

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

MILDRED VANE.

Mildred Vane! The queerest maiden
Of all the many maids I know;
No one like her in the village,
No one like her, high or low:
I have watched her from her childhood,
We have grown in years amain,
And a constant wonder to me,
In this funny Mildred Vane.

In a green and ivied cottage,
Hidden mid ancestral trees,
By the fair and murmuring streamlet,
Tuned in the Summer breeze,
Dwells she with her cripple father,
An old man with hair of snow,
Who had fought his country's battle
On the plains of Waterloo.

Only daughter, free and wayward,
Humored in her every whim,
Child of nature, all untutored,
Never swayed or checked by him,
Softened by no girlish pastime,
Nurtured in a country lane,
Like a boy has grown this maiden,
Like a boy is Mildred Vane.

See her walking through the village
In the fragrant Summer dawn,
How her dress and trim around her,
How they flick and trip and fawn:
When she blows her ivory whistle,
Up they prick their ears in play;
When she cracks her whip and points them,
Off they rush upon their prey.

Mildred is a fearless rider,
Aiding on her Morgan brown,
From the barn door off she gallops,
U attended to the town;
No gay equerry beside her,
Spurs his courser o'er the plain,
For a heartless Amazon
Is my dashing Mildred Vane.

Mildred loves her to the greenwood,
With her pistols in her breast,
And for hours aims the target,
Searing wild-birds from their nest,
Or drifting in her azure shallop,
Angles for the timorous trout,
While around her, near the eddies,
Insects flutter in and out.

Mildred scoffs the tricks of fashion,
In which female beauties shine,
Never wears the flowing dresses
And discards the ermine line;
Wears a short and narrow kirtle
Tightly belted at the waist,
While her dainty foot and ankle
In a jockey-boot are laced.

She derides the face of chignons
And false curls the brow that deck,
Her own soft chestnut ringlets
Wave in beauty on her neck;
And she scorns the city maiden
With her bonnet and her train—
From head to foot to be unfettered
Is the pride of Mildred Vane.

Proper matrons shrug their shoulders
When they speak of Mildred Vane,
Look askance when she passes,
Riding, romping, o'er the plain;
And the snaky tongues of gossip
Have been busy with her name,
Hinting at her manly boldness,
And her want of maiden shame.

Ah! jealous, ugly crochies,
Cease your mean and slanderous tale,
There is not a sweeter woman
Treads the grass of Kirkwood vale;
Fawn-like Mildred, shy and modest,
Glory of our wooded glen,
She is chaster as any flower,
And her eyes never look on men.

This wild girl knows not the tortures
That devour your amorous souls,
Her pure spirit flies above them,
Like the sun-bird o'er the shoals;
No! she has no fleshly passions,
Nor runs wild with human loves,
All her fancy is in Nature,
In its brooklets and its groves.

God has fashioned all his daughters
Each to tread a special way,
Some to grace the quiet homestead,
Some to shine in fashion's ray,
Some to pray in cloistered shadows,
Ever celibate as the child,
And thee, O Mildred! to romp and glory
In elemental freedom—wild!

God protect thee in thy freshness,
Radiant in thy beauty's charms,
Lithe of limb and pure of spirit,
Free from sin and sin's alarms,
Go thy ways through Nature's dwellings,
Live and die there free from stain,
And at thy death, the fays will scatter
Wood-flowers o'er thee, Mildred Vane.

JOHN L'ESPÉRANCE.

RECOLLECTIONS OF RIDGEWAY.

(BY A PARTICIPATOR IN THE FRAY.)

II.

MORNING AFTER THE FIGHT.

Long before daylight on Sunday morning, June 3rd, the 13th hustled out of the schoolhouse at Port Colborne, and marched silently to a position alongside of the canal, in the heart of the town. Major S—, (now Lieut.-Col.) was in command. At a convenient place, near the Custom House, the Battalion halted, formed column of companies and awaited further orders. During the early part of the night, it is almost needless to say, a big effort was made by everyone to obtain as much as possible of the much-needed rest and sleep, without which the men had been for the last forty-eight hours, and which could be had now only under the sharpest difficulties.

