

HISTORY
OF
THE FENIAN RAID
ON
FORT ERIE;
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE
BATTLE OF RIDGEWAY.

BY
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THE BEST DEFENSIVE FORCE FOR CANADA," ETC., ETC.

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HIGHLANDERS SKIRMISHING THROUGH THE WOODS

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Woods

7

8

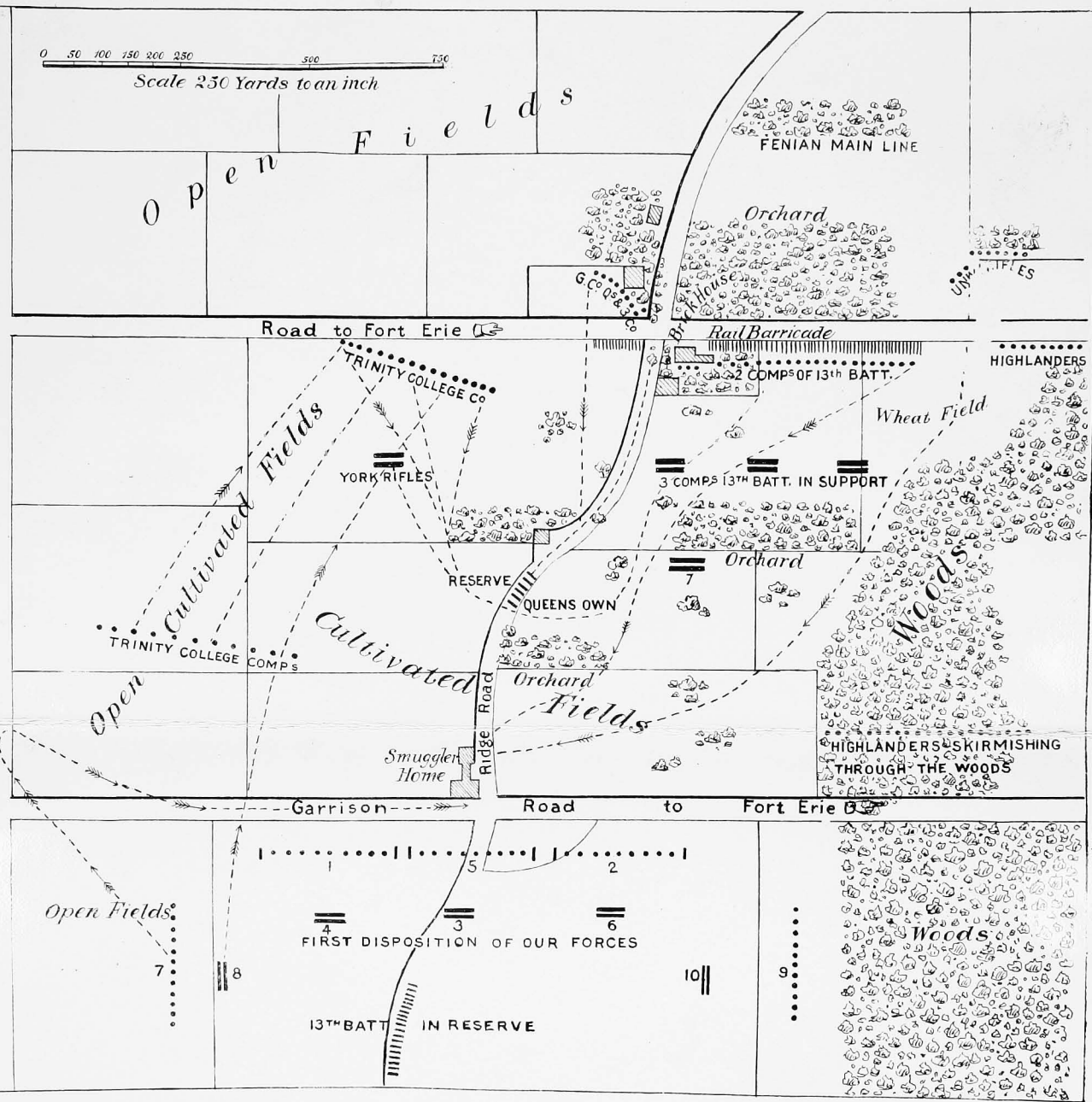
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PREFACE.

At the suggestion of a friend I had decided, early this spring, to write, if possible, an account of the Fenian Raid which we both felt confident would take place on the Niagara Frontier during the summer; consequently, on being ordered to the front to aid in repelling the invaders I kept the idea constantly in view, and was continually gathering up information of what was passing around me, in every quarter in which I could obtain it; speaking on every opportunity with anyone likely to give me further insight into the proceedings.

This gave me a great advantage in striving to gain the truth, I was not obliged to depend for my account on what I could glean from the newspapers and from the official documents alone, but was able to supplement it with information obtained personally on the spot, and at the time events were transpiring about me.

The account in the following pages will differ to a small extent from the ideas popularly entertained, which are based on the newspaper reports. Reporters on the field, writing at a time when the wildest stories and the falsest rumours are flying about with marvellous rapidity, writing generally in great haste are unable to trace rumours to their foundation, and have not time to apply the test of truth to the numberless stories which are retailed to them; thus the most reliable reporters will be sometimes unavoidably deceived, and false impressions thereby publicly promulgated.

I have taken every pains to make the story I have written as accurate as possible. The description of the scene of operations is to a great extent based on personal observation, as I am well acquainted with the whole of that section of the country. The account of the crossing of the Fenians was obtained partly from the newspapers, partly from the people living on the spot, and partly from an officer in the Fenian Forces who courteously gave me a great deal of information as to their crossing, their line of march, and their subsequent movements.

My information on the Plan of Campaign was obtained by personal observation, and from conversation with all the leading officers of each column, and there is no doubt as to its correctness.

The chapter on the Battle of Ridgeway gave me more trouble than all the others united. The accounts were so conflicting that I almost gave it up in despair; each person that I spoke to about it knew what had happened immediately in his own neighbourhood and with his own company; all that had occurred elsewhere he either knew nothing about, or else had heard accounts of it second hand. The great difficulty I experienced was in dividing what the relator knew of his own knowledge, and what he had heard; in some cases the information from both sources was so thoroughly knitted together that I failed, but after having heard about a hundred different stories, and cross questioned as many different people, I think I have arrived as close to the facts as is possible. I not only enquired of volunteers engaged, but went to the scene of the fight three different times, going over the ground and enquiring of farmers, some of whom had seen the whole fight from the Fenian lines, some from our own.

I do not expect that any one man who was engaged at Ridgeway will think the whole of my account of that battle correct, but if each one finds that I have described accurately what happened of *his own knowledge* I shall feel perfectly satisfied. Of course, in some points, accounts have been very contradictory, where I could not reconcile them, I have given credit to the weight of evidence.

I have been obliged from the facts as they occurred to lay the burden of the failure on other shoulders than the public have hitherto been inclined to place it, and I know that the prejudices have become so strong from an incorrect appreciation of the circumstances, that it is impossible at this late hour for me to attempt to counteract them. Still I have felt that the facts in a military point of view tend to exonerate those whom the people find fault with, and, consequently, I am bound to place them before my readers truthfully and accurately, even though they may be contrary to their settled opinions.

Although in the account of the expedition on the Tug "Robb" I have been obliged to animadvert on Colonel Dennis's actions from a military point of view, and although I honestly do not think him a good officer to have a responsible command in the field, for the reasons I have mentioned, still I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without giving him credit for his valuable services when afterwards acting as Brigade Major to Col. Lowry, for the active energetic manner in which he performed his arduous duties, and for the kindness and courtesy shown to all the officers and men who were thrown in contact with him.

I cannot conclude without expressing the obligations I am under to Col. Peacock, Lieut.-Col. Booker, Major Gilmor,

Adjutant Otter, Captains Brown, Dixon, Boustead, Adams Gardner and Whitney, and many other officers, non-commissioned officers and men, for information kindly given me relating to the movements in Port Colborne and at the Battle of Ridgeway.

I must also thankfully acknowledge the kindness of J. C. Kirkpatrick, Esq., Reeve of Chippawa, who not only gave me a great deal of information as to the movements of Friday night in Chippawa, but also kindly drove me in his carriage over the road Col. Peacock's column marched, and also along the route the Fenians took to the Battle of Ridgeway. The opportunity of going over the ground was of the greatest value to me in writing the account, and enabled me the better to appreciate the designs of the Fenian leaders.

To Mr. Couper, Postmaster of Chippawa, Dr. Kempson, John Douglas, Esq., Headley Anderson, Esq., and Samuel Dennison, Esq., of Fort Erie, I must also express my acknowledgements for information kindly given to me.

TORONTO, 1st August, 1866.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ORIGIN OF THE INVASION.

About seven hundred years ago, Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, at the head of his English archers, effected a landing on the coast of Ireland, and after various successes over the Irish chieftains, at last secured so firm a lodgment, that Henry II. of England compelled him to hold from him as his sovereign lord, the lands he had acquired by conquest. From that time until the present day, Ireland, or the greater part of it, has been an appendage of the British Crown. Looking back through the long course of years that have since elapsed, we find that the history of Ireland is little more than an account of a continual series of wars and insurrections, in which the native Irish, or the Celts, have endeavoured to throw off the yoke of their Saxon conquerors.

Although in England the Norman conquerors and the Saxons conquered have, through a series of centuries, so intermingled and united that at the present day an Englishman neither knows or cares which blood predominates in him; and although the Jacobite party and the causes which led to its formation, have ceased to exist in England, and the feelings to which they gave birth have been forgotten, yet in Ireland the very reverse has been the case.

