The Story of Riel's Revolt

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Part I

IT was the early spring of 1885. Canada was still covered with her mantle of snow, pure and unsullied on the vast prairies of the west and the farms of the east; and like tufts of cotton−wool on a child's Christmas tree, it still rested on the dark branches of the pines and the hemlocks of her pathless forests, where the axe of the lumberman and the tap of the woodpecker alone awakened the silence of winter.

Less beautiful, the snow was piled and dirty in the streets of her great cities, which were just waking to trade and to the opening navigation of the mighty rivers, whose fleets of ice floes surged slowly to the sea. In the far north the tributary rivers still bore upon their frozen breasts a wealth of piled logs, to be floated to the huge saw mills of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence, or shipped as squared timber across the Atlantic from the stately old city of Quebec.

The rosy−cheeked, light−footed Canadian girls and athletic young men were getting tired of the fun and frolic of winter carnival. Snow−shoe and skate and toboggan would soon be laid aside for the canoe and tent and fishing−rod, among the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence, or on the shores of Rivière du Loup and Tadousac. But the tinkling sleigh−bells were not yet silent, and gay picnic parties still frequented the leafless maple groves, and disturbed the stolid Habitan at his sugar harvest.

The seven provincial Parliaments and the Federal Parliament at Ottawa still debated on every subject, including woman−suffrage (which the Dominion Parliament discussed at an all−night sitting), till daylight dawned upon the corpses that strewed the battlefield of Fish Creek. Though a free hand had been given by the Cabinet to the minister, no one thought war imminent, except the lonely settler on his ranche hard by the Saskatchewan, where the Indian was fast becoming dangerously insolent, and the French half−breed was sullenly nursing his discontent at the delay of the Government in legalising their claims to the scattered log huts and half−tilled prairie farms.

The pioneer white settlers were also working themselves into wrath over similar delays in granting homestead rights. The prairie Indians had no tangible grievance against the Government beyond their natural dislike to sharing their country with white men. They had been, given ample reserves and daily rations of beef and flour, blankets, and a small sum of money annually. But with the buffalo had disappeared not only food and clothing, but happy hunting. The transition from hunter and horse−thief to rationed loafer was too sudden. Work they would not, to beg they were not ashamed; so they mounted their kyuses (ponies), and, rifle in hand, left their reserves, followed by their women bestriding the ponies that drew the travoises—a trailing contrivance of tepee poles that carried tent, papooses, puppies, and cooking−pots. As the ration−issuer could not follow their peregrinations, they frequented the small towns that spring up along the Canadian Pacific Railway, with the usual demoralising results. Rifles they had from the old buffalo days, ammunition they craved, though there was little to shoot but the white man or his cattle. For cartridges they would sell anything, from squaws to medicine pipes.

The Wood Indians, Crees, and Chipwayans, in the far north, lived on fish, game, and barter of furs with the Hudson Bay posts. They also had been relegated to reserves, a system they disliked. The great chiefs "Big Bear" and "Poundmaker" had collected bands they could not feed. The emissaries of Riel were busy among them, with promises of a millennium of pork and flour from the plunder of the Hudson Bay stores and settlements—"no police, plenty whisky." These blessings were to be obtained with the aid of their brethren from the United States and the evergreen Fenian Brigade. They were also told King George's red soldiers could not help the Canadians, as they were fighting the Russians.

At Frog Lake an Indian had been imprisoned for stealing beef (said to have been put in his way by the Indian agent). While undergoing imprisonment his squaw became intimate with the prosecutor. When the Indian had served his imprisonment he returned, and the agent was shot, as well as two Roman Catholic priests at the mission and some equally innocent settlers. Three Government officials were murdered, and the rest, with all the women and children, taken prisoners; the church, saw−mill, and the whole settlement plundered and burnt by Big Bear's band, his son, "Bad Child," being conspicuous. And so the curtain rose on the first act of the tragedy.

After the last fight of Steele's scouts at "Loon Lake," the squaw was found hung on a tree in our line of march, also the agent's dog. With this last minute protest the Indians released all their white prisoners, and surrendered

themselves and their arms.

But we are anticipating, as the Canadian government did not anticipate did not anticipate. The cloud no higher than a man's hand that hung over the great lone land suddenly spread and burst. The news was flashed to Ottawa that a detachment of the North−West police—fifty strong, with a 7−pounder gun and a company of loyal volunteers from Battleford, sent out to collect supplies—had been forced to retire to Fort Carlton with heavy loss; that the fort had been abandoned and burnt; and that the police and volunteers had fallen back on Prince Albert. The rebels had taken cover in a coulee, or depression of the prairie; and when the advancing mounted police and volunteers showed themselves, they were met by a withering fire from the half−breeds and Indians, under Gabriel Dumont, a celebrated old buffalo−hunter. Before the mounted police and volunteers, who were in sleighs, could properly extend, their losses became so heavy that retirement was found necessary, and, to add to their difficulties, the first shell was jammed in the bore of the 7−pounder M.L. gun, rendering it useless.

Captain Morton and eight men were killed, Captain Moore and four men wounded. The large proportion of killed, and the picking out of officers, shows the deadly accuracy of the half−breed aim. It was unfortunate that police−inspector Crozier allowed himself to take the initiative, when he knew that Colonel Irvine, commissioner of police, was within a day's march with a reinforcement of 100 men. The latter officer had marched from Regina with unexampled rapidity—291 miles in seven days, 42 miles per day, the thermometer often below zero. He had marched through hostile country and evaded Riel, who, with 400 men, desired to present his passage of the Saskatchewan river and junction with Inspector Crozier. Colonel Irvine got scant credit for the swift strategy with which he opened the campaign, or for the efficiency of the North−West Mounted Police, which could make such marches and yet were left shut up in Battleford and Prince Albert.

Then the fact was brought home to the Government that a police force was not sufficient to cope with so formidable an outbreak.

The long familiarity between police, Indians, and Métis had bred mutual contempt. The fact that Louis Riel, who fifteen years before had seized the government of the Red River country, proclaimed himself president, turned the governor sent by Canada out of the territory, imprisoned all those opposed to him, and after a mock trial executed Scott, a sturdy Orange Loyalist—and yet had been amnestied, allowed to return from the United States, and for many months to hold seditious public meetings, caused the half−breeds to hold the Government in profound contempt, so much so that the Indian name for the then Premier, on account of his policy of procrastination, was "Apinoquis"—"Old To−morrow." On the other hand, the Government thought that because Louis Riel had fled, and his force collapsed without firing a shot against the Red River Expedition under Colonel (now Lord) Wolseley, that the outbreak of 1885 would also be a flash in the pan.

It was fortunate at this juncture that a young French−Canadian gentleman, Mr. (Sir) Adolphe Caron, was Minister of Militia and Defence.

He did not hesitate, but wisely left the executive to General Middleton, commanding the Militia, who acted with equal promptness, and left for Winnipeg the day after the receipt of the telegram of the disaster at Duck Lake. He picked up on his way to Winnipeg the 90th Battalion Militia Volunteers (Major Mackeand), 268 rank and file, and Major Jarvis's Militia Field Battery. Orders were sent for the immediate entraining from Quebec and Kingston of "A" and "B" Batteries Royal Canadian Artillery, consisting of two field−batteries (two guns of each only were taken, under Majors Short and Peters, and a detachment of gunners acting as infantry, the whole commanded by Colonel Montizambert. From Quebec also came the Cavalry School Troop (Colonel Turnbull), 50 sabres; from Toronto "C" School Infantry Company (Major Smith), 90 rank and file.

The Royal Canadian Artillery and the so−called, "Schools" of infantry and, cavalry are the regular disciplined troops of Canada, whose duty in peace time is to instruct the Militia of their respective arms—an excellent system, but puzzling in nomenclature.

Every province and city sent its quota. The 10th Grenadiers, strength 250 (Colonel Grassett), the Queen's Own Rifles (Colonel Miller), 274, and the Bodyguard Cavalry, 81, under Colonel Denison, from Toronto; from Ottawa the picked marksmen of the Governor−General's Foot Guards, 51 (Major Todd), the Midland Battalion, 340 (Colonel Williams). The French−Canadian rifle regiments—the 9th (Colonel Amyot) the 65th (Colonel Ouimet)—from Quebec and Montreal respectively, were pitted against the Western Indians rather than the French half−breeds. All answered with alacrity. Officers and men left the law−courts, the House of Commons, the office desk, the store, the plough, the workshop, the forest, with no experience of war and but little training. They

proved themselves enduring and gallant soldiers, eventually overcoming a force of half−breed hunters and good shots as the Boers; as brave, as wily, and as skilful as those Transvaal "commandoes" who inflicted upon British arms one of the few reverses they have sustained.

The most noticeable feature of the whole campaign, a feature which makes its study of the greatest value to British militia and volunteers, is the extraordinary facility with which the young Canadian volunteers became converted into excellent marching and fighting soldiers. It may also be a matter of pride to young Englishmen that their brothers and cousins settled in Canada! many of them "army competition" failures, vied with the young Canadian. In their eagerness to go to the front they left their farms to take care of themselves. Though indifferent farmers, they made excellent scout cavalry. Bolton's, French's, Dennis's, Steele's, Stuart's scouts, and the Alberta Mounted Rifles were a mixture of young Canadian and English settlers, Western men, surveyors, and cowboys mounted on the toughest of bronchos. Many of the cowboys of the Western Column were American citizens. A difficulty was anticipated as to their taking the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, but a cowboy, will swear to anything for the sake of a scrimmage with the Redskins; always to the front, never grumbling or giving trouble to anyone but the enemy.

In peace−time Canada has no organised transport, commissariat, or field medical department. Within four weeks all three were improvised, mainly with the aid of the great Hudson Bay Company and the supervision of General Laurie at the central base.

The astonishing rapidity with which Canada carried through the campaign speaks well for her volunteer militia system, and for the inherent military qualities of Canadians. It is not impossible that in the future the martial spirit of the Old Dominion of Canada, and what some of us hope will soon be the New Dominions of Australasia and South Africa, may be a source of strength to the Old Country and save us from the need of foreign alliances.

A glance at the map shows the Canadian Pacific Railway stretching across the continent, 4,000 miles from ocean to ocean. The western part was not completed, and ended in a wilderness country that supplied nothing but wild horses, beef on the hoof, Indians, cowboys, cayotes, and gophers. Unfortunately, the railway was also not finished further east. There was a gap of 400 miles along the north shore of Lake Superior, which Riel believed would be an impassable barrier to the passage of troops at that season. Parallel to the railway, and for 800 miles, about 200 miles north, rolls the mighty North Saskatchewan. Upon it were three settlements (our objectives), surrounded by the enemy, and held by small garrisons of police:—(1) Prince Albert, with Batoche, the half−breed head−quarters of the rebels; (2) Battleford; (3) Fort Pitt, with Edmonton beyond it. Opposite to these objectives were our bases at Qu'Appelle, Swift Current, and Calgary, from each of which marched a column—the eastern, under General Middleton, from Qu'Appelle; the central from Swift Current, under Colonel Otter, a Canadian officer; and the western column, under General Strange, from Calgary.

