

THE SURPRISE.

The savages had been apprised of the expedition, but had previously supposed Clark and Lochry were proceeding together, and through fear of the cannon which Clark carried, refused to make an attack. Informed now of the capture of Shannon and his men, and by the reports of the deserters, of the weakness of Lochry's party, they collected in force below the mouth of the Great Miami, with the determination to destroy them.

They place their prisoners in a conspicuous position on the north shore of the river, near, it is said, the head of Lochry's Island, and promised to spare their lives on condition they would hail the companions as they passed, and induce them to surrender.

They, however, worried with their slow progress, and in despair of reaching Clark's army, landed on the 25th of August, about ten o'clock, at a very attractive spot on the same shore, at an inlet which has since borne the name of Lochry's creek,* a short distance above the point where the Indians were waiting them. Here they removed their horses ashore, and turned them loose to enable them to feed sufficiently to keep them alive until they could be taken to the falls, about one hundred and twenty miles distant. One of the party had previously killed a buffalo, and all, except a few set to guard the horses, were engaged around the fires which they had kindled in preparing a meal from it.

Suddenly they were assailed by a volley of rifle balls from an overhanging bluff, covered with large trees, on which the Indians immediately appeared in great force. The men, thus surprised, seized their arms and defended themselves as long as their ammunition lasted, and then attempted to escape by means of their boats. But they were unwieldy, the water was low, and force too much weakened to make them available, and the whole party, unable to escape or defend themselves, were compelled to surrender.

Immediately the Indians fell upon and massacred Colonel Lochry and several other prisoners, but were restrained by the arrival of the chief who commanded them, the celebrated Brant,† who afterwards apologized for the massacre. He did not approve, he declared, of such conduct, but it was impossible to entirely control the Indians; that the murder of Lochry and his men was perpetrated in revenge for the massacre of the Indian prisoners taken by Brodhead's army on the Muskingum a few months before.

At the time of their Surrender Lochry's party consisted of only one hundred and six men. Of these, forty-two were killed and sixty-four were taken prisoners. The Indians engaged numbered three hundred or more, and consisted of various tribes. Among these the prisoners and plunder were divided in proportion to the number of warriors of each engaged.

* Lochry's creek empties into the Ohio between nine and ten miles below the mouth of the Miami, and Lochry's Island, near the head of which the prisoners were confined to decoy their friends, is three miles below the creek.

† It may be uncertain whether Brant was the leader of the Indians at this place. There is no other evidence that he was in the West at that time.