There, the two parties, the Celts and the Saxons, have as broad marks of distinction and are as utterly divided as in the wars of Cromwell and William the Third. Religion among them seems to form a grand distinguishing mark, by which the national feelings are kept alive, and their traditions of hostility confined to well known bounds. Since the reign of William III., Ireland has been gradually improving, and the feelings of the two parties becoming less intense than before.

Nevertheless, the intrigues of the French Republic aiding the disaffected party in Ireland, caused an outbreak in 1798, which was soon put down by the Government, the rebels being dispersed, and a number of the leaders taken and executed.

In the year 1800 the Union of Great Britain and Ireland was effected. This measure was very distasteful to the National Irish party. They found their parliament taken away from them, their chief city deprived of its position as a capital, and their nation of its national character. It was not alone the effects of this measure which was so obnoxious to them, as the flagrant bribery with which they charged it was carried through the House. This feeling has led this party continually to regret what they call "the ancient glories of their race and country," and several attempts and agitations have been instituted in order to effect a repeal of the Union.

The more moderate men have endeavoured to effect this by legitimate means, by the means provided for in the constitution, and have agitated in this way to secure the end desired. The more enthusiastic and violent, those known better as the Young Ireland party, have endeavoured to effect the same end by violently dissolving the connection with Great Britain, and forming an independent government of a republican character. These attempts of both sections of the party have hitherto signally failed.

The unhappy state of affairs in Ireland, as well from these continual agitations as from a very severe period of famine under which they suffered, caused large numbers of the disaffected to emigrate to the United States of America, where many of the escaped rebels had also found a refuge. The emigration to the United States assumed immense proportions, and the increase of the people there, as well as constant additions, have so increased the Irish population that they are now numbered by millions.

The Irish race in America, living under republican institutions, and thriving in a country far richer and more prosperous

than the land they had left, naturally became imbued with republican ideas and tendencies, and soon imbibed a hatred to England and the British Empire, not only from the nursing such a feeling would receive among a people who themselves had thrown off the English authority, but also from the teachings and urgings of the leaders who had escaped for their lives from Ireland, and who blamed England because their native land was not as prosperous as the land which gave them refuge.

This feeling on the part of the Irish people in America was made use of by the leaders of the rebellion of 1848, or at least by the most enthusiastic among them, who believed that by uniting their race in Ireland and America they would be in a position to realize their day-dream of having their country an independent republic, or at least a kingdom ruled over by some modern Brian Boru. In order to carry out this idea, a few of these men organized a small society in New York, which afterwards, enlarging in its dimensions, became the Fenian Brotherhood. James Stephens, one of the men of 1848, took upon himself the duty of organizing the brotherhood in Ireland, while the task of furthering its interests in America devolved upon Colonel O'Mahoney. This was about the year 1857. For some years after that its progress seems to have been very slow, and its movements were little known, and, if known or heard of, attracted but little attention.

When the war broke out in the United States, it gave a great impetus to the Fenian organization. Up to that time the present generation had not undergone any experience in war. After a lengthened peace men get so accustomed to peaceful pursuits, and the idea of war becomes so hateful to them, that the military spirit of a nation becomes almost extinct, or at least exceedingly sluggish in its action. When a people are in that condition, it is useless to attempt to get them to embark in any undertaking likely to lead to war and bloodshed.

After, or during a war, on the other hand, the military spirit is awakened, and in some instances even created, and after a

time becomes very active : men who have left peaceful pursuits, and have become accustomed to the bustle of camps and the excitements of a soldier's life, return to their usual avocations with reluctance, and abandon their military duties with regret. Such men will generally be willing at any moment to re-engage in war, and will be always ready, upon a fair pretext, to join any cause which is likely to give them an opportunity of indulging their fondness for a soldier's life.

The leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood, fully appreciating this feeling, sought to turn it to their own advantage as well as to the benefit of the cause for which they were working. It was at once promulgated that the Fenian organization purposed attempting the deliverance of Ireland from the control of the British Government as soon as the United States authorities had succeeded in subduing the Confederate States of America. And it was also stated, in consideration of large numbers of Irishmen, with the consent of the Fenian body, enlisting in the armies of the Union in defence of the Union, and in support of its constitution, that the United States Government would, on the conclusion of its war, assist the Fenians in their designs against the British Empire.

Although there can be no doubt that the United States Government could not have authorized any such compact on its behalf, still it is much to be regretted that recruiting agents, lured by the large bounties offered, driven by the difficulty of getting recruits, and compelled by the urgent necessity of the case, often held out as an inducement to Irishmen to enlist the hope of assistance on their behalf when their own war was over. A more cruel and heartless expedient could scarcely be devised, or one more degrading to those engaged in it. If they never intended to help them, they were guilty of getting the life's blood of brave men to fight the battles of the Union on false pretences ; and if the help was intended to be given, it was a conspiracy against a friendly nation—a conspiracy without cause, and one likely to embroil a peaceful country in a bloody and unprovoked war.

Thus year by year, through the Civil War, the Fenian order prospered, its ranks were largely increased, its funds were improving day by day, and the spirit of its members becoming more enthusiastic. As soon as the war was over, and matters had partially settled down, the Fenian excitement began to increase. It became bolder in its movements, and made no secret as to its designs. A public organization was effected, a President and Senate appointed, and an Irish Republic, without a territory, was formally proclaimed. The public offices of state of this so-called Republic were filled up, and a large mansion in New York having been rented, the Irish Republic became the possessors of a "local habitation," the "name" having been previously assumed.

On these preliminary arrangements being completed, the Secretary of the Treasury of the new Republic, under the direction of the mock Government, issued a large amount of bonds, which were distributed for sale throughout the United States. They were bought up readily by the people, especially the Irish, for some time, and by this means large sums of money were obtained.

Soon, however, a disturbance took place among them, and the Secretary of War, General Sweeney, and the greater portion of the Senate, headed by Colonel Roberts, separated from Colonel O'Mahony and formed a new Republic, Colonel Roberts being President, and General Sweeney Secretary of War. The chief causes of dispute between the two factions seem to have been,—First: A dissatisfaction on the part of the Roberts-Sweeney faction as to the manner in which O'Mahony managed the financial affairs. Secondly: O'Mahony's plan of conquering Ireland, or, in other words, freeing her, was by sending men and money direct from the United States to Ireland, while the Roberts-Sweeney faction thought the true road to Ireland lay through Canada.

As far as regards the first cause very little is known, and even what is known is of no interest to those not engaged in the organization. With reference to the second cause of dis-



pute, it might be well to consider the matter a little before the invasion itself is treated of.

There can be little doubt that O'Mahony's plan of sending men, arms, and money from New York to Ireland to compete with the whole power of the British Empire, is one of the wildest of wild schemes. The difficulty of evading the British fleet, the immense disadvantage at which stores could be sent to such a distance, and the facility with which England could concentrate her troops in Ireland, show the folly of O'Mahony's plan of operations.

On the other hand, General Sweeney considered that by attacking Canada he was attacking England, and attacking her in her weakest point, in a point far removed from her base, and along a frontier of a length difficult to be guarded. By attacking Canada he would be able to bring into play all or nearly all his men, and in all probability, from the feeling some citizens of the United States have against Canada, his forces would be largely augmented by recruits from that class. Again, if he was able to take a sufficient portion of Canada to enable him to form a belligerent government, one recognized by the United States, vessels could be sent to prey upon British commerce, and the offer might be made to the United States to give up Canada to them on condition of their giving assistance in freeing Ireland. Again, by attacking Canada they might have better opportunities of fomenting a war between the United States and England, which alone would give them any ultimate chance of success. By fighting England in Canada, a large number of the English regular troops would be occupied and prevented from fighting against the Fenians in Ireland, who, of course, would rise there simultaneously with the Canadian invasion, or at any rate with its probable success. For all these reasons, therefore, General Sweeney and his party decided upon directing all their efforts against Canada, and it is with a view of giving an account of the principal attack which was made by General Sweeney upon this province that the following pages are written.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCENE OF OPERATIONS.

The Niagara frontier has always been, and always will be, a point on which an army directing its efforts against Canada from the United States would in all probability march and endeavour to effect a crossing, and it will be advisable here to give an explanation of the relative positions of the important points, in order to enable the reader the better to understand the movements which took place.

The Niagara River leaves the lower end of Lake Erie at Buffalo, and running in a general northerly direction for about thirty-five miles, empties itself into Lake Ontario. About four miles from Lake Erie the river is divided by Grand Island, the main channel running between the Canadian shore and the Island. At the foot of Grand Island lies Navy Island, on the Canadian side, it being about fifteen miles from Lake Erie and about one and a-half miles above the Falls. From the Falls to Queenston, some seven or eight miles, the river flows precipitously between perpendicular banks some 250 feet high; at Queenston the banks diminish to some sixty feet in height, and the river flows smoothly for eight miles into Lake Ontario. Two miles from the Falls is the Suspension Bridge, the only means of crossing between Chippewa and Queenston.