From his own account, General Middleton concentrated his attention on Batoche, and intended to take the central (Colonel Otter's) column with him, the southern branch of the Saskatchewan being between them. He tells us he doubted the strategic necessity of considering the other objectives, and that "nor'−westers" were his pet abhorrence! Yet the nor'−west had eventually to be taken into consideration. Perhaps it was difficult for a man who had never been beyond Eastern Canada at once to grasp the strategic geography of a new continent. He, however, believed in himself—an excellent quality in a general. Fortunately for General Middleton, Riel, who, as he naïvely wrote, "did not like war," had evidently not studied that subject at the University of Montreal, where he was educated. Riel chose to take his stand in the fork of the North and South Saskatchewan, navigable for General Middleton's armed steamers, which could take him in reverse. He also exposed his line of retreat at Prince Albert to Colonel Irvine and the North−West Police, who were to attack him in combination with General Middleton.

With a river at his back, therefore, both branches of which were navigable for his enemies' steamers, and a telegraph line behind the latter, Riel awaited the attack of the best regular troops of Canada, with field−artillery and Gatling guns. The houses he occupied were mere shell−traps, and some were not even Gatling−proof. A half−breed knows just enough to take up a faulty strategic position; an Indian does not.

As the three columns, when once started, could not communicate till their objectives were reached, they acted independently, and must be treated separately. So much for the strategy which forced itself on the general, owing to the geography of the country. Now to consider its execution by his subordinates. The initial difficulties of bringing up troops across the railway gap are best set forth in Colonel Montizambert's report:—

"Here began the difficulties of passing the gaps on the unconstructed portion of the road, between the west end of track and Red Rock or Nepigon sixty−six miles from Port Arthur. About 400 miles had to be passed by a constantly varying process of embarking and disembarking guns and stores from flat cars to country team sleighs and vice versâ. There were sixteen operations of this nature in cold weather and deep snow. On starting from west end of track on the night of the 30th, the roads were found so bad that it took the guns seventeen hours to do the distance, thirty miles, to Magpie, and from there to east end of track by teams, and march further on; then on flat cars for eighty miles, with thermometer at 5° below zero. Heron Bay, Port Munroe, McKeller's Bay, Jackfish, Ibster, and McKay's Harbour were passed by alternate flat cars on construction track and teams, in fearful weather, round the north shore of Lake Superior, the roughest region in the world, and Nepigon or Red Rock was reached on the evening of the 3rd April. The men had no sleep for four nights. This command was the first that passed over this route from the east."

Having collected troops at Qu'Appelle, General Middleton began his march on 6th April, with a force of 402, all told, consisting of 90th Winnipeg Rifles, 2 guns Winnipeg Field Battery and French's Scouts. The regular cavalry, under Colonels Turnbull and Denison, were left to guard his communications at Touchwood Hills and Humboldt respectively. On the 8th General Middleton was joined by Colonel Montizambert and the "A" Battery regular artillery, 100 strong, with two−horsed guns, 9−pounder M.L.R. Men and horses appeared none the worse for their long journey of 1000 miles by rail and trail, including the passage of the gaps previously described. On the 9th General Middleton received news of Frog Lake massacres, and telegraphed General Strange to raise a force, assume command of it and of such troops as might be sent, relieve Edmonton, and then to move on Fort Pitt, where General Middleton would meet him with troops coming up the Saskatchewan by steamer, after the relief of Prince Albert and Battleford. General Strange (who will have to speak later on in the first person) was an ex−artillery officer settled on a ranche near Gleichen, who had volunteered his services. On 10th April Major Smith, "C" School of Regular Infantry, 40 men, overtook General Middleton, and Major−General Laurie, a retired Crimean veteran living in Halifax. Also joined, and, though senior to General Middleton, volunteered to serve under him.

The march generally followed the telegraph line, which was tapped at every halt, and was of the greatest service, for Riel had contented himself with cutting the wire only between Batoche and Prince Albert. When a prisoner he told General Middleton: "I only wanted to cut off Prince Albert, as I thought I might want the wire, after defeating you, to communicate with Ottawa, and make terms with the Government." On this march the Indian "Day Star" and his people on the Indian farm were met and a "pow−wow" was held: they expressed loyalty in proportion to the tea, tobacco, bacon, and flour with which they were presented.

On the 11th the great salt plains had to be negotiated in bitter cold, through wind, snow, and slush; there were also several streams which took the infantry above the knee. As firewood had to be carried, fires were limited; although the alkaline water was only drinkable as tea, and even then was conducive to dysentery.

On the same day, when nearly through the salt plains, a despatch was received from Irvine stating he had 180 mounted police and ninety volunteers at Prince Albert, plenty of ammunition and beef, but only flour enough for a month; and also one from Superintendent Morris, holding Battleford with forty−seven North−West Mounted Police and thirty−five settler volunteers, asking urgently for help, Chief Poundmaker's large band of Indians being in the vicinity. General Middleton telegraphed to Colonel Otter, at Swift Current, to march at once, with all the troops he had, on Battleford. He left on the 13th, General Laurie leaving simultaneously to take command of the base at Swift Current.

It was very necessary to communicate with Colonel Irvine, and the services of Captain Bedson (transport officer) and Mr. McDowell, who volunteered for this duty, were accepted, as the general did not wish to send a written despatch. It was unfortunate for Colonel Irvine that these orders were verbal, as a difference of opinion has arisen as to the precise date of his co−operation. He states in his report that he had orders from General Middleton to come out of Battleford and co−operate in cutting off fugitives, and that the attack on Batoche would be on the 18th or 19th of April, on which day Colonel Irvine marched twelve miles towards Batoche; but as his scouts did not hear anything of Middleton's advance on Batoche, he returned to Prince Albert, dreading an attack on that place in his absence. General Middleton, in the United Service Magazine, says he informed Irvine he would attack Batoche on the 25th of April. But as he was engaged at Fish Creek on the 24th, where he was detained, it was not till the 9th of May that the attack on Batoche commenced; so that Colonel Irvine would have

had a longish time to wait, and is hardly to be blamed under the circumstances for returning to Battleford. It is only in theory that war combinations work like clockwork.

Middleton's force had now marched 124 miles in eight days (including a day's halt) over a bad trail in terrible weather—good work for untrained men. The food supplies were good, and the knapsacks throughout the campaign were carried in waggons. On the 15th he pushed on with a small force to Clark's Crossing. The rebels had not molested the ferry and not even cut the telegraph wire. The force remained at Clark s Crossing till the 23rd. In scouting, three Indians were run down and brought to bay, standing back to back in a gully. Lord Melgund was unwilling to shoot them, and two or three scouts who spoke a little Indian tried without effect to get them to surrender; finally Captain French walked down alone and unarmed, in spite of their covering him with their rifles, and insisted upon shaking hands with them; they then smoked the pipe of peace together and surrendered themselves. They were found to be part of a band of American Sioux from across the border. One was released and sent to Batoche with a proclamation in French, offering pardon to those who would surrender: he was promised a reward on his return. The man never came back, and at the taking of Batoche his body was found in the front, lying on his back in full war−paint, with a bullet through his head.

The persuasive coolness of Captain French was characteristic. He was a gallant, genial Irishman, and had been an Inspector of North−West Mounted Police, under his brother, the first Commissioner, Colonel French, R.A. He left his farm and his young wife for fighting−sake, raised a troop of scout cavalry, and was killed at their head in the rush on Batoche.

During the seven days' halt at Clark's Crossing, Bolton's scouts and 10th Grenadiers joined the force. Forage was very scarce, and the teamsters refused to advance without oats the horses being their own property. Colonel Houghton, D.A.G., suggested bayonet persuasion; but the general, perhaps wisely, declined this drastic measure, and oats arrived on the 22nd. A further supply was secured by a night raid made by Colonel Houghton in advance with a handful of scouts.

The ferry had been put in working order, and General Middleton divided his force of 800 men. Crossing a column on the 21st and 22nd, under Colonel Montizambert, to operate on the opposite side of the river, the columns keeping abreast, the ferry barge was floated down between them.

The left column was composed of 10th Royal Grenadiers, strength 250; Winnipeg Militia Field Battery, two guns, 50; detachment "A" Battery R.C.A., under Lieutenant Rivers, 23; French's scouts, 20; detachment Bolton's scouts, 30; total, 373.

The right column consisted of the 90th Regiment, 268; "A" Battery R.C.A., two guns, 82; "C" School Company, 40; Bolton's scouts, 50; total, 440.

Signals by bugle notes were arranged between the columns, but it was found impracticable to work in the noise of battle.

On the 23rd, news came of the surrender of Fort Pitt by the police garrison under Inspector Dickens (son of the novelist). They made their way by boat to Battleford. Mr. McLean, the Hudson Bay factor, left the fort to parley, and found himself in Big Bear's grip. He was induced by the wily savage to order his family (three very pretty girls) and the other officials and their families to join him. When these were secured, the police were allowed to depart unmolested. They broke the stocks of the rifles left in the fort; but these were ingeniously repaired by the Indians, and used against us at "Frenchman's Butte." A large supply of provisions and stores and a quantity of ammunition fell into the hands of the Indians, who had a good time in the fort until the arrival of the Western Column.

On the 24th, Middleton marched for Dumont's Crossing. Mounted scouts extended in front, the supports under Major Bolton 200 yards in rear. The general, as was his custom, rode at the head. On approaching some clumps of poplars (bluffs, in prairie phrase) a heavy fire on the left was opened, but did not do much damage, as it was delivered in a hurry.(1) Bolton instantly directed his men to dismount, and let loose their horses some of which were immediately shot, as well as a few men, the flankers and files in front falling back on the supports, and the wounded crawling; back to the line. The enemy were kept in check till the advanced guard of the 90th came up. Captain Wise's horse was shot in going back for them. Meanwhile, amid the rattle o rifle fire and the "ping" of bullets, could be heard the oaths, shouts, and jeers of the excited Métis. mingled with the vibrating war−whoop of the Indians but the English scouts spoke only with their Winchesters. One brave, alone, in full war−paint, dashed boldly out of cover, shouting his war−cry. He was immediately shot, and his example was not followed. When the

advanced guard of the 90th came up, it was extended on the right of the scouts; Captain Clarke (in command) and several men were wounded. The main body were brought up by Colonel Houghton, and Major Mackeand (90th) and two more companies extended to the right. The two guns of "A" Battery, under Major Peters, came into action; but as the enemy were too well covered, the general withdrew them. Subsequently they dashed into the fight at close quarters, which was necessary, as the men in the rifle−pits could not be reached from a distance. The guns took up various positions on both sides of the coulee. Captain Drury and Lieutenant Ogilvie at last ran their guns up by hand to within twenty yards of the edge of the ravine, and giving extreme depression, fired case shot into the bush which concealed the pits, whose whereabouts were only seen by the puffs of smoke, and the presence of the enemy felt as gunner after gunner fell in the act of ramming home (the guns were muzzle−loaders, and the men completely exposed).(2) About this time the enemy's fire slackened. They were seen moving down to their right. Major Boswell (90th) was sent to seize a farm−house on the left front, to check this movement, and the enemy fell back down the creek towards the pits.

