

he was in Toronto, and no matter how pressed for time, always went out to the barracks and called upon Tommy Atkins in his barrack room and took a personal interest in his welfare. Fort Rouille had no connection with either place. The exhibition buildings, still further west, are built upon the site occupied by that historic fort. Apologising for taking up your space, I am, Sir, Yours sincerely,

"STANLEY BARRACKS."

Toronto, 13th Jan., 1894.

Montreal, Jan. 31st, 1894.

To the Military Editor of the Montreal Gazette:

Dear Sir,—Your comments in the Gazette of the 20th inst. in reference to Gen. Sir Fred. Middleton's "Suppression of the N. W. Rebellion, 1885," taken from the United Service Magazine, having drawn my attention to this matter, I procured a copy of that excellent periodical and on page 384 of the January number I read the following statement by him, which I now quote in his own words:

"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 would be followed up and our retirement might chance to become a rout. Even if we fell back unmolested, the fact of our retreating would be made the most of all over the Northwest Territories and a general rising would probably take place. So I determined to hold out at all hazards where we were, even to keeping with us the wounded, whom I at one time thought of sending back."

Now, sir, as in justice to myself, as next senior officer to the General and D.A.G. of the N. W. F. force, and to Dr. Orton, then surgeon major of the 90th (Winnipeg) Batt. and brigade surgeon of the same force, I cannot allow this statement to pass unchallenged, I would ask you to be kind enough to insert the following open letter in most emphatic denial of its truthfulness, and, in order to set your numerous interested readers right in regard to this matter, I shall endeavor to relate, as concisely as possible, what did actually occur upon the occasion above referred to by the General, leaving them to draw their own conclusions as to the accuracy or fairness of the gallant historian's statement.

On the day in question, May 9th. 1885, or, the first day of the attack upon the rebels' position at Batoche, at about 2.30 p.m., I rode up to General Middleton, who was on horseback and alone, near the door of the church (described on his plan), with the intention of proposing to lead

a couple of companies to a certain position, from whence they could outflank and enfilade some of the enemy, who were occupying rifle pits about from five to six hundred yards to our left front, in the vicinity of the cemetery, from which they were keeping a desultory fire on our men. As I came up to him he appeared much excited and told me to order an immediate retreat to our camp of the previous night, some eight miles distant. I took the liberty of remonstrating with him upon the inadvisability of such a step, pointing out to him the extremely bad moral effect such action would have upon our young soldiers, and what an opposite effect upon the enemy. I suggested to him that this would be doubtless claimed as a victory by them, and reported by signals for hundreds of miles in every direction over the country before morning, and that in all probability it would have the immediate effect of turning thousands of the then neutral Indians into "Hostiles." I had some considerable knowledge of the feelings entertained by the Indian warriors of the Northwest Territory, which had been part of my command for the last four years, during which time I had been a close observer of them as he was well aware from certain reports which I had furnished him for the information of the Government several months before the outbreak of the rebellion. He exhibited the greatest impatience during this conversation, and at length flew into a towering passion and said: "I did not call you here, sir, to ask your advice or opinion. I have already consulted with all my officers with whom I desire to consult. You have got my orders, and I insist upon your carrying them out directly."

To this I replied: "General Middleton, I shall execute your orders at once, but before doing so I desire to say that, as Deputy Adjutant General and second in command, I disapprove of and protest against this action, as I feel confident it will result in disaster, not only to this force, but also, unfortunately, to the others acting in concert with us, and to the settlers generally throughout the country, and I desire to wash my hands of all blame which may attach to it."

I then galloped away to convey his orders to the proper quarters. In less than ten minutes the force was in motion, and the half of Boulton's mounted infantry ordered to cover the front of the retreat (the other half being directed to cover the rear), were fully half a mile from the main body, and in full and orderly retreat. As I passed the transport corps, I had given orders to Mr. Sinclair, who was in charge that day, to send 20 teams to the church at once for the conveyance of the wounded, of which there were then some ten or twelve being attended to there by Brigade Surgeon Orton and the other surgeons of the force. I had ordered these spare teams, feeling confident there would be a considerable increase to our casualty list, ere we should reach our destination. As I returned, I overtook and passed them arriving at the church a few hundred yards ahead of them. I did not dismount, but called out at the door for Brigade Sur-

geon Orton, who responded immediately, and to whom I then delivered the General's orders; telling him to lose no time in getting the wounded ready for removal to the waggons, which would arrive directly for their conveyance. He seemed quite thunderstruck, and asked me what I thought of such a movement. I replied that, personally, I highly disapproved of it, and that I had so informed the General.

He urged me to again try remonstrance with him, but I positively declined to do so, relating to him my recent conversation with the General on the subject, and telling him that I would not lay myself open to a repetition of such gross insult, as I had then received from him, for any consideration whatever, adding the words "Not to save the whole force,—myself included—from annihilation." Dr. Orton moving the wounded, over the terrible moving he wounded, over the terrible corduroy road lying between us and the last camp, specially in the rough springless freight waggons, which were all that were at his disposal for the purpose; and declared that he did not believe that one half of them would live to reach their destination. The waggons by this time were just arriving at the church door, and Dr. Orton, looking at them, continued, "No, sir! my professional reputation is at stake, and I positively refuse to murder the patients under my charge, by carrying out this order; so you may send the waggons away, and tell the General that I have decided upon remaining here with the wounded, and taking my chances with the enemy, in preference to so doing." I suggested that as the General was close by, it might be better that he should interview him personally upon the subject, adding that it would be absolutely impossible for him to continue the retreat under such circumstances. To this Dr. Orton immediately consented and walked up to where the General was still sitting on his horse—about fifty yards away—and told him his decision. I did not join in this colloquy; but could see and hear all that passed, as their dialogue was carried on in no undertone. The General was very angry, and spoke of the consequences of "disobedience of orders in front of the enemy," etc., but Orton stood firm and repeated what he had previously said to me upon keeping the wounded where they were and remaining with them himself; also that he had no fear of ill-treatment at the hands of the enemy for either himself or them.

"That simply means then," cried the General, "that I must stay here," and turning to me, he continued: "Colonel Houghton stop the retreat at once and order all back to the positions which they occupied before the order for retreat was given." This, I need not say, was carried out with the greatest pleasure and alacrity, and in less than fifteen minutes afterwards, all were back in their places just as though the retreat had never been thought of, and, happily, without its having been perceived by the enemy. Now I defy General Sir Fred. Middleton or any one else to refute one single statement contained in this letter and I am prepared to substantiate every