The Welland Canal, which connects Lakes Erie and Ontario, runs from Port Colborne on Lake Erie, distant about seventeen miles from Fort Erie, northerly through the villages of Welland, Port Robinson, and Thorold, to St. Catharines, and thence to Port Dalhousie on Lake Ontario, following a course nearly parallel to the Niagara River, and at an average distance of about thirteen miles from it. The Welland River, running from the west at right angles to the Niagara River, intersects the canal at Welland, and empties into the Niagara at Chippewa just above the Falls. It will be seen from this

that there is a square section of country enclosed between the Welland Canal and the Niagara River, and Lake Erie and the Welland River. It may here be mentioned that the Welland River is navigable from where it intersects the canal to its mouth. Between Port Robinson and the Niagara River there are only three bridges on the Welland River—two, the railway and the carriage road bridges, side by side at Chippewa, and the other four miles up at a place called Montrose.

The section of country which has just been described was the scene of the whole operations of the Fenian and Canadian forces, and it is very well intersected with railways. First there is the old Buffalo and Lake Huron Road, now called the Grand Trunk Railway, which connects with the Great Western at Paris and runs through Port Colborne along the lake shore to Fort Erie; Second, the Welland Railway which unites Lakes Erie and Ontario, running from Port Dalhousie along the Welland Canal to Port Colborne; and lastly, the Erie and Ontario Railway, just finished, which runs from Fort Erie along the bank of the Niagara River to the town of Niagara on Lake Ontario.

It should be remembered that only a few miles of the Niagara River frontier between Fort Erie and the Bridge was open to attack. Grand Island, for a long distance, covered the Canadian shore from a crossing, for the following reason: Grand Island is sparsely settled, and there is no harbour and no vessels ever lying on the Canadian side of it, consequently an enemy must come around the lower end of it, between there and the Falls, a distance of some two miles, or else cross above, between it and Fort Erie, a space of some four miles. This peculiar conformation of the river in reality gives only six miles available for crossing, out of some twenty miles in length.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CROSSING OF THE FENIANS.

During the last two or three days of May, 1866, the telegraphic despatches brought rumours of bodies of men moving northward, along the various railroads leading to the lake borders. These men travelled, for the greater part, unarmed; and, if interrogated as to their destination, stated that they were going to California, to work in the mines. When they stated this intention while moving northward, they had some colour for their statements; but, when they continued the story after turning eastward from Cleveland, towards Buffalo, the impudence of the falsehood was unparalleled. On the 31st May, it was reported that large numbers of these men, whom no one doubted were Fenians, had arrived in Buffalo and had left there for some unknown point; but that it was supposed they had gone further east.

This information led to a belief that the design of the Fenians was to effect a crossing on the St. Lawrence, or in the Eastern Townships, and not at Fort Erie. There were many, however, who were not deceived by this. It had long been anticipated by those who took the trouble to think upon the matter, and by those who, contrary to the general opinion, believed that the Fenians intended to attack Canada, that Fort Erie would be the first and most likely place to be attacked. There were many reasons on which to ground such a belief. In the first place, it was absolutely necessary that the movement should be conducted with the greatest celerity and secrecy; and, it was therefore absolutely impossible to concentrate a large number of men in a country place or a small town, without attracting a great deal of attention, and without experiencing a great difficulty in feeding them. In a large city, on the other hand, like Buffalo, 2 or 3,000 men could be easily accommodated, without any difficulty, as to

food; and without, to any great extent, inconveniencing the inhabitants, or even attracting their attention. Their numbers could be more carefully concealed, and their movements could not be so easily interfered with. In Buffalo there were more resident Fenians than in any of the border cities; and, the immense amount of shipping in the harbours of Buffalo and Black Rock, rendered it easy for the Fenians to procure the means of effecting a crossing, while the enormous amount of trade which is continually going on there, the active movements, hither and thither, of numberless canal boats, tugs, schooners, and steamers, employed on legitimate business, rendered it almost impossible for the United States authorities to search out and discover which particular boat, or set of boats, was engaged to carry over the Fenians.

Again: there were no Canadian or regular forces in Fort Erie, or within 50 miles of it; and, the chance of taking it, and pushing on, and destroying the Welland Canal, was a prospect that appealed strongly to their feelings. The destruction of the Welland Canal; or, at least, the suspension of traffic on it for a time, would be an enormous injury to Canada and her trade, while it would be a great advantage to Buffalo, inasmuch as the whole trade, or the greater part of what now finds its way to the sea by the Welland Canal, would be diverted to Buffalo, and through the Erie Canal to Albany and New York.

On Thursday evening, the 31st May, the authorities in Canada first began seriously to apprehend an immediate crossing. The Fenians gathered that night, at their various head-quarters in Buffalo—many of them armed with muskets, bayonets, &c.—and it soon became currently rumoured about the streets that a movement would probably be attempted that night. At a later hour they separated at their head-quarters, apparently going home for the night. They marched off in straggling parties, by different roads, their movements being skillfully confused, until they reached Black Rock, where the several columns united, and proceeded, with silence and cele-

rity, to Pratt's Furnace, a little below Black Rock, where some canal boats and a tug were in readiness to convey them across the river. Nine waggons, heavily loaded with arms and ammunition, were also waiting for them. The whole force was carried across, carrying their stores with them, and were landed at the Lower Ferry dock—about a mile below the Village of Fort Erie—immediately in front of Mrs. Anderson's residence. They landed with loud cheers, and having distributed their arms, immediately threw out pickets in every direction.

The Fenians, shortly after landing, moved up to the village. Col. O'Neil, who was in command of the force, ordered Dr. Kempson, the reeve, to furnish rations at once for one thousand men: a meeting of the municipal council was hurriedly called and arrangements made to provide the food. Immediately after this was done, Col. O'Neil sent a force along the Grand Trunk Railway towards Port Colborne; this force burnt Sourwine's Bridge on that road. The main body moved down to Frenchman's Creek, and encamped on Mr. Newbigging's farm, hurriedly strengthening their position by rough breastworks formed with the fence rails. Small parties were sent out in every direction, seizing horses and hurriedly organizing a force of mounted men for scouting purposes. The greater part of Friday, the 1st June, was passed by the Fenians in this way.

It was, of course, impossible for our Canadian authorities to form any accurate idea of the intentions and plans of the Fenian leaders in this section of the country. There was little doubt, however, that the first object, on their part, would be the destruction of the Locks on the Welland Canal. To effect this, their proper course would have been as follows:—

From the description of the general features of the country, given in a former chapter, it will be remembered that Lake Erie, the Welland River and Canal, and the Niagara River, enclose a section of country very nearly square, with a railway running from Chip-

pawa to Fort Erie, and another from Port Colborne to the same place. Col O'Neil would readily assume that our forces would come down upon him by one of these routes, and most probably would make use of both. His base of operations consisted of the Niagara River, between Chippawa and Fort Erie, with the possibility, in certain contingencies, of its being changed to the lake shore, between Port Colborne and Fort Erie. If he marched upon Port Colborne along the Grand Trunk Railway, he was leaving himself liable to be cut off from his base by a force coming down from Chippawa along the Erie and Ontario Railway.

The proper plan for Col. O'Neil to have adopted, assuming that the Welland Canal was his objective point, would have been to have landed a small portion of his command at the lower Ferry, who should have marched to the Village, there breakfasted, and then, pushed on along the line of the Grand Trunk Railway as far as they could get in the direction of Port Colborne, burning all the bridges along the road, and cutting the telegraph wires. With the main portion of his force, he should have dropped down the Niagara River in his boats, to Chippawa. He landed at the lower Ferry at half-past three in the morning, if he had gone straight to Chippawa he would have reached there at half-past five, two hours later. After breakfasting there, and burning the bridges over the Welland River, he should then have marched by the right bank of the river to Port Robinson, a distance of some eight miles, burning the Montrose Bridge on his way, the only bridge on the river between Chippawa and Port Robinson. At Port Robinson he would have been in a position to destroy the locks on the Canal, and also the Welland Railway which passes through the Village.

By pursuing this course, the Fenians would have thoroughly protected their right flank by the destruction of the bridges over the Welland River, that river being navigable throughout the whole distance, and being therefore perfectly unfordable. In addition to this, our forces were not prepared at the time

with pontoon trains, and had no means of effecting a crossing. The left flank of the Fenians would by this plan have been protected by Lake Erie, and our forces would have been compelled to attack them from the front, between Welland and Port Colborne, they could then have easily fallen back to the river, and escaped on their boats to the other side, this could all have been accomplished in one day, had they been sufficiently energetic. Fortunate indeed was it for us that they bungled and hesitated as they did. Having thus considered and discussed what the Fenians might have done, and what our authorities had to fear, I shall proceed to show in the next chapter the movements made to counteract their designs.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

Early on Friday morning, General Napier who commands the regular troops in Upper Canada, received information of the crossing at Fort Erie. The evening previous, the Government had ordered 400 of the "Queen's Own" Rifles of Toronto to be in readiness to leave for Port Colborne at an early hour in the morning, they left on Friday morning early by the steamer City of Toronto for Port Dalhousie, and then proceeded by the Welland Railway to Port Colborne. Col. Dennis who was in command, being ordered to occupy, and if necessary to entrench a position there, and wait for re-inforcements and further orders, before any attack was made on the enemy.

The greater portion of the Volunteer Force of Western Canada, except the cavalry, was ordered out for active service at an early hour in the forenoon, and a proclamation issued placing them under the Imperial Military authorities, arrangements were at once made for providing transport for troops, trains were held in readiness, and steamers detained for military purposes. But for some hours General Napier did not send any more troops to the Niagara Frontier, as from the numerous reports of landings of Fenians in different directions, he had reason to fear that the raid on Fort Erie was a feint to draw troops from other places. About 12 o'clock on Friday, finding all was quiet elsewhere, he began to concentrate troops for the purpose of driving out the force which had landed at Fort Erie.

