

family, a son of Capt John Simcoe who died on board His Majesty's ship *Pembroke* just before the siege of Quebec in 1759, John Graves Simcoe was left fatherless at a very early age. His only brother, died very soon after his father, and thus the elder became the only representative of the family. He was educated at Eton, and at Merton College, Oxford, and at nineteen entered as ensign the 35th Regiment of the line. This regiment was part of a contingent sent to support British authority in the revolted colonies of America.

In June, 1775, Simcoe

was in Boston, and fought at Bunker Hill. Later he purchased command of a company in the 40th Regiment, and was severely wounded at Brandywine in 1777. As commander of the Queen's Rangers, a Provincial corps, which was raised in Connecticut and New York, by Colonel Rogers, an ancestor of Col. Z. Rogers of Cobourg, to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of which Major Simcoe was appointed by Sir William Howe, Simcoe developed an astonishing gift of leadership and conducted that famous corps to the zenith of its fame. It was this regiment that in two divisions, the first under Captains Shaw and Shank, and the second under Captain Smith, marched on snow-shoes from New Brunswick to Montreal in the depth of winter in order to welcome their beloved Lieut.-Colonel, the new Governor.* Simcoe's subordinate officers were attached to him; both of these last-named officers and Captain Smith had been with him during the whole campaign of the Revolutionary War.



General John Graves Simcoe,
First Lieut.-Governor of Upper Canada

The year 1781 saw the capitulation of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and the consequent cessation of hostilities. Simcoe, whose health had long been failing, received leave to return to England, a sea voyage alone being spoken of hopefully by his physicians. But he had to go on parole to the United States, and was only exchanged some time after his arrival in England, at the particular instance of the U. S. Minister to Britain, Dr. Benjamin Franklin.

"Thus was ended," says D. B. Read, Q. L. C., in his *Life and Times of General Simcoe*,

"the military career of Lieut.-Col. Simcoe, a man who during the whole of his military life was honoured and beloved by all who knew him, of most generous impulses, and well entitled to promotion in the service of the Crown whose battles he had fought, if with varying success, at least with devotion and loyalty not surpassed by any of the King's subjects of high or low degree."

Soon after the restoration of his health, and while living quietly on his estates in Devonshire, Simcoe married. His wife was a near relation of a distant relative of his own, Admiral Graves. She was a Miss Gwillim, and it is her maiden name that is perpetuated in the townships of North, East, and West Gwillimbury in this Province, as is that of Simcoe in the Lake as well as the county that bears his name, and the capital town of the county of Norfolk.

Soon after his marriage Simcoe entered Parliament as member for St. Maws, Cornwall, and thus took part in the debates on the Bill for the division of the Province of Quebec into two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The debate was warm, both Fox and Pitt taking part in it, and the future Governor was thus enabled to see clearly the course the Government wished to pursue in dealing with

*This feat was twice afterwards nobly rivalled. In 1813 in the month of February, the 104th, the first Colonial Regiment of the Line, marched in ten divisions from Fredericton, N. B., to Quebec. And in 1837 the 43rd Regiment of Light Infantry made the same march, doing it in twelve days.

Both of these instances are given by Mr. W. G. Macfarland in his deeply interesting *History of Fredericton* appearing in the *Daily Sun*, St. John, N. B., issues Feb. 28th and March 1st, 1893, respectively.