Owing to the desperate state of affairs along the frontier, and the alarming rumors constantly pouring in concerning the movements of hordes of Fenians across the lines, together with the uncertainty of information generally, it was imperatively essential that every man should be held in readiness to move at a moment's notice. Consequently, the most stringent orders had to be issued when the Battalion turned into quarters for the night. No article of clothing could

be removed; shoes must remain in our feet and shakos on our heads; belts, with bayonet attached, and cross-belts with pouch full of ammunition, must all remain on the person, and none of the accoutrements were allowed to be unfastened in any way whatever; and, last of all, the rifle, lying by our side, must never, for a single instant, be out of its owner's hands. All this, though terribly uncomfortable, was of the utmost importance, for, in case of an alarm, which might occur at any moment during the night, the men would thus be ready to turn out instantly. Were it otherwise, many precious moments might be lost by having some of the three hundred men fumbling about in the dark in search of arms or apparel. Tired, hungry, worn out, the poor fellows grumbled not, but gladly stretched themselves upon the bare floor, and, all in harness, courted that sweet restorer, balmy sleep, which, without much wooing, soon came and spread her magic spell o'er the scene. Shortly after midnight the sleepers were aroused by the dread alarm, and in about as much time as it takes to write this sentence, the men were up and out, armed and equipped, and were stepping into their places in their respective companies.

Patiently the battalion stood in the damp chilly air, awaiting the receipt of the expected orders from the officer in command of the forces, Col. Peacock. How slowly the time passed; how long each moment seemed can be known only by those who stood there, in the darkness, on that dreary, dismal spot. The weary hours wore on, however, and in due time streaks of rosy sunlight began to appear in the east.

The wildest excitement prevailed everywhere. Crowds of people were moving about in every direction; it seemed as though the population of the whole district had centered in Port Colborne and were discussing the probability of their homes being destroyed and the town burnt by the enemy. Of the many reports which had come from the front, that which seemed to gain the most credence was to the effect that the Fenians had been largely reinforced during the night, and were then preparing to immediately advance on Port Colborne, which place was, in many respects, an important military point.

Everybody, the volunteers included, fully believed that a big battle must take place inside of a few hours. It was generally understood that Col. Peacock, with his own regiment, the 10th, a wing of some other regiment of regulars, a battery of Royal Artillery, a few troops of cavalry, and two or three volunteer battalions of infantry—including the 19th of Lincoln—was moving into position for attack; and that the Queen's Own and the 13th, as well as the two rifle companies from Haldimand—all then lying at Port Colborne—would instantly proceed to join him. It is but justice to say that was precisely what was desired by every one who had taken part in the engagement of the day before. Smarting under the (supposed) humiliation of the termination of the previous day's struggle, the result of blundering over which they had no control, every man was glad of the immediate opportunity to try it again. Another chance was wanted; and if the two battalions and the two rifle companies would be ordered into the thickest of the fight, or could have it all to themselves, they would like it a hundred times more. Not that the fighting could be any braver than it had been at Ridgeway, but because of a feeling bordering on desperation; a determination to carry it through to the end in spite of everything. That was the fire that kindled every heart and expressed itself in every face.

The men were starving, the towns-people, who lived close by, were nobly doing what they could in the way of providing food for the hungry, but their limited facilities and the shortness of the notice, prevented their best endeavors from accomplishing very much in this respect. There began to be grave apprehensions that the Battalion might have to leave before many of the men had received a mouthful to eat. About sunrise, however, all misgivings were put to flight by the arrival upon the scene of a number of Hamiltonians, loaded with provisions for the men. Loaves of bread and roasts of beef were spread out upon the ground, and were quickly divided and devoured. Many a hungry fellow, myself among the number, could scarcely refrain from dropping a tear in gratitude as we munched our beef, and reflected on the thoughtfulness of the people at home. Several ladies had also arrived from Hamilton, and were rendering valuable assistance in providing for the half-furnished men. I was but a bit of a boy then, but the incidents of kindness of which I was a silent observer, on that eventful morning, will long remain fresh in my memory.

Early in the forenoon the long-expected

DESPATCHES WERE RECEIVED

by the officer in command, and the result was, at first, a bitter disappointment to all. There would be no battle; there could be none, for the simple reason that there was no enemy to fight against. It seems that the Fenians had had enough of it the day before, and, all that was left of them "let no grass grow under their feet" until they were back from whence they came. They had landed upon Canadian soil with the intention of making a glorious conquest, and, at the same time, liberating down-trodden Ireland. But handled too roughly at Ridgeway, "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream," and in less than forty-eight hours after their arrival they had been put to flight and were recrossing the Niagara river in boats and scows, at every available place, under cover of the night.