Col. Peacock commanding the 16th Regiment, was at once placed in command of the whole force on the Niagara frontier, and instructed to proceed to his post. A Battery of the Royal Artillery under Lieut. Col. Hoste, and 200 of the 47th under Major Lodder were despatched about noon to Hamilton, and being joined there by Col. Peacock with 200 men of his batta-

lion, the whole proceeded by Great Western Railway to St. Catharines. Col. Peacock's instructions were that he was to make St. Catharines his base, and to act according to his own discretion, as to advancing on Clifton or elsewhere, and to attack the enemy as soon as he could do so with force sufficient to ensure success.

At this time he had under his command, in addition to the force which accompanied him, seven companies of Volunteers stationed at St. Catharines under command of Lieut. Colonel Currie, the "Queen's Own" at Port Colborne, under command of Lieut. Col. Dennis, and the 13th Battalion Hamilton Volunteers, under command of Lieut. Col. Booker at Dunnville, and he was informed he would be re-inforced at St. Catharines, that evening, by eight hundred men, and two troops of cavalry.

On Col. Peacock's arrival at St. Catharines, he received information that 800 Fenians were marching on the Suspension Bridge, and were actually within two or three miles of Chippawa. He immediately pushed on to the Bridge leaving directions for all troops arriving at St. Catharines to follow him as soon as possible. On arriving at the Bridge, he heard that the enemy had not as yet reached Chippawa, and being anxious to save the bridges over the Welland River, and being well aware of the importance of Chippawa as a strategical point, he pressed on with the 400 Infantry in the train, preceded by a pilot engine, ordering the Battery to march by the road, there being a doubt as to whether there was platform accommodation at Chippawa to unload the guns. It was dark when Col. Peacock and his force arrived at Chippawa, and consequently he bivouacked there that night, making his headquarters at the house of J. C. Kirkpatrick Esq., the Reeve.

Col. Peacock was at this time fairly entered on his first campaign, and during this night had to decide upon his plan of operations, and take steps to carry it into execution; and before relating any further the events of this night it will be well here to consider the circumstances under which he was placed, and the disadvantages under which he laboured.

In the first place his greatest want was a small force of Cavalry for scouting purposes, in fact the frontier should have been picketed with a body of cavalry from the moment an attack became probable. Had that been done, perhaps the raid would never have taken place, and if it had, the mounted men hovering about the enemy would never have lost sight of them, would have prevented them from spreading over the country, would have saved the farmers' horses and provisions, would have found out the numbers and designs of the enemy, and our authorities would have received full and accurate information of all their movements. No cavalry were on the front, however, and none were ordered out until the last moment when it was too late for them to do real service. There is no doubt, whatever, that to this great want of cavalry may be attributed the failure of the whole campaign.

The cavalry force of this Province is small in numbers, and, consequently, weak in influence. All the officers in high positions in this country are either infantry or artillery officers, and consequently they have not any sympathy with the cavalry arm of the service, nor as full an appreciation of its value as a cavalry officer would have. In addition to this cavalry have latterly been much decried and neglected, and a strong prejudice exists among some members of the ministry against that force. They have heard it said that cavalry cannot break squares although the military history of the last 2000 years proves conclusively that they can; and although Napoleon hardly ever fought a battle where his Cuirassiers did not overthrow infantry squares. They have heard it said that this country is too much cut up with fences and woods to allow of charges of cavalry to be made, and for these reasons they jump to the conclusion that cavalry in future wars may be done away with.

They forget or do not know that cavalry are the eyes, the ears, the feelers and the feeders of an army. They forget that there are generally 20 or 30 days of marching and countermarching, of camping and bivouacking, for one day of

battle, and that during these 20 or 30 days, the general depends for his information, the troops for the safe arrival of their provisions, the camp for its security while asleep, the men for time to rest, on the activity, vigilance, and efficiency of the light cavalry. Without cavalry the general can learn nothing of the movements of the enemy, the camp can never be secure against surprise, and the men compelled to keep up a great degree of vigilance would be wearied out with incessant watching.

It is particularly unfortunate that this prejudice, this unreasonable prejudice against cavalry should have so strong a hold upon some of our authorities and especially upon the mind of the Minister of Militia.* Although we must admit that he is right not to waste the money of the people in supporting a branch of the service which he really believes is useless, and although he is to be commended for thus acting conscientiously in his administration of an office of public trust, still it cannot be too much regretted that he is unfortunately so imbued with this prejudice against the cavalry force, that he will not permit the increase of its numbers, or even make use of it for outpost duties, a service for which it is peculiarly applicable.† In consequence of this feeling no cavalry were ordered out until Friday afternoon the 1st June, so that at the time they were really wanted Colonel Peacock was deficient in that force.

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* It cannot be that Col. Macdougall can approve of the small number of cavalry in this country. In his very valuable work on the "Theory of War," he lays down the proportion of cavalry in an army, at one-fourth of the whole. In Canada, the cavalry consists of about one-seventieth of the whole!

† As an instance, it may be mentioned, that Captain Carter was posted on the frontier, in the eastern townships, with 200 infantry, as an outpost, and was ordered to fall back on his supports, in case of attack. Accordingly, on a rumour reaching him that the Fenians were coming, he retired, with such haste, that it is a question whether cavalry could have caught him. The section is very suitable for cavalry; but the Minister of Militia, not believing in that arm of the service, used infantry instead. The result proved he was right. It was more economical, which is a great point in war; and his fleet-footed infantry showed, by their speed, that there was no use paying for horses when the men's legs could carry them as fast as they could go mounted. The country should congratulate itself on the new description of force which it is producing.

It may be considered that as an officer of volunteer cavalry I have no right to criticize the acts of my superiors. I joined the volunteer cavalry from patriotic motives, from love of the service, and for the purpose of defending my country in case of need. During eleven and a half years spent in that service I have sacrificed large sums of money and injured my business seriously by time devoted to it gratuitously. I do not consider that these services, these sacrifices, take from me the right as a loyal subject to agitate as a citizen those principles which I believe advantageous to the country I belong to. If I see a campaign lost, a great moral advantage gained to the enemy through the effects of a prejudice on the part of the Minister of Militia, I consider it my duty as a loyal citizen to endeavour to have it rectified in the future. Again, as a cavalry officer, I would be unworthy to hold a commission in that noble arm of the service, did a desire to obtain favour for personal advantage prevent me from speaking out or writing plainly on behalf of the service to which I have the honor to belong.

Another great want that Col. Peacock laboured under was a good military map, one showing him the roads, villages, &c. He was supplied with Dewe's post office map, a map well suited for the purpose for which it was published, but calculated to be of more injury than benefit to an officer planning a campaign. The effect of the inaccuracies of this map will be explained hereafter.

The want of an efficient staff was also felt not only by Col. Peacock, but much more still the next day by Lieut.-Col. Booker when he was engaged with the enemy.

Colonel Peacock being deficient in cavalry endeavoured to improvise a scouting force, by getting a few mounted men in the neighbourhood to ride out in the direction of Fort Erie to seek information * These men being civilians, most of them

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* It has been said, that Col. Peacock should have mounted some of his officers and sent them out as scouts. The economy of this idea of sending educated men, (paid highly to act as officers in looking after their men,) away from their

unarmed or but partially armed, without any of the ideas of a soldier, without the feeling that they had embraced the duties of a soldier, and that their business was to fight, without the *esprit de corps* of a regular force, without the feeling of confidence which a small patrol will give to each other, formed but a sorry substitute for a cavalry scouting force. The consequence was that the information brought back by them was very conflicting and in many cases very erroneous. The numbers of the enemy were magnified, and although the general weight of evidence fixed the location of the Fenian camp at Frenchman's Creek, the fears of the scouts and their local feelings led them to imagine or to report upon very slight foundation that the whole force of the enemy were coming to Chippawa.*

In planning his campaign, therefore, it will be seen that Colonel Peacock was at Chippawa on Friday Night with 400 regular infantry and a battery, and that he expected to be reinforced in the night or morning early, at Chippawa, by the St. Catherines volunteers, Lieut.-Col. Currie, the 10th Royals, Major Boxall, and 150 men of the 47th, under Lieut.-Col. Villiers, in all about 1500 men; at Port Colborne he had the Queens Own, Lieut.-Col. Dennis, and the 13th Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Booker, and the York and Caledonia Rifles, in all about 850 under command of Lieut.-Col. Booker; and as above stated the information was that the enemy were roughly entrenching at Frenchman's Creek, and were marching or

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commands, to do duty which would be done better by a small force of cavalry, at a smaller cost, is so striking, that I suppose I will only have to hint it, to have it acted upon in the future.

* To show the value of scouts improvised in this way, an incident worthy of mention is said to have occurred in New Germany; while scouts were being gathered up a man volunteered to ride down to the Fenian camp and bring back valuable information if he was provided with a horse; being very enthusiastic in his loyalty and offers of service, a horse was pressed for his use, and he went off to the Fenian camp and gave them all the information possible about Colonel Peacock's force, and gave them the horse to use. He has not since been seen, the horse was found a day or two afterwards thoroughly used up, and our government have paid the value of it.

likely to march towards Chippawa ; and that their force was between 1000 and 1500 and likely to be reinforced before morning.