(1) Gabriel Dumont's despatch to Riel, found at Batoche, says, "I had a place to ambush them at Fish Creek. It was frustrated by a fool in a buckskin coat, who, seeing a milch cow on the prairie, rode after her, and instead of driving, her into the enemy's cortège, drove her right on to me. Seeing I was discovered, I fired at him, in the hope that the shot would not be noticed, as he was always firing shots himself at birds and rabbits. as my scouts have frequently reported. I unfortunately missed him; and my shot being mistaken for the signal, all my men began firing, and exposed their position before the enemy had fallen into the trap I had laid for them." It will be seen fools have their uses, even the irrepressible sporting British tenderfoot.

(2) Some day we shall have shields for our B.L. field−guns.

The firing−line of infantry had in the meantime pushed up to the edge of the ravine, suffering severely, the men in their eagerness exposing themselves to the fire from below: any man raising himself showed against the sky−line, and many were shot through the head. The rebels now attempted a turning movement on our right, along the bottom of the coulee, and set fire to the prairie, to cover the movement and check and embarrass our men the wind blowing towards us. The general had previously sent his two aides to extend three companies of the 90th, Captain Buchan and "C" School Company, Major Smith, to the extreme right, the remainder of the 90th, under Major Mackeand, were held in reserve near the field hospital, where the waggons were corralled. Things looked critical, but from general to bugler every man and boy did his duty. The plucky old general was everywhere; a ball passed through his fur cap, his horse, "Sam," was also grazed.

His two aides−de−camp, Captain Wise and Lieutenant Doucet, were both wounded, the former had two horses shot under him; and above the din of the battle might be heard the shrill treble of the boy−bugler, Billy Buchanan, of the 90th, as he walked up and down the firing−line: "Now, boys, who's for more cartridges?" The bandsmen were busy bringing the wounded to the doctors, under Surgeon Major Orton, an old army hand; and the teamsters were brought up, led by Bedson, the transport officer, and under the enemy's fire beat out the blazing prairie with branches.

Captain Drury shelled the farmhouse and buildings occupied by the enemy on the right, and cleared them out. Colonel Montizambert, commanding the left column, hearing the firing brought down his force and guns to the edge of the river, though the banks were a hundred feet high, with no sort of a roadway. Unfortunately, the scow had been sent for forage, and was not at first available; eventually 250 men and two guns and horses were crossed over, and the Grenadiers were immediately extended in support. By this time the enemy's fire had almost ceased, and they had retired along the ravine, except a determined handful, who still held the pits. Major Peters got permission to try the bayonet: he made a desperate rush followed by a detachment of garrison gunners of the "A" Battery; some of the 90th followed Captain Ruttan, and Lieutenant Swinford, and Colonel Houghton. After making several gallant attempts, they remained in the ravine until ordered to retire by the general, with the loss of three killed and five wounded, including Lieutenant Swinford and a gunner, whose body was found within ten paces of the pits. The general refused to allow any further attempt, considering it a futile waste of life.

The Grenadiers were left extended along the ridge, while the rest of the force retired about a mile to pitch camp—a difficult task, as a blinding snow−storm had set in. As the Grenadiers were moving off, a considerable body of mounted men showed themselves on the opposite side of the ravine. They had probably been sent to bring off the gallant fellows in the pits, for on the Grenadiers facing about they disappeared.

General Middleton had about 400 men actually engaged; the rebels 280, most advantageously posted. Our

casualties were fifty—ten killed or died of wounds. The Indians only left three dead on the field, but were subsequently found to have had eleven killed or died of wounds and eighteen wounded; about fifty of their ponies were shot, as the poor brutes were tied up in the wooded ravine. The steamer Northcote not arriving as expected, the wounded were sent to Saskatoon in extemporised ambulances, the settlers taking them into their houses. Surgeon−Major Douglas, V.C., had paddled two hundred miles alone in his canoe to give his aid, and Deputy−Surgeon−General Roddick arrived with a complete staff, and Nurse Miller, pleasant, kind, and skilful, as nurses are wont to be.

The steamer Northcote had been delayed by low water, but she propped herself over the sand−banks with her long legs like a great grasshopper, as Western stern−wheel steamers manage to do, and arrived on the 5th May with supplies and reinforcements. Colonel Van Straubenzie, a veteran of the Crimea and India, Colonel Williams, M.P., commanding 100 men—"Midlanders"—a Gatling gun with Captain Howard, late U.S.A. agent of the Gatling Gun Company.

Leaving General Middleton to bury his dead, let us turn to the Central and Western Columns. The Central Column, under Colonel Otter, when organised for the relief of Battleford, was composed of: Personal staff, Lieutenant Sears, I.S.C., and Captain Mutton; Major Short, "B" Battery, R.C.A., 2 guns and 1 Gatling; garrison gunners, Captain Farley, 113; "C" Infantry School, Lieutenant Wadmore, 49; Governor−General's Foot Guards, Captain Todd, 51; Queen's Own Rifles, Colonel Miller, 274; North−West Mounted Police, Superintendent Herkmer, 50; scouts, 6; total, 543.

Their march was very rapid after crossing the South Saskatchewan: 160 miles were covered in five days, with a long waggon−train carrying the infantry, twenty−five days' rations, and wood−fuel. On the evening of the arrival Colonel Otter did not enter the settlement, and deferred doing so till daylight. The Indians utilised the delay to burn and loot the suburbs on the south side of the river. Next day he marched into Battleford, and on the 29th April learned from his scouts that about 200 Crees and Stoneys were encamped with Poundmaker about thirty−eight miles distant. It was decided to make a reconnaissance in force and surprise their camp. On the 1st May Colonel Otter marched out of Battleford with 325 of his force, including the Battleford Rifles, and forty−eight waggons to carry the men and rations, Major Short's two 7−pounder M.L.R. guns.(3) Halting at 8 p.m. Colonel Otter waited till the moon rose, and then pushed on through the night. Daybreak showed the Cree camp on a rise, partially surrounded by wooded coulees; Cut Knife Creek ran across the front. The advanced scouts had crossed the creek and mounted the rising ground before they were discovered and the alarm given. Scarcely had the scouts gained the crest of the hill than they were met by a sharp fire; the police extended on the brow, and the guns, pushed forward into the same line and supported by the garrison gunners as infantry escort, opened with shrapnel fire on the camp. An Indian, on emergency, makes a short toilet and dispenses even with fresh paint so that in a short time they were running down through the brushwood coulees and almost surrounded the force, pouring in a destructive cross−fire upon our men, who at first exposed themselves carelessly, but soon learnt their lesson. The whole force had to be put in the fighting line to meet the attack, the Battleford Rifles guarding the rear and the ford. The police horses and waggon−train were well sheltered in a slight declivity, where only two casualties occurred—a waggon−horse and Major Short's charger being shot.

(3) At the last moment, and contrary to the wish of the artillery officer, the equipment was changed—7−pounders, the carriages of which had been rotting in store since the last Red River expedition, being substituted for 9−pounders.

Shortly after the fight became general, a desperate rush was made by the braves to capture the Gatling, which had jammed for the moment.(4) The two 7−pounders had broken their rotten trails with the recoil, and were being lashed up and spliced by Captain Rutherford and the gun detachments; but Major Short, calling on the garrison gunners and police, advanced at their head to meet the onset of the braves, repulsed them with loss, and drove them back on the run—a pace an Indian very seldom adopts with his back to the foe. A tall brave, retiring slowly, turned and took deliberate aim at the major, who was about twenty feet in front of him men; the bullet passed through the top of the jauntily−cocked cap, and cut a crisp curl from his head. He drew his revolver and shot the Indian through the side. He rolled over, jumped up, staggered a few paces, dropped, and drew his blanket over his head, to die decorously, as Cæsar might have done. Alas! a moment after a blow from a rifle−butt in the hands of an excited French−Canadian gunner sped him to his happy hunting−ground. The major took his scalping−knife

but left him his scalp—a compliment the Indian might not have returned had things gone the other way.(5) Repulsed from the front, the Indians strenuously tried to surround the force by working through the wooded coulees from both flanks.(6) The right rear and ford were menaced, but the coulee was cleared of the Indians by a party of Battleford Rifles under Captain Nash, Ross, chief of police−scouts, and individuals of other corps, for the fighting had−got mixed, from the nature of the ground and the character of the attack. In a similar manner, the left rear was cleared by parties of the Queen's Own and Battleford Rifles. There remained, however, a few braves who doggedly held their ground until outflanked by the scouts, making a long détour, towards the end of the day.

(4) Maxims were not then so well known for never jamming.

(5) In this action "B" Battery had Lieutenant Peltier, Sergeant Caffney, Corporal Morton, and Gunner Reynolds severely wounded. After literally hairbreadth escapes in battle, Major Short died doing his duty in peace−time, from an explosion of gunpowder in blowing up a house to stop a vast conflagration in the city of Quebec.

(6) Colonel Otter puts the strength of the Indian braves at fully 500 and 50 Métis.

After six hours' fighting, the flank and rear were clear, but the position was not tenable for the night. The guns could only be fought by lashing up the broken trails with splints after each round. Colonel Otter had accomplished his object by handling Poundmaker and his braves so roughly that Big Bear did not care to join his discomfited friend, but preferred to try conclusions with the Western Column in the forest swamps north of the Saskatchewan. Colonel Otter returned to Battleford the same night, fearing a counter−attack on that place. The retirement was effectually covered by the artillery, crippled though it was, Short—first in advance and last in retreat—bringing up the rear with the Gatling. The dead and wounded were brought over the creek safely—8 killed and 14 wounded. The body of Private Osgood, of the Guards, alone could not be recovered. The force made a rapid return march to Battleford. General Middleton has left on record that he did not approve of the dash made by Colonel Otter, nor, indeed, of the action of any of the commanders whom distance made it impossible for him personally to control.

So far, we have followed the fortunes of the Eastern and Centre Columns, up to the battles of Fish Creek and Cut Knife. Should the reader so desire, he may at no distant date follow also the wilderness march of the Western Column, with its fights at Frenchman's Butte and Loon Lake in pursuit of "Big Bear," and read the story of the four days' battle at Batoche, where the brave but misguided half−breeds were lured to destruction by the foolish fanatic Riel, who paid the penalty of the folly that becomes crime.

Part II

ALONG the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains lies the prairie Province of Alberta, a country bigger than England and Wales, with a population of some 10,000 Indians and but few whites. In the immediate vicinity of the then small settlements of McLeod and Calgary there were about 2,500 braves—Bloods, Blackfeet, Peigans, and Sarcees—armed chiefly with Winchesters. The settlers, few in number, were unarmed, scattered over the country, and panic stricken. The half−breeds mixed with the white men were disaffected, and had already joined or instigated the Indians to plunder and ill−treat missionaries and solitary ranchers. The armed force at the disposal of her Majesty's Government in these parts consisted of a police inspector and four constables already in charge of five prisoners in the otherwise empty police barracks of Calgary, the rest of the force having marched East with Colonel Irvine.

On the 29th March I received the following telegram from the Minister of Militia:—

"To Major−General Strange.

"Gleichen, Alberta.

"Can you get up corps? Would like to see you to the front again; trust you as ever. Arms and ammunition will be sent up upon a telegram from you.

