

PREFACE.

The Breath of the Lord may rule the sea,
And the lies of men the land ;
And the craft of the tongue may hold in fee
The strength of the heavy hand ;
But though tongues may quicken and strength may sicken,
And hands grow soft and small,
Year upon year the day grows near
Of the unsheathed sword and the shaken spear,
That shall make amends for all.

—FRANK L. POLLOCK.



ESTEEM it a very great honor and privilege to have been entrusted with the writing of the regimental history of the Governor General's Body Guard, but entered upon the work with much misgiving, fearing that I should not be able to do justice to my subject. From early boyhood, when I joined the old Montreal High School Cadet Rifles, I have been interested in the militia, and the name of Denison's Cavalry has represented to my mind the very ideal of Canadian military spirit and militia efficiency. My anxiety with regard to my present task can consequently be understood, especially when it is remembered that some of the Denisons themselves are distinguished as authors as well as soldiers. One of them, the late Lieut.-Col. F. C. Denison, whose acquaintance I had the honor of forming at the time he was organizing the Nile Voyageurs, published in 1876 a concise "Historical Record" of the Body Guard, and I have availed myself freely of his careful work in the present book. It will also be found that I have quoted extensively from Lieut.-Col. G. T. Denison's (Heydon Villa) extremely readable work, "Soldiering in Canada." The present commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. Clarence A. Denison, has evinced a very kindly interest in the present book, and has contributed some invaluable matter to it, including extracts from order books and official documents in his possession, extracts from his personal diaries, newspaper clippings, etc., etc. I must also acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Majors Merritt and Fleming, who have contributed a considerable amount of the information on which the concluding chapters are based.

With so much assistance I hope I have been able to produce a history of this truly historical corps which will prove useful, not merely as a means of exciting the proper corps pride of the regiment, but as a stimulant to the military spirit throughout the district in which it will be chiefly circulated.

I know from dear experience that there is a very marked disposition to underrate the value of the military spirit in Canada, except perhaps at such times as the late Boer War; but this present history, as the accurate record of any militia corps in Canada would do, shows that it is to those who, in spite of individual sneering and most persistent official discouragement, carefully tried to foster a wholesome military spirit, that the safety of Canada was due in 1837, 1838, 1866, 1870 and 1885.