Colonel Peacock, although an officer who had never seen service in the field, is nevertheless a thoroughly educated military man, having obtained with the highest honors a first-class certificate in the senior class at the great Military College at Sandhurst. He is a strict disciplinarian, active, intelligent, and vigilant, cool, and calculating ; and although a man of undoubted pluck, is nevertheless too good a soldier to risk the loss of his command for the sake of winning the doubtful reputation of bravery by a reckless carelessness in the management of his men.

Being, as I have said, a thoroughly educated military man, and of a decided military talent, he at once perceived the difficulty and probable danger of attacking on two lines of operations. He had several plans good and bad open to him.

1st. He might have marched by the river road to Fort Erie, and sent Lieut.-Col. Booker by the Grand Trunk Railway and along the River to Frenchman's Creek, and have cut off the Fenians, and attacked them in concert. This was the plan afterwards proposed by Lieut.-Col. Dennis and acceded to by Capt. Akers. This plan could only have originated in an unmilitary mind, and one perfectly ignorant of the military art. The first great principle of war is "*always to oppose the mass of your army to fractions of the enemy ;*" and another great principle, a deduction from the first, is "*always to act upon interior lines*"—that is to say, upon the inner lines, so that your army may concentrate upon any one point before the enemy can concentrate there. Of course this is but to prevent the application of the first principle against yourself.

Now in this plan both these principles would be violated. Colonel Peacock's force and Lieut.-Col. Booker's would be acting upon exterior lines. The Fenians being between them, or upon the interior lines, by marching towards Chippawa or Port Colborne, could fall upon one column before the other

could come up ; or, in other words, oppose the mass of their army to the fractions of ours. This was what actually happened afterwards by the activity of the Fenian leaders.

Again, if the idea were to prevent them getting away, it is to be remembered that Colonel Peacock's duty was to *protect the Welland Canal*, to drive them out of the country, and to confine their depredations to as small a compass as possible. And it must be also remembered that if their retreat was cut off from the Niagara River, they would certainly endeavour to retreat some other way, and the road being open to the Welland Canal, they would make a dash for it, and seizing some of the numerous vessels which are always to be found upon it, they could embark and make their escape even if they did not delay long enough to destroy some of the locks on the canal. Taking all these points into consideration, there is no doubt that this plan was very injudicious, and not calculated to effect the end Colonel Peacock was ordered to keep in view.

2nd. Another plan would have been to have concentrated his whole force at Chippawa, Port Colborne, or Port Robinson ; but this was not advisable, as by doing so he would have uncovered some of those places.

3rd. A third plan, and the one which he adopted, was to unite his forces from Port Colborne and Chippawa at some point midway between these places, and from there march united upon the Fenians. On looking at his map, Stevensville was the only place marked upon it at which he could unite. It was well chosen for the purpose ; it was about ten miles from Chippawa, about thirteen miles from Port Colborne, and about ten miles from Fort Erie. If Colonel Peacock had his forces united at Stevensville, he was in a position to prevent their march towards Chippawa as well as towards Port Colborne, and would be able to fall upon them in full force whichever road they took ; at the same time his position there would have thoroughly protected the Welland Canal.

In order to carry out this plan, he telegraphed for all his



reinforcements to push on and join him at Chippewa, ordering them at the same time to bring provisions with them in their havresacks, so that there should be no delay in breakfasting. In order to prevent the Fenians, as far as possible, from receiving reinforcements, or from escaping, if so inclined, he telegraphed to Port Colborne to Lieut.-Col. Dennis (Lieut.-Col. Booker not having arrived at this time) directing him to place a detachment on board the International Ferry Boat, which he had ordered round from Buffalo, and to send it down to Fort Erie to *patrol the river* and prevent reinforcements coming over, or *the Fenians from escaping*. Lieut.-Col. Dennis, finding that the International Ferry Boat was not coming, telegraphed to Dunnville for the tug "Robb," owned by Captain McCallum, to come down.

Colonel Peacock then made arrangements for the junction of his forces with Lieut.-Col. Booker's. At the time he decided upon the hour of meeting, the greater portion of his force was yet to arrive, and not knowing at what hour in the night or in the morning they might come in, he was unable to name an earlier hour to start than 6 a.m., which would make his hour of arrival at Stevensville between 10 and 11 a.m. Not having a map showing the roads about Port Colborne and between there and Stevensville, and being unable in Chippewa to obtain accurate information as to the roads or the condition of them, and having received at the same time very conflicting information as to the movements of the enemy, he found that it was impossible for him to lay down the route Lieut.-Col. Booker should take, or the hour at which he should start in order to meet him at Stevensville between 10 and 11 a.m. Under these circumstances he thought it desirable to send an officer across to Lieut.-Col. Booker who should be thoroughly acquainted with his plan, and would be able, in case of doubt or difficulty, to consult with Lieut.-Col. Booker, and see that the spirit of the plan was carried out even if the details were varied.

Acting upon this idea, Colonel Peacock chose Capt. Akers, R.E., for this service, and explained his plan and the

reasons which induced him to adopt it, and explained to him that he wished the junction to take place at Stevensville, between 10 and 11 a.m.; but, with reference to the roads, he left it entirely optional with Lieut.-Col. Booker and Capt. Akers to choose a road after making thorough enquiries as to the most available route, and the route most remote from the position of the enemy—going even so far as to tell Capt. Akers that they might go along the Welland Railway, northerly, to a point opposite Stevensville, and then march due east to Stevensville; or, take the Grand Trunk Railway for some miles and then cut across the country in a diagonal direction to the point of junction. Ridgeway was never mentioned as a point to leave the railway; and, there is little doubt that, with a correct map, Col. Peacock would have positively forbidden it—Ridgeway being nearer Fort Erie than Stevensville, and the further march being, consequently, brought nearer to the enemy's position than the occasion called for. From information obtained since there is no doubt that the shortest and safest road lay from Sherk's Crossing across country to Stevensville.

We will now leave Col. Peacock in Chippawa, listening to the reports of scouts, and farmers coming in, and obtaining information as to the roads, etc., and follow Capt. Akers to Port Colborne, and describe what happened there, and how the plan of campaign was carried out.

We must go back a little, in the order of our story, and give an account of what happened at Port Colborne, until the arrival of Capt. Akers. It will be remembered that Lieut.-Col. Dennis was sent there, on the morning of Friday, with 400 men of the Queen's Own, and directed to occupy and, if necessary, entrench a position there and wait for further orders before an attack was made. He arrived at Port Colborne about noon, and hearing the enemy were not very near the village, billeted the men, to enable them to get their dinners, and sent out scouts during the afternoon, to discover the position of the Fenians. The day and evening was occupied

in this way ; no attempt whatever at entrenching having been made. In the evening, about 11 p.m., Lieut.-Col. Booker arrived with his battalion, the 13th of Hamilton, and being the senior officer, took command of the whole force.

At 10 p.m., Mr. Graham, the Collector of Customs at Fort Erie, arrived with information of the exact position of the Fenian camp. This was on Frenchman's Creek, a mile below the Lower Ferry, on Mr. Newbigging's farm. He had been in their camp at 6 o'clock that evening, and was of opinion there were not more than 700 men, and that, as they had been drinking hard during the day, they would certainly fall an easy prey to any force that might attack them. Lieut. Col. Dennis' orders were positive not to attack until further orders—the same orders were binding on Lieut.-Col. Booker—and, consequently, they could not properly move to the attack which Mr. Graham urged them to make, and which he stated would certainly be successful. In order to induce them to move at once to the attack, he suggested that, probably, Col. Peacock was endeavouring to keep the volunteers back in order that the regulars should have all the credit of capturing the Fenians.

This reasoning, and the prospect of success, was too much for Lieut.-Col. Dennis. Col. Dennis is a volunteer officer who, for a year, commanded the Toronto Field Battery ; and, on leaving that, was appointed Brigade Major. When the Military School was first organized, he obtained a first class certificate ; and, at the camp at Laprairie, was appointed a Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General ; but, at no time did the officers of the force look upon him as a good drill ; although, as an office-man, in the position of Brigade Major, no one could do the duty better. He knew nothing of military science, or of the different branches of the art of war. He is possessed of an exceedingly sanguine and enthusiastic temperament ; never thinks of defeat ; is rather visionary in his plans, and never provides against disaster. He is not deficient in pluck, but has not that sound, cautious judgment

which is absolutely necessary in a man holding a responsible command in the field.

It seems that Lieut.-Col. Dennis prevailed upon Lieut.Col. Booker to decide upon moving at once to Fort Erie, by rail, to attack the Fenians at Frenchman's Creek. The troops were all put under arms about 12 or 1 o'clock that night, and were loaded upon the cars, and a message sent to Col. Peacock by Col. Booker, informing him that he had given orders to attack the enemy at Fort Erie, subject to his approval. Col. Peacock did not answer this knowing that Capt. Akers would be there before his answer could arrive, with orders for their guidance. Capt. Akers arrived at Port Colborne about 1.30 a.m. on Saturday morning and found the whole force under arms and in the cars. On his arrival, Lieut.-Col. Dennis was anxious to move off at once to the attack, and Lieut.-Colonel Booker was prepared to carry out the proposal if properly authorized. Whether any of the three had reflected on the propriety of moving a large force by rail, through a wooded country, at night, and through a section not properly reconnoitred, and in close proximity to an active enemy, does not appear in the official reports.