"A.P. CARON."

In reply I put my fastest team into my buckboard (a light prairie contrivance on four wheels) and started for Calgary. As my half−broken bronchos were plunging to be off, the foreman, Jim Christie, making a long−forgotten military salute, put a paper into my hand. It was a list of volunteer troopers, to furnish their own horses, arms, and appointments. Heading the list were both my boys, one of whom sat by me on the buckboard, and with the twinkle of a merry brown eye he said, 'It's all right, governor; the boys will stick to you—every man on the ranche is down.' He let go the horses, and I shouted back, 'All right, boys! Sergeant Christie, take charge.'"(1)

(1) I have been obliged in the course of this narrative to draw upon my autobiography, "Gunner Jingo" as well as upon official despatches and an article in The United Service Magazine. On my way I was met by an Indian who handed me the following telegram:

"Gleichen March 30.—To General Strange—Latest report Fort Carlton burnt. Crozier retiring to Prince Albert. Slight skirmish—2 mounted police killed, 10 wounded 7 civilians. Not known how many Breeds. Great fright in Calgary Sunday night. Report Blackfeet going to take the town. People all assembled in hall. Great excitement. Women very much frightened. There will be a train going west to night or early a.m.—J.E. FLAHERTY, Stationmaster."

The Mayor of Calgary called a public meeting. Men, and fine ones too, were forthcoming, but of arms, ammunition, and saddlery there were not enough; of wild horses from the prairie ranches there was, of course, no lack.

Captain Hatton, an ex−militia officer, volunteered and obtained the command of the corps. A detachment of troopers, mostly cowboys, were posted on the Blackfoot Reserve to watch the braves and protect the railway. The military colonisation ranche was only seven miles from the Blackfoot Reserve. In my absence the family (until they could be taken to a place of safety) were left in the charge of my second son, only eighteen, and Jim Christie, an old hand with Indians. I left directions to put things in a state of defence, without alarming the ladies or letting the Indians see we were afraid. The six plucky fellows on the ranche were well armed. Jim Christie loopholed the cellar about the level of the ground, under the plea of ventilation: the house being plank, was not bullet−proof. The men's quarter—a log hut detached from ours and flanking it—was defensible. A band of Indians were camped in the brush near the river, without women or impedimenta, which meant mischief. They tried to run off our horses, but one of our men dropped the leading Indian; his comrades carried him off, but not our horses.

Major Steele's detachment of twenty police was withdrawn from the mountains. He added to this number a body of forty excellent scout cavalry, under Captain Oswald. Major Walker, an ex−police officer, was put in command of the volunteer home guards. Major Stuart raised the Mounted Rangers at Fort McLeod to patrol the frontier. But the main difficulty was transport, supplies, camp equipage, and field hospital. The first was got over

by using Government survey carts and hiring settlers' waggons. Supplies were sent by the Hudson Bay Company from its Eastern branches—most of their posts in the North were already plundered. The two last, with arms, ammunition, and militia infantry, had also to come from the East, where the pressure was great—the West had to wait. General Middleton and the Militia Department at Ottawa were doing their best to meet the strain. The first troops to reach Calgary (April 12), were the 65th French−Canadian Voltigeurs—2,000 miles by rail—from Montreal, 248 rank−and−file, Major Hughes in command, Colonel Ouimet, M.P., being invalided. The majority were recruits who had never fired a rifle. It was found that few trained men could be taken from civil employ. During the week that elapsed before sufficient transport, etc., could be collected, Mr. Hamilton (Police) worked hard as supply officer. The Voltigeurs were encamped and drilled incessantly, target practice, outpost instruction, and their arms overhauled. Officers and men were cheery and active, for the French−Canadian has a touch of the gaieté de cœur of the soldier of Old France; they were armed with Sniders, and uniformed like the Rifle Brigade—spruce little men they looked when they started. I got the whole force supplied with the Western broad felt hat, looped to the left with the regimental button: it could be worn to the sunny side at will, and gave them a jaunty, devil−may−care aspect, except when the thermometer dropped below zero and a muffler was tied over it: anyhow, it was better than the spiked pot. Three days after the arrival of the first detachment of militia the advance was made under Lieutenant Corryell,(2) with fifteen mounted scouts, to escort back the settlers who had abandoned the Red Deer Settlement. I armed them with the first lot of Sniders received, and transformed the Rev. M. Beatty (nothing loth) into a sergeant The Rev. John McDougall, a Methodist missionary, born in the country, volunteered to accompany this force with four faithful Indians. He pushed on, carrying despatches to Edmonton: the Citizen Committee of Defence had sent to me for help. Corryell had a rough experience: there had been a snowstorm, the glare of the sun producing snow−blindness. Corryell and seven of his men were so smitten; but not to be daunted, he got a leading−rein attached to his bridle and was led by a trooper. He so continued his advance to the Red Deer, where he loopholed the log houses and waited for the rest of the column. The few days' rest restored their sight. On the evening of the 17th, Colonel Osborne Smith reached Calgary with his newly−raised Winnipeg Battalion—326 of all ranks. The men were far superior in physique to a modern British regiment; the officers, except the colonel and a few others, had little military training, but all were eager to get to the front. He left a company at Gleichen to relieve the detachment of Alberta Mounted Rifles guarding the railroad and workshops, and watching the trails from the North, which centre at Crowfoot. The rest of the battalion was camped at Calgary Next morning Captain Valency's company set out to garrison Fort McLeod, a hundred miles south, from which a detachment of twenty mounted police, Inspector Perry, with field−gun, had been withdrawn for the Northern column.

(2) Corryell was a land surveyor, who was trained at the Canadian Military College, an institution invaluable to Canada and the Empire: its pupils have already made a red mark in the annals of the British Army.

On the 20th April the first column marched, Major−General Strange commanding, Lieutenant Strange, A.D.C.; Scout Cavalry, Major Steele; 20 Police, 40 Scouts, Captain Oswald; 65th, 160 men, Colonel Hughes; supply and transport officer, Captain Wright; medical officer, Surgeon Paré (six stretchers), 175 waggons and carts, with fifteen days' provisions and forage, reserve ammunition, tents, and the men's packs.

As I rode out of Calgary at the head of my command, an elderly man with a tired look in his face and wearing the Lucknow clasp and medal, took hold of my horse's mane and implored me to give him one more chance of a fight before he died. He was an old Indian comrade I had long lost sight of. He became a settler in Manitoba. I made him baggage boss on the spot, and as he performed the distressful duties satisfactorily, and as the only staff officer I had was my son, who was A.D.C., I appointed my veteran friend, Dale, brigade major. During the campaign he showed unwearying assiduity and pluck, though his old−time British−officer habit of damning militiamen in general and Frenchmen in particular was productive of much frictional electricity, which required all my best French and most oleaginous manner to neutralise.

We were entering a wilderness country from which no supplies could be drawn; the Indians had burned the prairie to the Red Deer River, beyond was forest and swamp. The second and third columns were to march when transport was available. The early spring of 1885 was most unfavourable to the advance. A few days' warm chinook (as the wind from the Pacific called) melted the snows, flooded the rivers and coulees, and made Sloughs or Despond in which waggons sank to the axletrees. Then the warm wind ceased the thermometer fell, and blizzard snow−storms obliterated the trail. The first obstacle was the Bow River—three feet deep, with an icy

current. It had to be forded: there was neither bridge or ferry. Nose Creek, its tributary, was a second obstacle the same day: thus the first march was of necessity a short one.

21st.—The column marched to and camped at McPherson's Coulee. A snowstorm came on, and continued next day. The tents were frozen stiff the ropes like rods, and the pegs had to be chopped out of the frozen ground with axes. But the march was not much delayed. As we came into brush−wood country, numbers of white hares tempted the sporting proclivities of our medico, which had to be repressed for fear of false alarm.

The regimental officers were busy imparting what instruction was possible on the march. At every short halt they taught judging distance and aiming drill.

On the 25th the column reached Red Deer River, swollen and rapid with melted snows. There had formerly been a ferry run across by a wire rope. It had been cut adrift by "hostiles." As we neared the Red Deer dense clumps of poplar and alder clothed the north side of the river; the bush was too thick for cavalry to scout with effect. The Voltigeurs were sent across in waggons raised on their axles by blocks of wood. The infantry advanced in extended order. They were not opposed, though the Indian signal−smokes (sent up in long and short puffs on the Morse system) showed they were watching our movements. They also used the heliograph. There is nothing new under the sun. An Indian brave wears a small looking−glass on his breast, which he uses for flashing signals as well as for adornment—his vanity may be put on a level with that of Tommy Atkins wishing to captivate his best housemaid. Their vedettes on a subsequent occasion were seen on a rising ground signalling our advance by circling right and left, just as laid down in the red−book. The cavalry under Steele forded the river, then the transport waggons. A few carts were swept away, but were recovered, the provisions they contained scarcely damaged, as flour in sacks only wets to a depth of about an inch, the interior, from the caking of the outside layer, remaining dry. The consumption of supplies had left waggons available to return to Calgary for the second column, and as the grass was sprouting, it was no longer necessary to carry forage.

27th.—The force camped on south bank of Blind Man's River, a deep but sluggish stream. The bridge had been partially burnt by "rebels," but was rapidly repaired by the pioneers. Canadians are axemen par excellence, and can build a house or make a toothpick with an axe.

29th.—At Battle River camp Fathers Lacombe and Scullen met us. They brought with them the now penitent thieves—"Ermineskin" and "Bobtail"—who plundered the H.B. store and Protestant mission, and who wanted to shake hands; but I put mine behind my back, saying I would shake hands on my return, provided they behaved themselves in the interim. Otherwise—— I left a blank for their imagination to fill. I was told the Indians were not impressed by my little French−Canadian soldiers, who they declared were not King George's men, because they did not wear red coats, and talked French like half−breeds; but when the Winnipeg Light Infantry, in scarlet, and swearing in English, marched through their reserves, they began to feel that the long arm of the Great White Queen could reach them.

The plundered Protestant missionary families came into camp. The Rev. J. McDougall, my avant courrier, wrote to Corryell from Edmonton on April 5th:

"I am sending the accompanying despatch. Please forward by first opportunity: The 'hostiles' are still at Frog Lake. The white women are in their hands worse than murdered. This is the latest Indian report sixteen days since—Fort Pitt was still all right, our mission Indians at White Fish Lake and Saddle Lake loyal, and this has influenced others to be so. I hope the advance will be quick to relieve Fort Pitt and rescue prisoners. There is still a feeling of insecurity about here. My regards to the boys."

There was also a despatch from Inspector Greisbach, who was holding Fort Saskatchewan, about twenty miles east of Edmonton, with ten police, who wanted help. The settlers from Beaver Lake had taken refuge with them. A company of the 65th were left as garrison. As the column neared Edmonton the settlers came out with waggons for the tired soldiers;. but the Voltigeurs, after their two hundred miles' march, were toughening, not tiring. That this little column, with its long line of waggons, reached its destination unmolested was due to the careful scouting of Steele and his men, who also guarded the horses at night. The march of two hundred miles was accomplished in ten days.