Expecting that the enemy would, of course,

concentrate at some other point along the frontier, and make further raids upon our borders, our troops had to be kept in readiness for any emergency. The Queen's Own and the two rifle companies were, soon after, ordered to some post in the west, and the 13th being ordered to remain at Port Colborne to guard the mouth of the canal, the railway bridge, &c., immediately returned to barracks. The school-house, which had been given up for our accommodation, was a good-sized brick building, two stories high, and consisted of a single large room on each flat.

The left wing, comprising companies Nos. 4, 5 and 6, occupied the ground floor, and the right wing, companies 1, 2, and 3, went aloft.

The generalship displayed in selecting that school-house for a barracks is worthy of commendation. No place could have been procured which would have answered the purpose half so well. The desks and benches all about were splendid substitutes for tables and chairs, and the children's copying books, ink and pens did nicely in the way of stationery; besides, if a volunteer felt disposed to do a little in the way of studying, the necessary school books were all right at hand.

Half a dozen guards, of different strengths, were organized and posted at various places about the town, the ground about the barracks was put into shape, and a temporary hospital was fitted up down town, into which were placed some of the sick and wounded.

The Town Hall at St. Catharines had been converted into a general hospital, to which all the more serious cases were to be sent from all quarters.

About noon, while working at some fatigue duty, I was called up and, much to my delight, furnished with the necessary pass and ordered to escort some patients to St. Catharines, and then proceed on to Hamilton with four invalids who had been ordered home as being unfit for duty. Upon our arrival at St. Catharines we found the Town Hall filled with comfortable beds and stretchers and supplied with all the usual hospital accessories. A number of the Queen's Own and of the 13th Battalion, as well as of other corps, were already laid up there, and were all receiving the most tender and best of treatment from the surgeons and ladies of the town, who had volunteered to act as nurses. Proceeding on, we arrived at Hamilton about 7 p.m. that (Sunday) evening. An immense crowd of citizens had assembled about the station and were awaiting the receipt of reliable news from the front. The wildest rumors—all sorts of exaggerated reports—had been hourly received in Hamilton, and in consequence, the excitement for the last two days had been beyond description. Procuring a cab I distributed my men at their respective homes with as little delay as possible. Our uniforms were the signal; the news of the arrival of some of the participants in the fight spread through the city like wildfire. We were besieged on every side, at every turn, by anxious inquirers about the boys at the front. The first train next morning carried me back to St. Catharines, and having an hour or two to wait for a train on the Welland Railway, I concluded to spend the time among sick acquaintances in the hospital. Hardened though I was by the rough experience of late, my eyes moistened in spite of me. The lady nurses not only brightened the place with their presence, but were doing all in their power to comfort and relieve the sufferers. Tenderly those poor fellows were nursed by fair hands, and although the patients were strangers, what mattered that? They were sufferers, and woman's nature was appealed to. Deeply impressed by their noble conduct, I have ever since retained a warm appreciation of the people of that town. The regular arrangements on the Welland Road had, of course, been all upset; but, through the kindness of Brigade-Major V—, of this district, whom I accidentally met at the station, I was soon after provided with a place in a freight car, and was thus enabled to report myself back in barracks that evening. As might be expected, I was the bearer of many bits of good news and good things for a number of the boys from their friends at home.

The Battalion remained at Port Colborne for about three weeks, and the experience of the first few days was anything but enjoyable. The Commissariat Department of the Active Militia was very different then to what it is now. It was in a state of oblivion in those days, but has been worked up to a degree of perfection since. The men were entirely destitute of everything except arms and ammunition. They were without even tin plates to eat off of, or tin cups to drink out of, and I think it can be stated, without fear of contradiction, that the only knife and fork in the whole barracks was in the possession of Quartermaster Sergeant S—. And, come to think of it, it was just as well that the rations were not very varied at first, and consisted chiefly of solids (breads and pork)—something that could be got hold of without much formality.