The result was, however, that the three decided upon a plan that may be best told in Capt. Akers' words: "The plan was as follows:—Lieut.-Col. Booker to proceed by rail to Erie, with the greater part of his force, to arrive at Fort Erie at 8 a.m. Lieut.-Col. Dennis and myself to go round the coast in a steam tug, taking a company of Volunteer Artillery to reconnoitre the shore between Fort Erie and Black Creek, and to return to Fort Erie in time to meet Col. Booker at 8. Should Col. Peacock approve of this he would march by the river road from Chippawa, and make a combined attack with Col. Booker at some point between Fort Erie and Black Creek, cutting off the enemy's retreat by the river,—the tug to be employed in cruising up and down the river, cutting off any boats that might attempt to escape, and communicating between the forces advancing from Chippawa and from Fort

Erie. I communicated this proposed change to Col. Peacock both by letter and telegram.

The plan was merely a modification of that proposed by Lieut.-Col. Dennis who wished to move at once with the volunteers, without arranging a junction with Col. Peacock. Before receiving an answer from Col. Peacock, I went off in the tug with Col. Dennis and the Company of Artillery, leaving word with Lieut.-Col. Booker to take care and obtain Col. Peacock's approval to the proposed change before acting on it, and explaining the plan previously determined on, in case Col. Peacock should desire him to adhere to it."*

The above official account by Capt. Akers shows at once the position Col. Peacock was placed in, the difficulties he laboured under, and the little chance he had of succeeding when his orders were disobeyed, as the report, above quoted from shows. In the first place, there was the commanding officer's plan changed by his subordinates, almost at the moment of execution. The three officers whom he had charged with the execution of his orders, even including the staff officer who carried them, coolly forming themselves into a mimic council of war, aided by a customs officer, and unitedly deciding upon a plan which has been previously shown to be absurd, a plan for cutting off their retreat to the east, but leaving the whole country open to them to the west, as well as uncovering the canal they were sent to protect.

Again, Lieut.-Col Dennis' instructions were to wait further orders before any attack was made, and yet Capt. Akers says he was anxious to move with the volunteers at once, without

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* The substance of these instructions were taken down in writing at the time, by Lieut.-Col. Booker, at Capt. Aker's dictation. They were as follows:—

" *Memo.*

" Move at not later than 5.30. 5, if Bread be ready. Move to depôt, at Erie, and wait till 7. If not communicated with, before 7, *march to Frenchman's Creek.*

" If 'no,' by telegraph:—

" Disembark at Ridgeway and march to *Stephensville* at 9 to 9.30. Send pilot engine to communicate with Col. Dennis, at Erie, with telegrams."

arranging a junction with Col. Peacock. Capt. Akers was sent to go with Lieut.-Col. Booker, and consult and advise with him on Col. Peacock's plan, and assist him in carrying it out. Col. Dennis was sent to command the "Queen's Own," and yet, before receiving any answer from Col. Peacock, both these officers, in disobedience of orders, went off in the tug to carry out their own plan.

The only way in which their conduct can be accounted for is, that they were so confident that Colonel Peacock would at once fall in with their plan of operation in lieu of his own, that they never, for one moment, calculated that his answer would be in the negative. Being imbued with this idea, it can readily be imagined that Capt. Akers would not be very particular in going into details, and explaining minutely to Lieut.-Col. Booker the plan which they both looked upon as virtually abandoned, it can also be conceived, even if Capt. Akers did enter minutely into the details of the plan laid down by Col. Peacock, that Lieut.-Col. Booker, believing that it was a useless precaution, would not give so close attention to it, or be able so clearly to remember it, as if he felt when he heard it that he was about setting out to put it in execution.

It also happened, unfortunately, that Capt. Akers, fearing the delays which so often occur in the movements of a large number of men, as a matter of precaution, directed them to start an hour earlier than they should, and to be an hour earlier at Stevensville, thinking that in all probability at least an hour would be lost in setting off or on the march, and that if they were before the time they might be kept back a little on the way. If he had staid with them to have kept them back, it would have been all right, but unfortunately he was away when he was wanted.

Lieut.-Col. Dennis and Capt. Akers, as stated in the report, without receiving any answer from Col. Peacock, left Port Colborne about 4 a. m. in the tug "Robb" which had at that time arrived, taking with them the Welland Garrison Battery under command of Capt. Richard S. King, and a few men of

the Dunnville Naval Company under command of Capt. McCallum. The particulars of this expedition will be described in a later chapter.

After they had left Port Colborne, Lieut.-Col. Booker received in answer a telegram* from Col. Peacock, directing him to adhere strictly to the first plan, the particulars of which had been carried to him by Capt. Akers. Lieut.-Col. Booker therefore had to set out upon his march, without the assistance it was intended he should have received from Capt. Akers, and without the opportunity of referring to him for enlightenment on those parts of his instructions which he did not clearly understand.

Having his men all ready to start in the cars, and having heard that the Railway was clear as far as Fort Erie, he decided to go by train as far as Ridgeway, and to keep his men in the cars, or at least under arms for the short time he would have to delay before starting. Having his men thus all ready to start, there occurred none of that delay which Capt. Akers had anticipated, and to provide against which, he had named an earlier hour for starting. Being all ready in the cars to start, and only waiting for a particular hour to arrive, it can readily be believed that he would be likely to start a little before the time, rather than after it. However this may be, there is no doubt, that Lieut.-Col. Booker started at least, as early as 5 a.m., an hour or more earlier than necessary. Immediately after the force had left, a telegraph arrived from Col. Peacock, directing Lieut.-Col. Booker to delay his march for one hour, which would make his time of arrival at Stevensville between 11 and 12, cautiously feeling his way in the direction of the rendezvous. Mr. Stovin of the Welland Railway, seeing the importance of the message, took a hand-car and followed Lieut.-Col. Booker as fast as he could. On get-

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* Col. Peacock's telegram was as follows:

Chippawa, 3.45 a. m.

Have received your message of 3 a.m. I do not approve of it. Follow original plan. Acknowledge receipt of this.

GEORGE PEACOCK.

ting near Ridgeway the men refused to go any farther, and getting out he got a waggon and drove on in the direction of where the battle of Ridgeway was at this time commencing, after going as far as the man could drive him, he walked on and gave Lieut.-Col. Booker the message.

It will be necessary to leave Lieut.-Col. Booker's column on their way to Ridgeway, and go back to Col. Peacock whom we left at Chippawa gathering up information and trace the causes which led to his telegram directing Lieut.-Col. Booker to delay an hour.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Col. Peacock's re-inforcements were to join him some time in the morning, and being anxious that there should be no delay in starting, he telegraphed back to Hamilton and St. Catharines, directing that the re-inforcements should bring with them a supply of cooked provisions, so that no delay should be occasioned by waiting to get breakfast for the men, after they arrived.

At about 4.30 a.m. the expected re-inforcements came up, and after being unloaded, Col. Peacock mentioned to the officers commanding that he should start at six o'clock, it being then nearly five. They at once objected on account of their men not having had any breakfast, and very little to eat the whole of the previous day, and they had been unable to bring anything with them, as they were unprovided with havresacks in which to carry it. Being unwilling to set out upon a very severe march, to finish probably with a severe battle, and through a country where it would be difficult to get food, Col. Peacock decided it would be better to wait an hour to enable the men to get breakfast, and immediately telegraphed to Lieut.-Col. Booker to delay his march an hour. This message, it will be remembered, did not reach Lieut.-Col. Booker till he was already engaged with the enemy. Had he started at the proper time, he would have received the message before he left, for even to have reached Stevensville at 9.30, it was not necessary for him to have left Port Colborne until 6, he



was at the battle ground 3 miles from Stevensville at 7.30, and if not interrupted would have reached Stevensville at 8.30, about an hour earlier than Capt. Akers mentioned, and two hours before Col. Peacock's time of junction. This mistake of one hour led to his not receiving the message to delay, and therefore caused him to be really three hours too soon.

It must not be forgotten, that, at the time Col. Peacock decided to wait, that there was no reason for him to fear any ill result from the delay. At that time he expected that a heavy battle would take place, before the Fenians would be driven out, and that instead of the object being to prevent them getting out of the country, the opinion of every one was, that the great difficulty would be to drive them out, and that he was right in proceeding cautiously with that object in view. At any rate he anticipated that the tug would have prevented their escape.

Such was the plan of campaign adopted, such were the orders given, such the mistakes made, such the exact position of affairs, as each column marched off to perform its allotted share in the contemplated operations. How these combined movements dovetailed into each other, how they became disjointed in their working and confused in the execution, will be better understood by following the course of the three columns into which our forces were divided, considering first, Lieut.-Col. Booker's command and the engagement it entered into; secondly, the march of Col. Peacock's column; and thirdly, the expedition on the tug "Robb," under the guidance of Lieut.-Col. Dennis and Capt. Akers.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BATTLE OF RIDGEWAY.

We have already seen that Capt. Akers, acting upon the information received from the Customs officer as to the position of the Fenians, had decided that the best route from Port Colborne to Stevensville, was by rail to Ridgeway and from there to Stevensville by the road. The information was, that the Fenians were encamped at Frenchman's Creek at 6 p.m. But that was no proof where they would be at 7 a.m. next morning. Hereafter, in describing the Fenian line of march, it will be shewn that they were on the march to Ridgeway on Lieut.-Col. Booker's arrival there.