The approach to the little town of Edmonton, peeping through clumps of pine and poplar, the blue sky and brilliant sunshine gilding the grey stockades of the Hudson Bay fort, with its quaint bastions and buildings crowning the steep bank over the broad sweep of the Saskatchewan, made a picture that lingers in the memory.

As I neared the opposite bank white puffs of smoke wreathed rom the little guns of the fort, and the echoes of

a salute reverberated across the river. The dear old flag floated over the citadel of the far North, its folds displaying the wondrous letters H.B.C. (Hudson Bay Company), which are a history of two hundred years of British pluck and trading energy.

"Hullo! What's them letters on the flag?" asked a young English scout.

"Why, I guess that's 'Here before Christ,'" was the ready reply of his Canadian comrade.

The force crossed the Saskatchewan, and on May 1st encamped under Fort Edmonton, which was rapidly put into a state of defence, and provisions collected. The chief factor anticipated a famine in the district, as many H.B.C. stores had been raided and communications interrupted. A large flat−bottomed boat, 100 feet long by 25 feet beam, and four smaller ones, were patched and strengthened, as it was my intention to float down half my force and the bulk of the provisions, the other half and cavalry marching. All transport that could be spared was sent back to assist the second column, the remainder prepared for the forward march to Victoria. While waiting for the rest of the force incessant drill and target practice were again carried on.

On the 5th, Steele's scouts were to march; but the teamsters refused to budge without arms. They knew that General Middleton's teamsters were supplied with rifles, and I only induced them to move by a promise (pie−crusty) that arms should be given at Victoria: they had been wired for before leaving Calgary. One was sick of worrying the wire and being worried by it. It was a relief that it went no further than Calgary, with which communications were established by couriers, and kept open by detachments of the 65th at Red Deer Ferry, Battle River, and Peace Hill Farm. The trail was also patrolled by a detachment of Alberta Mounted Rifles, and no convoy or courier was molested. It was otherwise with the other columns: a convoy was captured and looted by Poundmaker's men. Colonel Osborne Smith pushed forward the two remaining columns from Calgary, which marched simultaneously.

Inspector Perry arrived on the 5th with left wing of Voltigeurs and the field−gun. He had stretched a wire rope across the Red Deer and repaired the scow sufficiently to transport the gun, etc. As the artillery ammunition had been twelve years in store, it was necessary to try it and give the gunners practice. On the 8th, Colonel Hughes with the rest of 65th marched along north bank of Saskatchewan to Victoria, preceded by Steele's scouts. On the 10th, the third column arrived—Colonel 0. Smith, W.L.I., Alberta Mounted Rifles, with further convoys of provisions. All the waggons and horses, except six for the guns, were sent on to Victoria under escort.

Some half−breeds from the settlement of La Boucan were arrested by Captain Constantine of the police, who knew them to have been concerned in Riel's first rebellion. Compromising letters from Riel's camp were found upon them. Half−breed pilots were the only men acquainted with the river, but such a scare was established as to the certainty of boats and men being destroyed, that it was difficult to obtain boatmen: indeed, it was evident that where the river was narrow, a few trees felled into the water, and carried down by the current to some of the numerous shallows, would effectually detain the flotilla under fire.

I made the best provision I could against plunging fire from the banks. The boats were not decked, but had a narrow platform running round. Barrels of salt pork and sacks of flour were arranged along the sides above and below the gunwale, giving a double tier of fire, loop−holes being formed by intervals between the sacks and holes cut under the gunwale. A high traverse was raised along the centre of the boat.

The gunboat and horse−boat were stouter than those for infantry, and protected by bales of pressed hay. The sketches (on p. 732) indicate the arrangements. My flour−clads, carried along by the current and steered by sweeps, did not inspire the same confidence as the steam flotilla of General Middleton. To add to my difficulties, some of my officers took to foolscap, "condemning the construction of the boats, requesting permission to try experiments on the penetration of flour sacks by rifle bullets, and finally condemning the ammunition issued to the troops, the defects of which had been brought to light by target practice." The protest against the boats was met by ordering a board of officers to take the evidence of the boatbuilders. The experiments on flour−sacks were left to the enemy, and officers objecting to the quality of ammunition were advised to restrict the fire of their men to short range.

A snowstorm delayed the embarkation till the 14th. The flotilla consisted of five infantry boats, a gunboat, a horse−barge, and a ferry scow, carrying a coil of wire rope, to span the river and establish communication, enabling the troops to act on either bank. The flotilla was preceded by river scouts in canoes, men of the type one finds on all the wilderness waterways of the West, who can navigate a log or balance a portly Englishman as he plays a salmon from a birch−bark canoe.

The weather cleared, the tall pines rustled overhead, and the swift, yellow gold−bearing waters of the Saskatchewan swirled beneath us for many a mile, for it was three hundred to Fort Pitt.

Il dolce far niente after hard marching was enjoyable, but a sharp look−out was kept, and the Winnipeg men pulled lustily at the sweeps, cheered by the lively boat songs of the French−Canadian pilots, with which one had become familiar in many a lumber camp in days gone by:

"C'est l'aviron qui nous monte qui nous mène,
C'est l'aviron qui nous monte en haut.
"Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai."

I had not the heart to stop them, though they might have attracted the attention of prowling Indian scouts. But the song dropped towards dusk—the men knew it was dangerous.

Passed Fort Saskatchewan on the morning of the 15th. The M´tis prisoners were here handed over to the police. Another snowstorm, and the snow lodged on our blankets as we slept in the open boats. The refugees in tents within the palisades were far from comfortable. Among them were Major Butler, his family, and governess. These ladies bore their hardships splendidly, even the necessity of throwing all their finery and adornments down a well for concealment.

Major Butler begged to accompany my force. As he had some experience as a settler, I put him in charge of the road−repairing party. The ladies volunteered as hospital nurses, but of this offer I did not feel able to avail myself.

The composite character of volunteer service was added to by a telegram from an ex−hussar, my old friend Captain Palliser, who wired thus:

"OTTAWA—Minister consents. Am off to join you as captain, but will serve with pleasure as full private."

He made his way to the front, riding courier's horses, which was rough on both parties, for he stood about six and a half feet, and rode over fourteen stone. Finally, he paddled down the Saskatchewan in a canoe with a half−breed, and restored communications which had been interrupted, rendering important service.

The church militant was strong in the force. With the leading scouts as interpreter was Canon McKay, of the Anglican church. He, like Mr. McDougall, was born in the Indian territory. The son of an old Hudson Bay official he had a university education and the gift of tongues—Indian. Mr. McKenzie, a young Presbyterian minister, marched from Fort McLeod with the mounted police, and the 65th had their chaplain, Father Prevost.

All these gentlemen were well armed and mounted, except the latter, who rode in an ambulance, and carried no weapon but a crucifix, with which he went under fire to administer the rites of his church to the mortally wounded. These reverend scouts were men as well as missionaries, and eagerly desired to rescue the English women from the Indians.

Fort Victoria was reached on May 16th. Settlers, after the Frog Lake massacre, had crowded within the half−rotten palisade, and were without food. The young children looked wretched, and many died. I left rations in charge of the Methodist minister, Rev. Mr. McLachlan, and a small detachment of the 65th as garrison.

The horse−boat sank near Fort Saskatchewan. The drivers swam the horses across the river and marched. The boat was raised by pumping, and towed in rear. All this caused delay. On 17th Steele's scouts were pushed on to Saddle Lake. Peccan, a Cree chief, who had not joined Big Bear, sent messengers asking the inevitable "Pow−wow." I reluctantly consented as it was important to get some of his men as scouts. My cowboys were on new ground and in wooded country, very different from the open prairie.

Corryell's scouts had not been heard of, and must be short of provisions. There was a report of their capture, and no news of Hattan with Alberta Rifles. Peccan came into camp on the 20th, and said that his people would not consent to act as scouts, so I marched from Victoria to Vermillion Creek with the Winnipeg Infantry and field−gun. The 65th, under Colonel Hughes, embarked in the boats, and dropped down the river, touch being kept between the land and river columns by mounted scouts. To encourage the others, who objected to the boats, I had embarked in one myself with my staff, but I had no intention of being caught floating. The tussle with Big Bear I knew must come off on land, and I wanted the stiffest part of my force with me—the dogged English−Canadians.

THE BATTLE OF BATOCHE.

Leaving the English of the Western Column to plod through forest and swamp while the French−Canadians floated in their flour−clads, we must return to the Eastern Column, to General Middleton's steam flotilla and the coming battle of Batoche. It must be borne in mind that the two columns were operating with about eight hundred miles of wilderness between them, and as yet without communication, hoping to concentrate at Fort Pitt. After the battle of Fish Creek, General Middleton was delayed, waiting for the steamer Northcote with supplies and reinforcements from his base at Qu' Appelle. On her arrival she was made, as far as practicable, bullet−proof, and "C" Company went on board, fifty strong, Major Smith in command, with orders to move abreast of General Middleton's shore column, 724 strong.

Lieutenant Freer (of the Canadian Military College) was appointed aide−de−camp; Colonel Strawbenzie, brigadier of infantry; and Captain Young, of Winnipeg battery, brigade major.

On the morning of the 7th May, leaving camp standing with a small guard, the column marched on Batoche, scouts in advance. As they neared the river a rattling fire and the steamer's whistle showed she was already engaged. The houses and village church were found to be held by the enemy, who opened fire. The part taken by the artillery is best described by the man who commanded it—Colonel Montizambert.

"On the morning of the 9th the welcome command came, 'Guns to the front!' A three−mile gallop brought us there,(3) and the two guns of 'A' Battery came into action, Major Jarvis's two guns being held in reserve." The enemy retired behind the church and a large wooden house beside it, from which shots were fired as the advance continued. The gatling was turned on the house without effect. A white flag was waved at a window. General Middleton stopped the firing and rode up. Within were found some Catholic priests, Sisters of Mercy, and half−breed women and children. The advance was continued without molestation of the occupants.

(3) The Canadian Field Artillery are, for short distances,able to move at a rapid pace, as they carry the gunners on the off horses, gun−axle seats, and limbers, like the old Bengal Horse Artillery.

The scouts were checked by a fire from brush−wood about two hundred yards in front—they retired behind the church. "A rush was made on the guns by the half−breeds and Indians, but Lieutenant Rivers's gatling was of service in the absence of any infantry escort, which was necessarily left far behind. Captain Howard (an American volunteer), acting as a gun number, turned the crank and poured in a fire which enabled the guns to be retired without serious loss." After the infantry came up, the guns attempted the shelling of the pits from the same point, but the nature of the ground, consisting of rolling prairie and heavy bluffs, made it necessary to come to too close quarters for effective work. "Gunner Phillips was wounded at the edge of a ravine occupied by the enemy, and rolled down into it. Gunners Coyne and Beaudry went down and brought up their comrade, who was lying in front of the rebel pits not a hundred yards off; Phillips was shot the second time and killed while being carried up; the rescuers escaped unhurt." The wounded were put in the church, where the priests and the sisters gave their aid to the doctors. On this day the casualties were two killed and eight wounded.

It was getting late, and though our men were holding their own, the enemy had been reinforced by those who had been engaged with the steamer, and the general did not think it advisable to attempt an advance through thick cover surrounding the village. He decided to retire a short distance and bivouac for the night.