The same stringent orders, prohibiting the removal of any clothing or accoutrements at night, had to be enforced every day. Work was hard; about a third of the Battalion were constantly out doing guard duty about the town, and the remainder, after drilling all day at headquarters, must furnish men for picket duty at night. Of all the guards, perhaps, the pleasantest, and the one most sought after, was that at the piers, with the guard-room in front of the Canal Superintendent's house; and, without doubt, the most melancholy of all was that placed over the car-load of hard-tack near the elevator. Stonebridge, a small place, a mile or

two down the canal, was also a popular resort for the men when off duty. After the first week, thanks to the citizens of Hamilton, the rations began to be first-rate, and although the men were working hard they were living well. As the days wore on, hundreds of incidents, humorous and otherwise, occurred, which are, no doubt, still fresh in the minds of all who were there, but as ten years have elapsed since their occurrence, it is hardly worth while to enumerate them. As the weeks rolled round, the Fenian cause gradually fizzled out in the States, and, after having sacrificed several Canadian lives and put our country to an immense expense, the American Government was forced to take such steps as would prevent any further filibustering like what had occurred. Some twenty odd days after the fight at Ridgeway, peace had been restored throughout our land, and the troops were then all relieved from further duty. After receiving public marks of respect from the people of Stone Bridge and Port Colborne, the 13th bade adieu to the old school house and returned to Hamilton much improved in every respect by the short campaign. Immediately after arrival, the Battalion was entertained at luncheon in the Drill Shed by the citizens, and the hearts of those bronzed boys were made warm by the welcome. So terminated the experience of the 13th Battalion in connection with the Fenian raid of 1866.

NOTE.—Two errors having been discovered in the first paper, I am glad of an opportunity to correct them. I accidentally omitted to include among the volunteers who took part in the Ridgeway fight the gallant Caledonia Rifle Company; and I would also state that those members of the 13th who had been on duty at Windsor were also present in the skirmish, having returned to Hamilton a few days previous to the departure of the 13th for the front.

W. F. McM.,

Hamilton Field Battery.

THE STARVELING OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

Our readers doubtless remember the story, published some weeks ago, of the member of the immortal Light Brigade, who died of starvation in England somewhere, and whose death was said to have been declared by the Coroner's jury "a disgrace to the War Office." Some clever sarcastic verses were published on the subject and they went the rounds of the press. A gentleman of this city writing to a friend in London called his attention to the story, and his friend having made inquiries at the proper quarters, wrote back the following, which we have been allowed to copy, and to which we call attention as putting a new face on the affair. "In regard to the present case, a paragraph appeared in the *Globe* of 15 December, 1875, containing an explanation of the Secretary of Chelsea Hospital to the following effect: 'John Fitzpatrick served 14 years, during which time he was six times brought to trial for desertion, insubordination and habitual drunkenness, besides being brought up 43 times for every sort of offence, showing him to have been a worthless soldier whom any Commanding officer would be glad to get rid of. At the time of his discharge he wanted not four but nearly ten years to complete the time when he would have been entitled to, not 1s 4d. a day, but 8d. The man belonged to the 4th Dragoon Guards.'

ROUND THE DOMINION.

BUSINESS in Hamilton is said to be improving. DYPHTHERIA is prevailing extensively in Montreal.

THE Newfoundland seal fishery is not such a failure as reported. Average hauls are being made.

ONTARIO has sent fifty-six car loads of goods to the Centennial Exhibition.

AT OTTAWA the frost was very severe and many mill-dams were carried away.

CUMBERLAND County, N. S., lumbermen cut 25,000 feet of lumber during the past winter.

IT is said the Grand Trunk Railway Company will shortly lay a second track between Toronto and Montreal.

CONSIDERABLE injury has been done to the mill-dams on the Credit River in the counties of Peel and Halton.

THE Victoria Bridge, Montreal, was threatened on the 15th inst. by a heavy shower, blocks of ice reaching the iron trestle through which trains run.

SIXTY-three Nova Scotians, who left home nearly three weeks ago on a small schooner for Gloucester, Mass., to man the fishing boats of that port, are all supposed to have gone down with the vessel on the passage.

GRACE Church, Toronto, is in a state of agitation; the trustees bring very serious charges against the rector, Mr. Jones, and he makes some counter charges against them. The Bishop intends to hold a commission of enquiry.

THE Dominion Government has withdrawn the permission hitherto granted to American steamers to carry cargo and passengers between ports in the Dominion. The change will affect vessels plying between Boston and Maritime Province ports.

EDWARD JENKINS, the late Agent-General, has written to the Montreal *Witness*, deprecating the action of the Government in giving up the late establishment in London, and saying that it chooses to forego a large sum of money from what seems to be a totally unnecessary and foolish sentiment.

THE Dominion Government will shortly issue Land Scrip to the half-breeds in Manitoba, in order to enable them to take up their lands in that Province. It is also stated that the volunteer force there will this year be reduced, which will throw a large number of land warriors on the market.