



CHAPTER I.

FROM QUEBEC TO WINNIPEG.

Seldom, if ever, in the annals of "A" Battery, has excitement been so great as it was on the 26th of March, 1885, when a telegram from the Militia Department, at Ottawa, reached the citadel of Quebec, with an order for 87 dismounted men of all ranks, to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to the North-West, to assist in putting down the insurrection in the Saskatchewan district.

Riel, the "Stormy Petrel" of the Halfbreeds and Indians, had worked upon the feelings and passions of both, until the climax had been reached by the fight at Duck Lake. To hurry troops up to the scene of action was the only alternative left for the Militia authorities, and "A" Battery (the senior permanent militia corps) were to supply the number of men before mentioned. The "fall in" sounded in the forenoon, and the roll of men selected being called, they were ordered kit inspection at dinner hour. Reports and rumours, it is needless to say, were flying about and the press news eagerly scanned. Next day (27th) the detachment paraded in their barrack rooms in marching order, for the inspection of Captain Peters, who was to have the honor to lead us to the front, and, after a few details as to the packing of valises and the packing of squad bags, one of the latter to each four men, they hung round the library and discussed the coming campaign. About 8 p.m., a fresh telegram came from Ottawa which ordered the detachment to further augment to over 100 of all ranks, with two 9-pr. M. L. R. guns, horses and drivers. All was now hurry and bustle getting things to rights; everything being done without confusion, and the stores being despatched to the North Shore station, the parade was ordered for 12 midnight, in marching order. Leave-taking between husbands and wives, sweethearts, and comrades who stayed behind, was indulged in, and some of us alas! parted forever on this side of the grave. Exactly at midnight the parade fell in, and, on the roll being called, it was found that we were all present. Our gallant commandant—Col. Cotton—made a farewell address to us, trusting we would keep up the credit of the corps to which we belonged, giving us to understand that we were not going out on a pic-nic. How far the credit of the regiment was kept up it is not for me to say; one thing I can vouch for, is, that our trip was not a pic-nic, by any

were not intended for a book, but are only as came under the personal eye will not be criticized, as the handspike writer's hands than the after the fight, on the Saskatchewan steamers, and the account of the "days" artillery, in their journey hewan.

ON.

Regiment of Canadian North West campaign of dedicated by the author.