Bolton's scouts, with Secretan (assistant transport officer), were sent to bring up the camp. The waggons were corralled on an open space about 1,000 yards in rear. No tents were pitched, except for the wounded, as the horses were inside the enclosure. The troops were gradually withdrawn, the enemy following until checked by a fire from the waggon corral. They kept up a desultory fire till darkness fell, killing two horses and wounding one man. The men lay down by their arms. The steamer's whistle not being heard, a rocket was sent up to show the whereabouts of our force.

Orders were telegraphed from Humboldt to close up the troops on the line of communications, and Lord Melgund was sent to Ottawa with special despatches. The steamer Northcote had three men wounded. The captain, pilot, and most of the crew lost their heads and control of the steamer: she swept on to the wire ferry rope, which carried away her smoke stacks and steam whistle.

It was impossible to steam back against the current, towing the barges. It was decided to drop down to Hudson

Bay Ferry, leave the barges there, take in firewood, and return to Batoche; but they ran aground at the Hudson Bay Ferry, where they found the steamer Marquis with a party of police. Both steamers started with the reinforcement, but the Marquis's machinery broke down, and the Northcote took her in tow. They did not reach Batoche till late on the 12th. No doubt the approach of steamers had a dissolving effect on the rebel forces, and prevented Riel's escape across the river. On May 10th, General Middleton received valuable reinforcements—the Land Surveyors Scouts, 50 strong, Captain Dennis. Many of the men had surveyed the country in which the struggle took place.

When the force moved out they found the positions captured the day before occupied by the enemy, who had also made fresh rifle−pits.

During the day the guns shelled houses occupied by the enemy. Our men constructed pits out of sight of the enemy to cover the evening retirement. When the force withdrew they were followed, but the enemy were stopped by the unexpected flank fire. They tried a few shots at long range. The casualties this day were one killed and five wounded.

On the 11th, French's scouts having reported open prairie north−east of Batoche, General Middleton, leaving Van Strawbenzie to command the infantry, went with Bolton's scouts and the gatling to the right, where the enemy had rifle pits. The gatling, supported by dismounted scouts, was advanced to a slight rise: the enemy were too well covered to be impressed, and the general brought the party back to camp. During his absence, the artillery had shelled the cemetery and rifle pits, from which the fire slackened. Seeing this, Colonel Williams, with his Midlanders, rushed the Indian post at the cemetery, and held it till the usual evening retirement, which was unmolested. The casualties were four wounded, including Captain Manly, Grenadiers.

On the morning of the 12th—General Middleton, with all the mounted men, one gun ("A" battery) and gatling, took up the former position to the right on the prairie—Messrs. Ashby and Jackson, two of Riel's white prisoners, brought a letter from Riel to the effect that "if his women and children were massacred, he would massacre the white prisoners." An answer was sent that if he would put the women and children in one place and indicate the exact locality, no shot would be fired at it. Mr. Ashby honourably returned with the answer. The prisoners were shut up in a cellar, the trap door of which was kept down by heavy weights. Mr. Jackson declined to return. The general retired, the gun and gatling covered by the dismounted scouts, who here lost Lieutenant Kippen, shot through the head. On his return to camp, the general found to his chagrin that, owing to a high wind blowing from the camp, the firing had not been heard, and no simultaneous advance made. He naïvely tells us he lost his temper and his head, and hurried off alone to the front. As he neared the church he was discovered, and so hot a fire opened that he had to indulge in exercise to which he was not accustomed—running away. Fortunately, he reached one of our rifle pits, into which he dropped, till Captain Young, who had been watching the solitary reconnaissance with some anxiety, advanced a party and brought back the general. Meanwhile the men dined, and Strawbenzie was ordered to take up the old position and "advance cautiously." The latter part of the order he disobeyed. The Midlanders, under Williams on the left, again carried the cemetery with a rush, the Grenadiers, under Grasset, prolonged the line to the right beyond the church—the 90th, at first, in support. But the Midlanders and their colonel were sick of advances and retirements, and swept the enemy out of the pits right down to the river. The Grenadier advanced and drove the enemy from the ravine.

The whole line, led by Strawbenzie, gave a rousing cheer, which brought the general from his tent with his mouth full of lunch and expletives, disgusted that there had been any fighting he had not had a hand in. He found the line had pivoted on the centre and was now at right angles to the river, having turned the whole position. The gatling and guns were blazing away at the village and the ferry by which the enemy were escaping, the steamer not having yet come up. The 90th were extended on the right, and the scouts dismounted beyond them again on the extreme right. Ashby again appeared, running the gauntlet of fire from both sides, to bring another letter from Riel, who, he said, was "in a blue funk." Outside the envelope was written, "I don't like war. If you don't cease firing, the question will remain the same as regards the prisoners." The answer was an advance of the whole line, with ringing cheers, and officers well to the front. The place was carried, and the prisoners released: resistance had collapsed. About 6 p.m. the steamers appeared. Blankets and food were sent up from camp, part of the men bivouacked in the village, pickets were posted, and the men rested content with a good day's work; but it had been paid for—five killed, of whom four were officers: Captains French and Brown, of the Scouts, Lieutenant Fitch, grenadiers, and Lieutenant Kippen, Surveyor Scouts; twenty−five wounded, including Major Dawson,

Grenadiers, and Lieutenant Laidlaw, Midlanders. Total casualties for the four days were eight killed and forty−six wounded. Twenty−three dead rebels and five wounded were left on the field. A Roman Catholic priest gives the rebel loss during the four days as fifty−one killed, one hundred and seventy−three wounded.

A camp of Indian and half−breed women and children was found under a cliff by the river, left by their owners. They were soon camping about the bivouac. Some of the ladies spoke in unparliamentary terms of the leaders who had brought the trouble upon them and them abandoned them. The following days the half−breeds kept coming in with white flags to surrender, sometimes accompanied by their priests. The general was given a list of the worst rebels, who were made prisoners, the remainder being released with a caution.

On the 14th the force marched to Lepines. The search continued for Riel and Dumont. On the 15th the former surrendered to three police scouts—Howrie, Deal, and Armstrong, producing a letter from General Middleton, which guaranteed his life until handed over to the civil power. Gabriel Dumont, the wily old hunter, made his escape to the States, from which, it is said, he visited England with Buffalo Bill's circus. Riel, with others, was sent a prisoner to Regina, and handed over to the civil power.

On the surrender of Riel, General Middleton's force crossed the Saskatchewan, and went on to Prince Albert in three steamers. Prince Albert was reached on 20th May, and Battleford on 24th.

FROG LAKE; FORT PITT; FRENCHMAN'S BUTTE.

We have now to return to Big Bear.

At Saddle Lake Corryell's scouts came in. They had opened communication with the boats which had been fired on, and returned it, but none of Mark Twain's "good Indians" were found. I was anxious to open communication with Otter's column at Battleford, and thus with General Middleton.

Sergeant Borradaile and Scout Scott volunteered to go in a canoe down the Saskatchewan to Battleford. Hiding themselves by day and paddling by night, they duly reached General Middleton. Eventually he sent them back to me with a letter for Big Bear, demanding his immediate surrender. This letter for various reasons—among others, the deficiency of pillar−post boxes—failed to reach that gentleman.

The morning of the 22nd we collected stores of grain and potatoes, plundered and then abandoned by Indians. Struck camp, and marched at noon. The long−expected rifles having arrived, the teamsters—Western men, and mostly good shots—were at last armed, as I had promised, much to their content and mine, relieving the infantry from guarding the convoy.

23rd.—Camp near Dog Rump Creek. The Alberta Rifles at last overtook the force.

24th.—Camped at Moose Creek near Frog Lake. Queen's birthday, but not Queen's weather. Three cheers were given for her Majesty, and being Sunday, the first verse of the Old Hundredth was started by some Puritan soldier, and sung by everybody, and the march resumed amid terrible surroundings of massacre. The settlement consisted of the Roman Catholic mission, a mill, and eight or nine settlers' houses. The church, parsonage, mill, and every settler's house was burnt and levelled with the ground. In the cellar of the parsonage, guided by the terrible smell, a painful sight was witnessed—four headless bodies huddled together in a corner. Two of the bodies had been Father Fafard and Father Marchand another was that of a lay brother, and the fourth someone unknown. The corpses were horribly mangled; all four heads were charred by fire beyond recognition. The bodies of the priests were recognised by their beads. The remains of Delany, Quinn, and Gilchrist were discovered in the woods near by. A body, supposed to be that of Mrs. Gowanlock, was found in a well. Both legs were severed near the thigh, and the arms above the elbows.

The following is condensed from the statement of an eye−witness, W.B. Cameron, H.B.C. employé, the only man spared in the massacre: When news of the disaster at Duck Lake reached Frog Lake, the "Bear" Indians were loud in their assurances of friendship; but before daylight they came in a body to the house of the Indian agent, Quinn, and two of them—Big Bear's son, "Bad−Child" or "King−Bird," and another Indian—went into his bedroom, intending to shoot him. Quinn was married to a Cree woman, and his wife's brother, "Lone−Man," followed "Bad−Child" upstairs, and prevented him from murdering his victim. Meantime, the Indians below had taken the guns from the office, and "Travelling Spirit" called out to Quinn to come down. "Lone−Man" told him not to go. He obeyed, however, and was taken to Delany's house. Before this the Indians had seized all the Government horses.

"Lone−Man" and "Travelling Spirit" went with the others to the H.B.C. storekeeper Cameron, and made him give them all the ammunition in stock. Big Bear now appeared, and said, "Don't take the things out of store. Cameron will give you what you want."

The Indians demanded beef. It was Good Friday. The priests went to the church without hindrance, and the white people were allowed to assemble there. Big Bear and "Miserable−Man" stood near the door, while all the others knelt. During service "Travelling Spirit" entered, kneeling in mockery in the centre of the church, rifle in hand, war hat on head, and face painted yellow. Without a pause or tremor in his voice the undaunted priest continued the service. When it was finished, the people were all taken to Delany's house, where the two priests and all the men except Cameron were killed.

Cameron, the women and children were kept close prisoners. They were not otherwise badly treated. During the action at Frenchman's Butte they were taken away by Indians some twenty miles into the woods, and then left. They were subsequently found by Major Dale, and brought into camp.

While the bodies of the murdered were being hastily buried, a report came in from Oswald, scouting in advance, that the Indians were in force near Fort Pitt, and that he required immediate support. I pushed on with

the cavalry, the gun, and one company infantry in waggons leaving Colonel 0. Smith to follow with the rest of his regiment and the supply train. Orders were sent to the 65th to drop down in their boats parallel to us. Starting after mid−day, we reached Fort Pitt, thirty miles distant, before evening, finding Oswald's scouts posted in a poplar bluff, where they could observe the enemy without being seen. The Indians had retired, leaving a small part of the building intact. We camped for the night on a plateau above the fort, throwing out strong pickets.

