queens-ton road, where he had planted
a battery of guns, consisting of nine
pieces. Lundy's Lane, a public highway,
intersecting the Queens-ton road from
the west, lay in front of the enemy's po-
sition, about two hundred yards; and
then the wood, which the enemy had
intended should have masked his ad-
vance.

Jessup, with the 22d Infantry, had
been turned off to the right; with orders
to move down the Queens-ton road, and
place himself in position to meet and
check the advance of the British 19th
Light Dragoons, or of any other corps
of the enemy with which he might at-
tempt to turn the American flank, or at-
tack their camp in the rear.

At the head of the 22d Inf., with Col.
Brady, Scott passed through the wood,
and showed himself to the enemy, who
greeted him with a discharge from his
battery, which shivered several of the
companies of the 22d Inf., whose officers
and men sought safety behind the trees.
But they were soon rallied by Brady
and Scott in person, and the regiment
advanced and formed line of battle, and
returned the fire of the enemy. While
the 22d Inf. was getting into place, Ma-
jor McNeil advanced with the 11th Inf.
without a quiver or shake in its columns
into the midst of the storm, and spread
out his line abreast on the enemy. Af-
McNeil, Leavenworth, at the head of
the 19th Inf. dashed out and deployed
his regiment in Lundy's Lane; and not
behind the Infantry, Towson got his
battery into line, and gun and musket
began the work of death.

Much of the effect of Towson's bat-
tery was barred by his inability to plant
his battery upon a commanding eleva-
tion, while the enemy's overlooked him,
and were served with an earnest that
spoke a determination to take vengeance
upon Scott's line. The enemy's infan-
try were less effective in their fire, but
they fought with a determination which
evinced a desire to regain the fame they
had lost on the 5th, upon the plains of
Chippewa, and Riall was there to urge
them to the effort; and lead and pot met
was poured upon those who upheld
the star spangled banner of our country,
in the shape of all sorts of shot, with
bags of musket balls. Brady somewhat
relieved the condition of his men by
pushing forward his line; but he was
wounded and bleeding, and his command
was terribly backed. Leavenworth was
also wounded, and his numbers reduced
to a single company. McNeil was in the
front of the storm—and to him, with the
11th Infantry, had been allotted the hot-
test birth, which they stood like sala-
manders. His men had been cut and
cleaved, and he a shot put through his
left leg, and a boot filled with blood, and
yet they still kept their front to the en-
emy. But, within the completion of the
first hour of the engagement, Major
McNeil received a canister shot in his
right knee, which brought him to the
ground—and finished his career of active
military life. The sun went down on
the carnage field—but the fight contin-
ued—and never before, or since, have
witnessed the bright stars and the sil-
very moon so dreadful a conflict as there
progressed. For one whole hour of time
did Scott's line, unassisted, maintain
the unequal fight. Then came Ripley's
brigade to his relief, and Porter's.—
These formed a new line in his front,
and allowed Scott to retire.

Of the wound received in his knee at
Bridgewater, General McNeil never re-
covered entirely. He was, however, at
the conclusion of the war, retained in
the peace establishment as Major of the
5th Inf. In this regiment James Watson
Webb served with him as a Lieutenant,
and it was a difference with General
McNeil which drove Webb from the ser-
vice. In 1829, General McNeil was ap-
pointed by President Jackson, a commis-
sioner to treat with the Sac and Fox In-
dians. About which time he retired from
the army, and received the appointment
of Surveyor of the Customs of the port
of Boston, which post he continued to
occupy until the day of his death, with
the exception of the brief time trans-
piring between his removal by General
Harrison and his reinstatement by Mr.
Tyler.

How short the years are when we
are getting old! Till we are out of our
teens, time not only "hides his scythe
among the flowers," but actually seems
to be mowing by the day. No sooner,
however, do we turn the corner of thirty,
than he is after us with a swarth
that cuts into our years as if they were
made up of weeks of wet paper.

If we would enjoy ourselves, we
must take the world as it is—mixed up
with a thousand spots of sunshine—a
cloud here and there—a bright sky—a
storm to-day—a calm to-morrow—the
chill, piercing winds of autumn, and the
bland, reviving air of summer.

A fellow advertising his store,
"down east," says he has a good assort-
ment of muslins, molasses, peppermint,
pork, calico, cod-fish, sewing silk, salt,
singing books, sweet oil, bibles, brown
sugar, fish hooks, sarsaparilla, ginger,
gambles, psalm books, saltpetre, testa-
ments, tow cloth, almonds, &c. He must
have a queer looking store.