

word I have said, by my own affidavit, supported by that of Dr. Orton, and corroborated by the testimony of others, who were present at the termination of this episode; and, indeed, I may say of the whole No. W. F., every member of which was aware at the time that a retreat had been ordered and actually commenced, though all may not then have been cognizant of the reason why it was countermanded. It indeed seems strange to me that Sir Fred. Middleton should have committed such an egregious error, as to have deliberately penned such an egotistical and fallacious statement as that contained on page 384 of the United Service Magazine for January, 1894. Is it possible that his memory is failing so fast that he has already forgotten the fact that the very matter to which I have here taken exception, was the subject of both official and newspaper correspondence, in the spring of 1886, the latter being between Dr. Orton and some of the General's inspired and expectant friends; and that it was finally settled, both privately and officially in favor of the former? Or does he imagine that because, whilst occupying the high position of Major General commanding the militia of Canada, he was permitted, through the rules of military discipline and etiquette, the privileges of making incorrect statements, and garbled reports, unchallenged, he will still be accorded the same license of speech and pen, and immunity from contradiction, now, when appearing in the role of an historian, and egotistical auto-biographer combined? Or, has he forgotten that he no longer wields the baton in Canada? I think I have now said all that is necessary, for the vindication of myself and others, from the charge of incapacity, or cowardice—which you will—laid at our door by Gen. Sir Fred. Middleton, who will hear no more from me, until he either disputes the truth of any of the statements contained in this letter (of which I shall, of course, send him a copy) or makes some other libellous accusation—for his own aggrandisement or otherwise—against, or to the disparagement of myself, or any of my brave Canadian brothers-in-arms, with whom I had the honor of serving in this my adopted home.

Sir Fred. Middleton's Suppression of Rebellion in the North-West Territories of Canada, 1885.

Continued

Most, if not all, of my senior officers were of opinion that we were not strong enough and ought to retire to our last camp and await reinforcements. I differed from them. I considered, though I would have been glad of a few more men, that we were strong enough as we were, and a few days' delay before actually forcing the enemy's position would only render our men more fit and anxious for it, and we could afford to expend more ammunition than the enemy. Moreover, even if reinforcements were found to be necessary, we could await them more advantageously where we were, for I felt

certain that should we retire we should be followed up, and our retirement might chance to become a rout. Even if we fell back unmolested, the fact of our retiring at all would be made the most of all over the Northwest Territories, and a general rising would probably take place. So I determined to hold on at all hazards where we were, even to keeping with us the wounded, whom I at one time thought of sending back. At the same time I thought it wise to prepare for possibilities, and I wrote orders to be sent by telegraph from Humboldt to close up the troops on our lines of communication, so as to be at hand if required. I also wrote a dispatch to the Minister of Militia on the state of affairs, which I determined to send by Lord Melgund. He was naturally averse to leave me, as I was to lose him at such a moment; but I explained to him my reasons for wishing it, and he departed that afternoon on the understanding that I was to telegraph to him at Winnipeg if matters became worse, and he was then to return with any troops he might find there. I sent back Mr. Secretan with Boulton and his scouts to strike our camp and bring everything up to us. This was done very quickly and a zareba was formed with the waggons on a piece of open ground about a quarter of a mile back from the church. Towards evening the troops were gradually withdrawn, some of the enemy following them up until checked by a heavy fire from the zareba. A few of them kept up a desultory long-range fire for a short time, killing two horses and wounding one man in the zareba. As darkness fell all firing ceased. We were a little anxious about the steamer as we could hear no whistling, and to let them know on board that we had not retired we sent up a rocket, which, by-the-way, nearly caused a stampede among our horses. The force had behaved well, the officers setting a good example by their coolness, Van Straubenzie and his brigade major, Young being always to the front, and Melgund, Haig, and Freer being of the greatest use to me. Piquets were posted and a trench made round the zareba. No tents were pitched except for the wounded, as all the horses were inside, and except for a little rain the weather was fine. The men lay down, with their arms, along the four sides of the zareba after a hasty supper. Our casualties for the day were two men killed and ten wounded, including Captain Mason, 10th Grenadiers. Next morning, the 10th of May, we were under arms at dawn, but all was quiet, and after an early breakfast I moved out part of the infantry; but we were not able to take up our positions of yesterday, as the enemy was in greater force, and now held the high ground in front of the church. Some of them, apparently Indians from their cries, had taken post at the end of a point of land below the cemetery, to answer which we had to send a party down to the edge of the river. The infantry were placed in as advanced positions as possible to engage the new positions taken up by the enemy. During the day A Battery had some practise at some houses on the opposite bank, and

the two guns of the Winnipeg Battery shelled the cemetery and some rifle-pits. A body of mounted men, 50 in number, called the land surveyor's scouts, under the command of Captain Dennis, joined us that afternoon—a most useful, able body of well-mounted men, all more or less surveyors by profession—and did right good service. That afternoon we constructed, out of sight of the enemy, some trenches and isolated pits which would enfilade their usual advance when they followed our men up in the evening. Just before that time I placed some men in these pits and trenches armed with Martini-Henrys. When the advanced parties withdrew they were followed as usual by the enemy, who were speedily driven back by this unexpected flank fire. After enemy had retired, two shots—evidently long range, unaimed shots—struck the camp, one killing a horse, the other, oddly enough, striking a waggon on which was my looking-glass and before which I was shaving, after which all was quiet for the night. Our casualties were one killed and five wounded.

Having heard that there was a large piece of open prairie to the northeast of Batoche, I sent out during the day Captain French with some scouts to ascertain if such was the case. On his return he reported that it was so, and I resolved to make a strong mounted reconnaissance next day in that direction, with a view to preparing for our final attack, for which I saw our men were getting nearly fit, the retirement this evening having been much steadier, and our casualties for the day less.

The next morning, the 11th of May, having seen the infantry under Van Straubenzie take up their position and "open the ball," I started off with Bolton and his scouts and the gatling to reconnoitre the prairie ground said to be to the north of the village. As we were leaving we met a party carrying on a stretcher one of the Roman Catholic priests, who had been wounded in the thigh by a shot from the rebels fired into the house where he was sitting. The poor man bore the pain with great courage and patience. He was sent off to Saskatoon and, I am glad to say, eventually quire recovered under Dr. Roddick's treatment. Instead of taking the regular trail, I made a detour through the wood, which was inclined to be marshy, for I thought it possible the enemy might have defences on the trail. We soon came out on the plain, which appeared nearly two miles long and some thousand yards broad, with a slight ridge down the centre. We soon saw men moving about near the edge of the woods on the river side of the plain, and a few shots were fired at us. I advanced the gatling to the ridge, supported by some dismounted scouts, and soon drew a smart fire from them. We could see with our glasses that the enemy had a series of rifle-pits all along the edge of those woods, and numbers of them were running up between the woods and disappearing into the pits. Evidently they were prepared for an attack in this direction. Leaving the gatling in action