At daybreak on the 26th, working parties cleared out what remained of the fort. One large room was found knee−deep in flour; our approach had evidently interrupted a carnival of riot and waste, the whole neighbourhood was littered with the débris of broken furniture and articles for which an Indian has no use, a mass of religious books and tracts. Among them was a curious commentary on the Gospel: the mutilated body of a policeman, whose heart had been cut out and stuck on a pole close by.

On 27th, my scouts had a skirmish with the Indians, and I found another commentary, written this time by a white man on a red one the body of an Indian chief bereft of his scalp lock. À la guerre comme à la guerre.

The whereabouts of Big Bear being unknown, it was an open question, first, whether he had crossed the river and travelled east to join Poundmaker, of whose discomfiture we had not heard; second, whether, after crossing the river, he would go west, and fall on my communications; third, whether he would strike north into forest and swamp that stretches to the Arctic circle. Scouts were sent in the three directions indicated.

Inspector Perry, with twenty police; accompanied by McKay and McDougall, were ferried across the Saskatchewan. They found the track of Cree carts opposite Fort Pitt, and the prints of white women's slippers. Perry, was ordered to follow the tracks for ten miles, where I knew the trail divided into three, and report along which the white women had been taken. The half−breed scouts who followed the trail west along the south bank found it unused and returned. Steele, with the rest of the cavalry, was sent to reconnoitre west and north. He found a recent trail, indicating the movement of a large party. After travelling about thirty miles, he found himself at nightfall in thick brushwood on the river bank, within three miles of where he started. Steele, six shooter in hand, was himself leading, followed closely by one of his men. Their advance was noiseless. There is no jingle about the accoutrements of a Western scout; his horse's unshod hoofs are muffled in the soft soil, and—to use an Hibernianism—his stirrup−irons are wood, and for head−collar chain he has a raw−hide rope.

The movements of the red men are equally noiseless. Suddenly an Indian challenged in a low tone, not knowing friend from foe in the gathering gloom. Sergeant Butlin, the white scout with Steele, answered in Cree, "Keeka!" ("Wait"), but the native gentleman promptly fired at Steele, missed him, and received in return Steele's bullet and the scout's. A few scattering shots were exchanged in the twilight, and the Indians retired. Two ponies were captured.

The Indian cayuse—beau−ideal beast to carry a rifleman—browses while his master fights: any other sort of rest only makes him tired. The fallen Indian was the chief who had started the outbreak at Saddle Lake: he wore the Queen's medal supplied by the Canadian Government—an ornament about the size of an agricultural trophy for a prize pig. These medals are solid silver, and much valued by the chiefs, who hand them down from father to son. Some of them bear the image and superscription of good King George III. Next morning, on passing the spot where he fell, I noticed the tall, athletic figure of the dusky warrior as he lay like a bronze statue overthrown by some iconoclastic hand, and clothed only with a grim smile and a breech clout, the usual full−dress fighting uniform of the red man. He had lost his medal and his scalp.

In the meantime, the infantry had been busy putting what remained of the fort in as defensible a condition as possible—for the site, like that of most police posts, was chosen regardless of military necessity, and was commanded by an adjacent plateau, from which the Indians shot fire arrows into the wooden roofs, their rifles commanding the path to the river, which was the only water supply. It is not surprising that Inspector Dickens and his men quitted the fort.

The wire cable had been stretched across the river, so that the force could act on either bank. On getting Major Steele's report that he had found the enemy, I immediately marched with all available men: 200 infantry, the field−gun, 27 cavalry, leaving a company of the 65th to garrison Fort Pitt. Only three days' rations remained. We were already on a reduced scale, officers and men sharing alike. No supplies had reached us since I left Edmonton. The situation was serious, some 300 men, including teamsters, in a wilderness country, and destitute of supplies. I decided to take my three days' rations and attack Big Bear and the Indians in the hope of making them drop their prisoners.

Unfortunately, Inspector Perry, with his twenty police, who were trained gunners, McKay and McDougall, the only reliable men who knew the country, had not returned. Their absence caused me anxiety, until I heard that they had run down General Middleton instead of Big Bear. I did not know the exact whereabouts of either, not having heard of Batoche, and my couriers were like the raven sent from the ark—they did not return.

Steele told me that his half−breed scouts had been badly scared: they fell into ambush, and only escaped by hard riding and good luck. The waggons were corralled, and we advanced in fighting formation about four miles through difficult country. We found the enemy occupying an advantageous position on the slopes of a thickly wooded ridge, intersected with ravines. The summit of the ridge to our left was bare. Upon this we could see a number of mounted men; some were circling and signalling our approach. The gun, which I had put in charge of Lieutenant Strange and Sergeant Conner of the police, and a volunteer detachment of Winnipeg men, opened fire: a few rounds of shrapnel cleared the ridge.

The scouts and one company of Winnipeg Infantry were extended to the left, and the remainder to the right. We advanced thus to the crest of the hill without serious opposition.

It was difficult to maintain connection in the dense bush. The gun, which had to follow the trail, was the only portion of my small army which could not break away from me in this big country. The Voltigeurs, who had dropped down the river parallel to us, left the boats and their uneaten dinners, and advanced with alacrity at the first sound of the firing. We followed the enemy's trail till dark through dense wood, where space could scarcely be found to corral the waggons, which had been brought up. After scouting a short distance in advance, we bivouacked round and inside the corral under arms. The Voltigeurs had neither blankets, greatcoats, nor rations; their comrades, the Winnipeg Infantry, had but short rations to share with them. The fires were extinguished after cooking. The darkness of the night, and the black shadows of the forest which surrounded the corral, rendered objects invisible. The horses were brought into the corral and tied up to the waggons. In the event of attack the men were cautioned against wasting ammunition. Night−firing, as a rule, is not effective, except on friends.

On the morning of the 28th the force was roused at daybreak without bugle, and after a scanty breakfast, again moved forward, scouts on foot extended and flanking each side of the trail. The Voltigeurs formed the advanced guard, the Winnipeg Infantry the main body, the gun following, and the supply waggons bringing up the rear. The whole column was confined by the thick wood to a narrow trail. Suddenly we came to an open space on which numerous trails converged. It was the camp−ground where the braves had held their last sun dance. The poles of the sacred lodge, with leafy garlands still hanging from them, showed a batch of young warriors had been lately initiated with the usual rites of self−torture, while the old warriors recounted their achievements in murder and horse−stealing.

The great number of lodge fires confirmed the report of the scouts that we were opposed by about seven hundred braves. We halted, and I rode on with the advanced scouts. On the edge of a wide open valley, right across our line of march, we came upon a fire still alight, an abandoned dough−cake in the ashes. The valley stretched for over a mile in length, and, about six hundred yards wide. Along the bottom ran a sluggish creek, widening into a swamp and fringed here and there with willow−brush. The descent into the valley on our side was abrupt—a wooded slope, down which in zigzags ran the trail. The opposite crest was thickly wooded, and sloped in a bare glacis to the stream, a tributary to the little Red Deer, which flows into the Saskatchewan. From tall trees on the opposite crest hung streamers of red and white calico, the spoils of Fort Pitt. There was no sign or sound of movement: the banners drooped in the still morning air. Our old Indian fighters were nonplussed at so wanton a departure from the traditional Indian tactics of concealment.

Leaving Steele and his men behind the brow, I rode down into the valley with scout Patton. We reached the bottom and were close to the little stream when his horse suddenly sank to the girths. I reined back, and he scrambled with difficulty to solid ground, followed by his sagacious broncho. It was evident we could not cross, so we returned to the crest of the hill overlooking the valley, where some Cree carts were seen in the distance to the left. Word was passed to bring on the gun, which came up at a gallop, the infantry clearing off the narrow trail and cheering—they thought it meant business. A round was fired at the retreating carts. Hardly had the echoes died away when the opposite crest was outlined in a fringe of smoke, followed by the rattle of small arms: the Indian position stood revealed.

Steele's police and scouts rapidly extended to the left; dismounting, they descended the hill to a fringe of willows along the edge of the creek. The Voltigeurs, under Colonel Hughes and Major Prevost, went down the

hill at the double, and extended on the right of the dismounted scouts. Two companies Winnipeg Infantry, under Major Thibaudau, prolonged the line to the right; the remainder, under Colonel Smith, formed the reserve withdrawn from the edge of the valley. The Alberta Rifles, dismounted, were extended on the right flank, where the wood was very thick. The waggons were brought up and corralled in the only space about two hundred yards in rear.

The gun was in the open, and the rifle bullets "pinged" rapidly round it. The officer made his men lie down after loading, and laid the gun himself. The shrapnel bullets tore through the branches, but did not seem to touch the men in the pits. But a few percussion common shell, passing through the loose earth, exploded in the pits, and silenced some of the largest. The mangled bodies of the occupants were afterwards found hastily buried.

Meantime, the infantry were trying to cross the swamp: they sank waist deep. I saw the advance checked, and rode along the ridge to the left, and descended to the position occupied by Steele and the Voltigeurs. I saw for myself it would be impracticable to carry the position by direct assault. Constable McRae and two of the 65th were here severely wounded. I ordered Steele to withdraw, mount and move up the valley, to find a crossing by which the enemy's right could be turned and their retreat pushed towards the river up which I was hourly expecting General Middleton. After an hour or more a report came from Steele "that the enemy's position extended about a mile and a half, and he could find no means of turning it." In reality, the Indians kept moving parallel to Steele up the opposite side of the valley behind the screen of trees, and so prevented his out−flanking them. I had tried to join Steele, to judge for myself; but the half−breed scout led me in a circle through the woods, and I found myself in the spot whence I started. He said he had lost his way. While we were trying to turn the enemy's right, they were trying to turn ours, creeping through the thick wood which closed that end of the valley. A few rounds of case fired over the heads of our skirmishers stopped the attempt, and a heavy fire was opened by Hatton's men on the wood to our right.

It was now late in the day, and we had eaten nothing since 3.30 a.m., and but little for the last twenty−four hours. Only one day's rations remained, and no signs of General Middleton's steamers. I decided to retire to open ground to graze the horses and cook there the men's dinners. The advance line was withdrawn from the valley, and the force re−formed on the high ground. It was found that Private Le Mai, of the 65th, had been left severely wounded where he had fallen. Covered by a sharp fire of case shot, Surgeon Paré and a stretcher party of the 65th, followed by Father Prevost, went down. They were exposed to a hot fire. But the dying man (shot through the lungs) could not speak. He was carried to the ambulance in a stretcher.

By this time the enemy had ceased firing. The gun remained in position to cover the retirement. A party of scouts were left to watch the enemy, who did not molest us. On reaching open ground about six miles distant, the waggons were corralled, the horses left to graze, and the men to cook. Our difficulties were aggravated by the boats of the 65th dropping down the river behind an island for concealment. They could not return against the current. With them went the remainder of our food supply, and the blankets and greatcoats of the 65th. There was nothing for it but to return to Fort Pitt, five miles distant. Fortunately, our long−looked−for convoy of provisions reached us next day by boat. The Alberta field force had received its baptism of fire, and taken it well.

On arrival at Fort Pitt I sent two scouts in canoes to look for the barges of the 65th with a despatch for General Middleton. When the scouts arrived within forty miles of Battleford, they met a steamer with a large contingent of newspaper correspondents, Mr. Bedson, supply officer, and provisions, but no troops. My messengers were taken on board, and the steamer returned to Battleford.

