

ject seemed to have so great an interest, as those which pertained to the efficiency of the Canadian Army. It was well for the country that it was so, for had the force remained in the semi-organized luke warm state as in 1870-71, I fear that I should have to narrate a far different series of circumstances than those which fill these pages. In May 1874 the Active Militia Force was called out, ostensibly for the performance of their annual drill; and were gathered together in Brigade Camps at Kingston, Niagara, Brantford and London. Two regiments were assembled at Collingwood, and the Garrison Batteries called into Kingston and Toronto. For the instruction of the latter, earthworks were thrown up at the mouth of the Humber, and the batteries at the new and old Forts repaired. An excellent naval Brigade was formed and for this, and others formed along the Lake frontiers of Ontario, Erie, and Huron; powerful tugs were fitted up as gunboats, each mounting a 72 pdr. Armstrong gun. Great fear was entertained as to the necessary supplies of ammunition, but to our great relief, some two weeks before the war broke out, vessels arrived with ample supplies of both ammunition and arms. The next week brought us the English troops, and I have seldom witnessed more enthusiasm than was displayed at their reception. I was in Toronto that day, and as the 69th, 47th, and 29th marched through the streets to their camp on the Garrison Common, both population and soldiers seemed to have gone mad. The ranks were all broken; the red and green coats mixed up with those of divers civilian hues, not without a sprinkling of the brighter habiliments of the fair sex, in inextricable confusion, to the great amusement of the other officers, and the due indignation of the subs, who did not seem to approve of such infractions of dignity and discipline.

The prospect of a row seemed to these jovial warriors the subject of infinite jest, and the good humoured chaff and fun with which they greeted their acquaintance in the crowd was amusing in the extreme. The artillery did not participate in the general reception, having been sent on to the Queen's Wharf to disembark their guns. In consequence of the great demand for horses in England, they were sent out without them, but in a short time they succeeded in horsing the Batteries splendidly. I have always thought the Canadian farm horse a most tractable animal, but the readiness with which these drafts acquired their duties surprised me.

To return to the subject of my narrative. The Brigade Camp at Niagara to which I was attached, with my squadron of mounted rifles, consisted of the 2nd, 10th, 12th, 34th, 36th and 44th Battalions of Volunteer Militia, six Troops of Cavalry, four of mounted Rifles, and two Batteries of Artillery, from Hamilton, and the Welland Canal. The whole were under the command of the Deputy Adjutant-General for the 2nd Dis-

trict, under whom they were divided into two brigades consisting of 3 regiments, six or four troops and a battery. The second or "Light Bobs" consisted of the 2nd and 36th, 44th Battalions, my squadron, and two frontier troops of mounted rifles under my command, and the Hamilton Field Battery in all about 1,500 men. The other Brigade was commanded by the senior officer, an unqualified man, but anxious and zealous in the performance of his duties. Towards the last of May the headquarters of the 1st Brigade were shifted to Chippewa, and we were instructed to throw out pickets as far as Fort Erie, some 14 miles up the river.

This unpleasant duty fell upon my little command, together with that of warning the inhabitants to be prepared to move at short notice. Nothing could exceed the incredulity, or obstinacy, of these people. They would not, or could not, believe that war was imminent. They were ready to sell, however, and as a depot for provisions was to be established at St. Catharines, I made contracts for all their spare supplies of grain, to be delivered at that point, within one week after the declaration of war. The next week passed over, with many scares—one, the most serious of which, was caused by the cutting of the Telegraph wire between Chippewa and Fort Erie. This, though the work of some idle vagabond, kept me riding the whole night, as I feared my patrols might be cut off by some of the Fenian scum who had gathered in large numbers at Buffalo. On the 3rd of June we heard that the Major-General had arrived at Niagara, and had confirmed the commands already made.

The organization of the Reserves had been determined on and was carried out with characteristic energy. I should have mentioned that simultaneously with our move to Chippewa, a Brigade from Brantford moved down to Port Colborne, the other remaining at Brantford.

In the meantime, we saw nothing of the regulars, but on the evening of the 5th heard that two regiments and a battery had arrived at St. Catharines, and another Regiment and a Battery had gone to Brantford; which, for the present, was to be the General's Head-Quarters. This was welcome news to us; for although pretty steady, it increased our confidence, to feel that we had some regulars at our back. All this time we had been hearing, from every source, of the vast army that was to crush us into insignificance; and seeing the crowds that assembled on the other side of the River whenever a party of our men showed themselves, we could quite believe, that in numbers, we were greatly inferior to the army of invasion collecting in Buffalo.

On the night of the 6th, by previous arrangement, I received a cypher telegram from Head-quarters instructing me to destroy the International Bridge on the morn-

ing of the 7th, as war would then be declared. As a precautionary measure, the swing had been left open all night for some time past, and it was with deep regret that I embarked with a chosen party, at about 11 o'clock p.m., to carry out my first piece of military vandalism. Landing at the east pier, we awoke the surprised and frightened bridge keepers, bundled them into our boat, put two kegs of powder under the pivot rest half swung the bridge, laid our train and waited. So soon as twelve o'clock the chimes from the Catholic Cathedral in Buffalo commenced playing, and singularly enough the tune was "Home, sweet Home." The most brutal and unrefined Boolin in the world could not have carried out the work of destruction with such sounds in his ears; but scarcely had the last sweet chime died away than we heard the puff, puff, of a tug descending the river. I fired the train, and letting the boat drop down the current reached the shore. Scarcely had we done so than a burst of flame shot up in the air, a sound as of thunder, a crash of falling material, a scattering pit pat on the surface of the water, and our work of destruction was accomplished, and the war commenced. As the noise of the explosion reached Buffalo, a solitary gun boomed from Fort Porter, the sound of distant bugles rang out faintly in the distance, lights flashed, and sentries challenged; but in a short time all was still, and we in the first excitement of actual warfare, patrolled the banks of the majestic Niagara, having severed the International link that bound us to another people.

At the same time the Bridges at Clifton were undermined on our side, and plunged into the river.

For nearly a week, though living in constant excitement, we were unmolested. Our patrols were fired at from boats, and returned the fire, but no man was lost. We scarcely seemed to be at war,—much of the bustle and hurra had died away and the quiet seemed almost oppressive, but at last, preparations were made to cross. First, we saw drawn upon the other side of the river, some batteries of artillery; under their cover, a gun-boat steamed down followed by a flotilla of tugs and scows. From a safe distance we watched the embarkation, and following our orders, as the first boat touched the Canadian shore, we retired down the river road, destroying the bridges as we crossed them.

On arriving at Chippewa I reported the crossing to the officer commanding the Brigade, and there tried to obtain a little rest, of which I was much in need. The next day I learned that the invading force some 14,000 strong, had occupied the heights above Fort Erie. For two days after, no movements were made on either side; but on the third, an order was received to proceed with the Brigade to Port Robinson, on the Welland Canal, leaving an outpost at Chippewa. The right Brigade of our Div-