Lieut.-Col. Booker was, on this eventful morning, for the first time in his life, in command of a Brigade. He was an old volunteer officer, although still young in years. He had served in the Hamilton Field Battery for some time before the Volunteer force of 1855 was organized, and from that time to the present has been an enthusiastic and zealous officer. He was appointed commandant of the active force in Hamilton, in 1857, and a few years ago, while still holding that position, he organized the 13th Battalion of Volunteers in Hamilton. He always had the reputation of being a good officer, and was the first to obtain a first class certificate from the Board for examining Volunteer Officers. During his whole military career he had never commanded a Brigade of Infantry, even at a review, and was sent to the front merely as commanding his regiment, the 13th, and not in any other capacity. Chance threw him into the position of a Brigadier General on the morning of a battle, without any staff, without any mounted orderlies, without artillery, or cavalry, and without a mounted officer in the field but himself. Such was the position in which he found himself when forming up his command at the village of Ridgeway, after taking them off the cars.

Finding that he could not procure vehicles to carry on his stores, he sent them back to Port Colborne in the train, left the great coats of the men at the station, and set off by the Ridge Road in the direction of Stevensville.

The Queen's Own, being the senior corps, took the lead, being under the command of Major Gilmor, an excellent officer, brave, active and energetic, one in whom the men had the utmost confidence, and one with whom they were all accustomed to serve. It will be remembered that Lieut.-Col. Dennis, who was sent in command, had left the regiment and had gone off on the Tug "Robb" along with Captain Akers. How it came to pass that Lieut.-Col Dennis, who belonged to another district, was sent in command of a Regiment which had its own officer to command it, one who had much more experience than he had, is difficult to conceive. It seems very unfair that the command should have been taken away from the officer who had all the trouble and hard work for months before in making his battalion efficient, and that the command of the best Volunteer Battalion in both provinces should be given to an officer who had never previously taken any interest in it or been connected in any way with it. The principle was bad for this reason:—If the Battalion covered itself with credit it would be due to the previous training and exertions of its own officer, and Lieut.-Col. Dennis would not be entitled to the credit, and if it did not act so well, Colonel Dennis could not be blamed for it, as he had never before been in command of it.

No. 5 company of the Queens Own, (Captain Edwards) being supplied with Spencer Rifles, were sent in advance as the advance guard; after the "Queen's Own" marched the York Rifles, then the 13th Battalion, and lastly the Caledonia Rifles, under command of Captain Jackson, forming the rear guard.

The force had proceeded in this way for about two miles when just before they had arrived to where the garrison road intersects the Ridge road the advance party signalled that the

enemy were in sight. No. 5 company immediately extended from the centre and No. 1 moved up and extended on their left and No. 2 on the right; No. 3 forming the centre support and Nos. 4 and 6 the left and right supports; after moving on in this way for some distance No. 7 company was sent out as a flanking party to the left supported by No. 8, the Trinity College company. The force was in this position on arriving at the garrison road. Before proceeding further with the movements it will be desirable to describe the nature of the ground and the position of the Fenians.

The Ridge road runs from Ridgeway in a direction northerly and easterly, following the course of the Lime Ridge from which the road takes its name; this ridge is about 30 or 40 feet in height, in some places steep, in others of a very gradual ascent; at the point where the battle was fought the ridge is about half a mile wide, of a very gradual rise, the road running along the ridge about half way up. The garrison road running from the west towards Fort Erie ascends the ridge crossing the Ridge road almost at right angles, about half a mile or perhaps a little farther there runs a road parallel with the garrison road which also leads to Fort Erie. It will thus be seen that in moving along the Ridge road from Ridgeway that the ground rises gradually for about a quarter of a mile on the right, and slopes downwards for about the same distance to the left; on both sides there are cultivated fields; on the right extending as far as the top of the ridge where the summit is covered with woods; on the left for half a mile, at which distance the view is shut out with a large hard wood bush. At the north west corner of the garrison road is a tavern called "*The Smugglers Home*," and on the south east corner of the next cross road there stands a brick farm house with an orchard around it, and a large orchard along the opposite side of the cross road to the right of the Ridge road.

It should also be mentioned that these fields on both sides are much cut up with orchards, and that a large number o

beautiful shade trees are scattered about. These trees and the peculiar conformation of the ground renders it exceedingly difficult to get an extended view in any direction over the scene of the fight.

The Fenian position was as follows: their main body, the reserves, were posted nearly quarter of a mile to the north of the further cross road, to the north of the brick house beyond the orchard; their position being behind a rail fence thickly grown up with shrubbery which almost hides it, some second growth shade trees being also thickly scattered along; their first line was posted along the south side of the road above the garrison road, where they had erected a barricade along the southerly fence with the assistance of the rails taken from the fence on the north side; this was done by laying the rails slanting outwards leaning against the top rail; this barricade was erected very hurriedly, not having taken them more than ten minutes to complete it. Their advanced skirmishers were posted along the rail fences about half way down to the garrison road, with a few files in the woods on the upper side of the ridge.

After moving on in the order before mentioned as far as the garrison road, a few of the Trinity College company moved down as far as the woods on the left, and the company was afterwards in skirmishing order on the extreme left for remainder of the fight. Nos. 1, 2, and 5, and Nos. 3, 4, and 6, who afterwards relieved them, moved on in the most gallant manner, driving in the enemy's skirmishers before them, pushing on from fence to fence.* In this advance Ensign McEachren fell, mortally wounded. As soon as they had crossed the garrison road a short distance, Col. Booker again directed the Highland Company, Captain Gardner, to form a flanking party to the right, and to scour the woods on the top of the ridge. This service was performed by this company with

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* About this time the University Rifles were sent to the right of the line to skirmish, the Highland Company in support, shortly after the Highland Company was recalled and fell in with the reserves.

great spirit, the Highlanders driving the Fenians before them in such haste that they left company rolls and papers of various kinds behind them on the ground, the Highlanders penetrated across a wheat field at least as far as the road along which the Fenian first line was posted; while there is very little doubt that the University company on their left had even crossed it and had advanced as far as a wood on the left of the Fenian line. The Trinity College company on the left and the University and Highland company on the right were not relieved during the fight.

About the time these flank companies were sent off, or perhaps a little before, Major Gillmor reported the centre companies of his battalion short of ammunition, and Lieut.-Col. Booker ordered the 13th Battalion, Major Skinner, to move up and relieve skirmishers on the right of the road. The 13th Battalion, having only 6 companies, were only able to relieve that number, leaving the Highland Company and the University Rifles still out on the extreme right, and the Trinity College Company and No. 7 supporting them on the extreme left. For some reason, the company of the 13th, which was to have relieved No. 6 (Capt. Adam), moved up to the brick house where No. 6, after driving out the enemy with great gallantry, had established itself; and both companies remained in that position, fighting together; the left subdivision, with Lieut. Campbell and Ensign McLean, pushing across the road as far as a barn on the left side of the Ridge Road. No. 7 company was recalled from the left, and then soon after sent out on the right, in support, under Capt. McPherson; and the York Rifles, Capt. Davis, took their place on the left, in support of the Trinity College Corps.

The whole of the skirmishers pressed forward with the greatest gallantry, driving in the enemy's skirmishers on the first line and dislodging it from the strong position they had taken up behind the rail barricade. The whole of the Fenians were now concentrated on their main body, in the position already described, beyond the orchard, and our troops

had moved on and taken up a position behind the rail barricade. No. 6 company of the Queen's Own and a company of the 13th holding the cross roads, the brick house, and stretching across the road to the barn on the left front; two companies of the 13th were on the right of the house, along the barricade; the Highlanders, who had cleared the woods, were in a wheat field in advance of them, to the right of the 13th, and the University Rifles between the right of the 13th and the Highland Company, in a wood, in advance of the cross road; and the Trinity College Company on the extreme left. The remaining companies of the Queen's Own were in reserve, in a close column, on the Ridge Road, about 400 yards in rear of the skirmishers. The other three companies of the 13th were in support of their skirmishers, except a small party with the colours in rear of the Queen's Own.

Our troops had been in this position for some time, when it seems that the Fenian leaders decided to charge again, to drive our men back from the line they had carried. In order to encourage their men onward, the officers rode out to the front, and two or three of them, mounted, led their men to the attack. As I have before stated, the windings of the road, the gentle undulations of the ground, and the orchards and shade trees prevent a clear view in any direction of more than about 100 or 200 yards. The skirmishers, seeing the mounted men coming towards them, thought a body of cavalry were going to charge; and, raising a cry that cavalry were coming, began to run back, calling out to the reserves to look out for cavalry. The reserves were on the road, and these mounted men were also seen upon it. Lieut.-Col. Booker, from his position in front of the reserves, could not possibly see for himself whether the report was true or false; but, on hearing it reiterated, he called out to Major Gillmor to "Look out for cavalry!" Major Gillmor thereupon ordered his battalion to form square. This was done; the bugler sounded the "prepare for cavalry," and the companies on the flanks ran in—some forming in rear of the square,

others forming rallying squares in the fields, and afterwards falling back on the main body. These companies, coming in on the double, and being obliged to climb over the fences to get into the road where the square was situated, tumbling in from both sides in the confusion caused by the fences, endeavoured hastily to form in rear of the square. The front and side faces of the square were formed with the coolness of a parade movement, but by no possibility could the rear face be properly formed in the short time in which there was to do it. At this moment, while the men were endeavouring to form up, the Fenians came in range of the square; the bullets whistled fast and furiously among them, and the men were dropping wounded and dead on all sides. Seeing, by this time, that no cavalry were coming, Major Gillmor endeavoured to extend his regiment. He ordered No. 1 company (Capt. Brown) and No. 2 (Capt. Dixon) to advance and extend, in order to enable the square, under cover of their fire, to regain its formation. These companies advanced nobly, and endeavoured to extend, but the rear portion of the square, which had never been able to form, feeling the fire of the enemy, began gradually to dissolve, falling back to the rear. At the same time, the advanced skirmishers, running in along the road—being unable to go round the flanks for the fences—broke through the 1st and 2nd companies, who were advancing, and forced their way through the square. Seeing the impossibility of re-forming under so heavy a fire, the order was given to retire; and, the two regiments, retiring along the same road, became mingled together: some few running hurriedly to the rear, others retiring more slowly, while a large body of red coats and green, fighting gallantly, slowly and sullenly retired, covering the retreat, and holding the Fenians at bay. With this rear guard were most of the officers, who, throughout the entire day, fought nobly—encouraging their men and exposing themselves recklessly to the enemy's fire. Lieut. Campbell, No. 6, and Ensign Fahey, No. 1, "Queen's Own;" and Lieut. Routh, of the 13th, receiving serious wounds.