THE PURSUIT OF BIG BEAR; LOON LAKE.

On 30th May, with a full commissariat, we again marched for Frenchman's Butte, which the half−breed scouts had been told to watch—a duty they had performed in a perfunctory fashion, for we found the position abandoned. We had to make a detour two miles to the north of the old position to avoid the swampy ground. Here we found ourselves in a cul de sac, surrounded by dense forest impassable for wheeled transport. The scouts found no less than seven trails on which the enemy had dispersed. They eventually converged into two. Along one of these the scouts found traces of Mr. McLean and the ladies of his family, who, with true woman wit had knotted bits of coloured worsted to twigs, and dropped a piece of paper saying they were all well and being carried north−west. At this juncture a message reached me from General Middleton that he had passed up the river to Fort Pitt, and would be in my camp next day with reinforcements. The Indians had abandoned twenty−five waggons and forty carts in their flight, together with tools, sacks of flour, furs, and odds−and−ends of all sorts, the plunder of Fort Pitt. As the trail could only be followed by mounted men in single file, with any prospect of overtaking them, I sent on Major Steele with all my cavalry.

They carried nothing but ammunition, tinned meat, and biscuits in their haversacks. The smaller trail was followed by McKay, H.B.C., with ten Alberta Mounted Rifles. They captured thirty−six of Big Bear's band, and released Mrs. Gowanlock (who we were thankful to find had not been barbarously murdered), Mrs. Delany, and several other prisoners. On June 2nd Major Dale brought into camp Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Quiney, Messrs. Cameron, Halpin, and Dufresne, and five half−breed families who had escaped during the attack on Big Bear's position. Next day General Middleton arrived in camp with 200 mounted men. I told him Steele had been sent in pursuit, and required support. He decided to await Steele's report, but I obtained permission to march towards Beaver River, a Chippewayan settlement, where there were large H.B.C. stores for which Big Bear appeared to be heading. At 2 a.m. a courier arrived from Steele, reporting an engagement and three men wounded. He was falling back.

The following is his condensed report:— "Marched twenty−five miles; halted at noon for dinner. While cooking, was alarmed by two shots fired by McKay at Indian scouts.(4) These men hid in the bush further on, and shot scout Fisk, who was leading the advance, breaking his arm. We continued our advance, and camped forty−five miles north−east on Big Bear's trail. Fisk pluckily rode on without a murmur. Marched next day at daylight. Found a note from McLean, 'All's well.' On topping a hill, came on Indian camp of previous night. Two teepes were occupied. The main body were crossing a ford about 1,200 yards off. We counted fifty−three camp fires the previous night, and knew the enemy must be too strong for us to attack. I only intended to parley with them through McKay. They, however, fired on us, and seeing them retiring to an inaccessible place on an island, the horses were put in cover and the men extended on the brow of the hill. The chief called to his men to go at us. We were very few. The Indians crawled up the hill under cover of the brush. The leader was killed by teamster Fielders within ten feet of him. Two more were shot. We then fired a volley into the teepes and at the Indians taking cover, and charged to the bottom under strong fire, the left taking the hill commanding the position, the right taking the swamp along the lake. Sergeant Fury was shot through the breast while going up the hill. The scouts were on the brow in a few minutes. We had cleared the whole ridge half an hour after firing commenced, driving the enemy into the ford. We then showed a white flag to parley. McKay, who exposed himself freely, told them to surrender the prisoners. The answer was a volley. A second attempt met with no better result. They shouted back; that they could fight and clear us out. The chief tried to rally his men to re−cross the ford, unsuccessfully. Three of our men were badly wounded and twelve Indians killed. We destroyed the ammunition found in the teepes, and burnt them, capturing four horses, which we brought away. We then retired twenty−four miles to the first feeding ground for the horses. Next day returned to camp. Fourteen of our horses were disabled. All under my command behaved steadily, and were well led by the officers."

(4) Some allowance must be made for my reverend scout's eagerness. His destined bride was among the captives for whom he so freely risked his life.

On going over the ground at Frenchman's Butte 300 rifle pits were counted, and two large and deep trenches, 50 feet long and 8 feet deep, with loopholed logs for head cover, and a ledge to stand on and fire from, the whole

concealed by branches stuck in the loose excavated earth. These large trenches were on the left flank of their position, and formed an ambuscade commanding the trail approaching it. Here the red rags were invitingly displayed to tempt the British bull. From what I saw I could well, believe my half−breed scouts, who were familiar with the defenders, that many of the latter had, experience in Indian wars against the United States troops, who found, as we did, that one dead Indian counts for two or more white men.

On June 6th we were nearing the Beaver River. The infantry were dead beat from incessant marching. The Voltigeurs having been in the first advance had tramped the soles off their boots. Some were literally barefoot, others with muddy, blood−stained rags tied round their feet.

Yet Goldwin Smith (professor of veracious history) writes, "No French regiment went to the front." Their commanding officer told me the men could march no more. Outwardly I thanked that officer, and rode up to the battalion: they presented a grotesque yet pitiable aspect in their tattered uniforms, "the remnants of their trousers being patched with flour sacks bearing alarming legends, such as 'patent self−raising,' etc., but a little French officer remarked, 'N'importe, mon général! l'ennemi ne voit jamais un Voltigeur par derrière.'

"Addressing the battalion in French, as was my habit, I said: 'Mes enfants, votre commandant m'a dit que vous demandez quand vous pouvez retourner chez vous? Mais je n'ai qu'une réponse—celle de votre ancien chanson:

'"Malbrook s'en va−t−en guerre−a!

Ne sait quand reviendra!"'

It had the desired effect. The weary little Voltigeurs shouted: 'Hourra pour le général! En avant! Toujours en avant!' And they stepped out to the refrain of their ancestors,

'"Malbrook s'en va−t−en guerre−a!' etc."

Queer whirligig of time, that an English general should be cheering the soldiers of New France by a couplet in which their ancestors unconsciously enshrined the memory of Marlborough! But the shade of Marlborough could not carry my exhausted infantry, to say nothing of a field−gun, through some thirty miles of swamp and forest, in time to head off the swiftly−moving remnants of Big Bear's band, who were making for the H.B.C. provision store on the banks of the Beaver River.

I left orders for Colonel Osborne Smith (whose men were in better condition than the 65th) to push after me as fast as he could, but the Voltigeurs would not be outmarched by their English comrades. Captain Perry, who had returned to me with his detachment of police gunners, said that the 65th not only kept up, but dragged the gun and horses with ropes through a long and deep muskeg.

The infantry marched all night and overtook me by daybreak at the H.B.C. store, which I reached by riding ahead with my staff and fifteen mounted men: all I had—the remainder were with General Middleton. We reached it just in time to secure eighty sacks of flour and a supply of bacon. It was nightfall when we arrived; and we saw a party of Indians making for the same goal, but they turned back into the woods. We indulged so freely in a supper of fried bacon and dough−cakes, that I for one fell asleep on the floor of the H.B.C store, pipe in mouth. I was awakened by my A.D.C., to whom I had set fire as well as to myself. The sentries seem to have been more vigilant, for we were not molested.

Next morning, June 7th, the infantry having rejoined, a party were left to guard the provisions and watch the trails, and I moved on to Beaver River, following the trail of the Indians seen the previous night. They crossed the river in canoes, this being their own reserve, to which they returned after Frenchman's Butte The Roman Catholic church and mission had been plundered, and his flock had carried off Father Le Goff when they joined Big Bear at Fort Pitt. At a second H.B.C. store near the mission a hundred sacks of flour were secured and a couple of boats. On June 9th Father Le Goff came into camp to plead for his flock. I sent him back to the Chippewayans with an ultimatum for unconditional surrender "within twenty−four hours, otherwise they would see the smoke of their log houses, as I would burn every building on the reserve except the chapel, the priest's house, and the H.B.C. store." They surrendered within the time, and forty−four braves came into camp with rifles and guns, the women and children following on the next day.

On the 11th I held a court of inquiry on the Chippeweyan prisoners: Father Le Goff, and Messrs. Halpin and Cameron gave evidence. The former, with true pastoral love, would gladly have exonerated his flock, but the proofs were too strong: all the young men had fought against us. General Middleton afterwards held a "pow−wow," and told them not to do it again. The majority had acted through fear of Big Bear, and all were tempted by plunder. The most curious thing revealed by the inquiry was that the Indians were largely swayed by

the belief that North−West Canada would be sold to the United States, and only those who joined the outbreak would receive any portion of the purchase money.

Scouts reported that the Wood Crees had taken the McLean family to Lac des Iles, where fish are abundant. Big Bear himself abandoned his prisoners and turned in his tracks after being pressed by Steele at Loon Lake. At this place General Middleton was obliged, by impassable muskegs, to give up the pursuit and to follow my trail to Beaver River, which he reached on the 14th with his own cavalry and mine. In the meantime my men were repairing, and constructing boats. I proposed to descend the Beaver River. Osborne−Smith volunteered, with a hundred of his men and McKay as guide, to rescue the McLean girls; but at this juncture their Indian captors released them: they had all along treated them with a certain respectful chivalry, and "Tall Poplar" was désolé at their refusal to marry him. They were met by Bedson, who took them to Fort Pitt, where they found repose and sympathy for the courage with which they had endured their privations. Constantine had also scouted in search of them until his provisions ran short, and he made his way to Fort Pitt in a semi−starved state.

The release of the captives, the surrender of the tribes and Métis, crowned as it was by the capture of Riel, Poundmaker, and Big Bear, enabled the citizen soldiers to turn their faces homeward with light hearts but saddened memories of the comrades who slept under the prairie sod and by the forest trail.

This campaign had been carried through without the aid of a British bayonet or the expenditure of a British shilling. Except the Winnipeg infantry left to garrison Fort Pitt, and the Alberta cavalry, who, with the Western transport train, retraced their long march to Calgary, the force was broken up and sent down the Saskatchewan eight hundred miles to Winnipeg in steamers, and thence to their homes by rail.

I accompanied them to settle the teamsters' and farmers' claims for supplies, transport, etc. On my way down at Battleford I saw my old enemy, Big Bear, in durance vile. His appearance indicated natural intellect; he had a massive head: his own people said of him that he had a big head but a small heart. I felt no animosity towards him for the many weary miles he had led me. After evading all the columns, and travelling almost alone, he made his way to Fort Carlton ferry, where he was arrested by Sergeant Smart, of the police—about the only man in the force who had never gone after him, as he had been left in charge of the ferry.

Big Bear was sentenced to imprisonment for life for having made war upon her Majesty's Government. I, for taking up arms in her defence, "under a Colonial Government," was deprived of a pension for thirty years' service.

Soon after, Big Bear was set at liberty by her Majesty, and the King of Kings gave him a fuller release. My pension was restored, and I also await my fuller release, when we shall both find wherein we both erred.

"The irony of fate" is a favourite phrase. The humours of a constitutional monarchy are occasionally as startling. Riel was tried, condemned, and hanged. Had he been released after a term of imprisonment, he would perhaps have been elected a member of the Canadian Parliament, where his oratorical talents might have gained him the dignity of knighthood.