The Highland Company and the University Rifles being, as we have seen, so far advanced on the right, did not know of the squares being formed, until they heard the retire sounded. The whole force were falling back at this time, and the two companies had to cross, diagonally, the full fire of the enemy, in order to reach the road. Had the Fenians advanced promptly, they would, in all probability, have cut off the retreat of both. A portion of the Highland Company retreated across the fields, along with the University Rifles, while the remainder fell back through the woods, and rejoined the main column by the Garrison Road. It was through this retreat across the front of the Fenians, that the University Rifles suffered so much loss.

After retiring some distance, Col. Booker endeavoured to rally his command at the edge of a wood, which came up to the road. In this he was ably seconded by many of the officers, all of whom behaved well. Major Gillmor, Major Skinner, and Captain Hennery (13th), and Captains Brown, Dixon, Whitney, Adam, Gardner, and Sherwood; Adjutant Otter, and Lieut. Arthurs, of the "Queen's Own," and Captain Davis, of the York Rifles, did their utmost, assisted by their officers, to restore order. Captain Sherwood succeeded in forming part of his company at Ridgeway, so, also, to a greater extent, did Captain Adam; and there, also, one or two companies of the 13th were rallied by their officers, but, not being properly supported, they were obliged to resume the retreat, which was continued to Port Colborne.

Before leaving this subject, it will be desirable to consider the circumstances which led to the retreat of the volunteer force, on this occasion. Lieut.-Col. Booker, being without a mounted staff, was acting at a great disadvantage, which, of course, must have had an ill effect on the whole of the movements. The broken nature of the ground, and the impossibility of thoroughly understanding the enemy's position, was another great difficulty.

The substantial cause of the retreat, however, was, without doubt, the fact of the reserves being in close column, and in square, so close to the skirmishers as to be under fire.

The most difficult thing that soldiers can be called upon to perform, is to deploy or execute any movement from close or quarter distance column, while exposed to the fire of the enemy. The best disciplined veterans in the world will often be thrown into confusion, if endeavoring to deploy from column under fire. The Old Guard of Napoleon, the victors of a hundred fights, the men who never failed to retrieve the fortunes of their Emperor, wherever he trusted to their efforts, failed him at his last great battle, at the battle that was to decide his fortunes forever. They did not fail him for want of bravery, from want of enthusiasm, or from want of endurance, but solely because they were thrown upon the English line in immense columns, in a formation in which they could neither fight, manœuvre, or retreat in order.

If these veterans could not deploy from column under fire, how could our lads, who, for the first time in their lives, were seeing shots fired in anger? If the French columns at Albuera were cut to pieces by Cole's Fusilier Brigade, and the Russian column at Alma driven off the field by Lacy Yea and his regiment, by reason of their using this heavy formation, how could we hope for more from the inexperienced volunteers at Ridgeway? This was the great mistake: had the reserves been a few hundred yards farther back, they could have deployed or extended, and, perhaps, have retrieved the day. Under any circumstances, the fences on the flanks should have been at once levelled, when they took up their position, because, where they stood, being cooped up between fences, they could not execute any manœuvre without getting into confusion.

The Fenians only followed them as far as Ridgeway and about a quarter of a mile beyond it.

There was no doubt that the men and officers behaved well: they fought with the greatest gallantry, and, had it

not been for the unfortunate cry of "Cavalry!" and the mistakes I have mentioned, would have won a brilliant victory. Where all did so well, we cannot make invidious distinctions. Reflections have been made, in some of the public prints, on the conduct of the 13th Battalion. After thoroughly enquiring into the whole matter, I am strongly of opinion that there was no difference between them. Both fought nobly. They were mingled in the retreat, some in front, some in the centre, and some behind, fighting bravely, covering the remainder. In all these different positions, each battalion was represented.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MOVEMENTS OF COL. PEACOCK'S COLUMN.

Col. Peacock having ordered Lieut.-Col. Booker to meet him at Stevensville between 10 and 11 a.m., and having afterwards changed the time of meeting to about 11.30 p.m. set off from Chippawa at 7 a.m. In deciding upon his route to Stevensville, he had the map, Dewe's Post Office map as has been before mentioned for his guidance, aided by the information he could obtain from the people of the neighbourhood. This map shows a direct road from Chippawa to Stevensville through Black Creek, making an almost imperceptible obtuse angle at Black Creek. Now the only road in fact, or at least the only travelled road to Black Creek is the river road which follows the windings of the river bank. At that place a road strikes back into the interior to New Germany, and from there due south to Stevensville. In addition to this, the bridge on the river road over the mouth of Usher's Creeks being broken made this road longer still, by rendering a detour necessary to avoid the obstruction.

There was another road from Chippawa direct to New Germany and Stevensville called the Sodom Road, this was mentioned to Col. Peacock by Mr. Kirkpatrick the Reeve, but the guides all representing that the river road was the best, and that the Sodom road was in so bad a state that artillery could not go over it, he allowed them to take him by the former road to Black Creek and thence to New Germany.

It was unfortunate that his column did not take the Sodom road. In moving up to join Col. Peacock with my command on the afternoon of the same day, I marched by that road, and found that it was quite suitable to move troops and artillery over, and by marching some seven miles my corps reached New Germany a point to arrive at which, Col. Peacock had marched about 10 miles.

Strange to say, along this road we met scores of vehicles of every description belonging to people of the neighbourhood, who had by this time discovered that the Sodom road was the best way home, and were using it to get back from the camp, to which place they had followed the troops.

Whether the fear that the Fenians were coming up the river road to Chippawa, or the fear that they might move up while Col. Peacock was marching down the Sodom Road had any effect on the minds of the guides in deciding upon a route to take, it is of course impossible to say ; but there is no doubt, that they all acted for the best, and Col. Peacock ought to feel grateful to the many inhabitants of the sections through which he marched, for the assistance they gave him, and for the readiness with which they devoted their time, night and day, to the service of the country.

Col. Peacock's column then marched on by the river road to Black Creek, and thence to New Germany. Saturday the 2nd June was the first really hot day of the season, there was hardly a breath of wind stirring and the heat of the sun was excessive. The men were all warmly clad, and it being the first hot day, they suffered far more seriously from it than if they had become inured to it by a succession of warm weather. After marching some miles the men began to fall out from fatigue and exhaustion caused by the heat, the regulars suffered more and fell out to a greater extent than the volunteers, on account of being heavily loaded with knapsacks, &c.

The column however still kept pushing on, arrived at Black Creek and moved on towards New Germany the men still falling out in great numbers, till at length, on arriving near Black Creek, Col. Peacock who was riding with the advanced files received a few words written by Lieut.-Col. Booker at 7.30 a.m. stating that he had been attacked in force by the enemy at a place three miles south of Stevensville. At the same time he received information that he had retired on Ridgeway. The receipt of this caused him (being anxious to reach Stevensville) to urge the column on faster. Im-

mediately after he received word from the rear that the men were giving up with the heat, it being then about 11.30 a.m. and that great numbers were straggling. Just afterwards Lieut.-Col. Hoste sent him a message stating that his escort had so diminished that it would not be right to go on without having it increased. This decided Col. Peacock to halt for a time to rest, and accordingly after pushing on as far as New Germany so as to hold possession of the cross roads he camped in the fields about the village, and ordered the men to get dinner.

By this time he knew that Lieut.-Col. Booker was falling back and would be unable to meet him at Stevensville, and that he would have to depend upon his own column without the immediate assistance of the other.

The time the men rested was occupied in sending out scouts hunting up information and discovering where the enemy were and the direction they were moving.* Here again he felt the want of Cavalry, here one single troop of Cavalry would have made a difference of two or three hours in gaining information, but the effects of the unfortunate feeling against Cavalry were not yet over, and the result was the Fenians had time to escape.

Had Col. Peacock had a force of cavalry with him at Chippawa, he could have moved his whole force from Chippawa to Black Creek, by rail, sending the cavalry spread across the country for two miles, on each side of the track, to see that all was clear. Fifty men could have done it, with perfect safety, and could have retired, and warned the train to retire, or to halt, in case they came upon the enemy. Cavalry, starting an hour before the train, could have searched the woods, and pushed on about five miles an hour, the train

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*This being absolutely necessary to enable him to decide in which direction to move his column. If he had moved to Fort Erie, and the enemy had marched to Port Colborne he would have left the column unsupported, while on the other hand, if he had marched towards Port Colborne while they had gone to Fort Erie, he gave them a good opportunity to escape, or to march to Chippawa and on to the bridge.

keeping about a mile behind, would have gone fully twice as fast as the force could have marched, and the men would have arrived at Black Creek quicker and fresher, and would only have had a few miles then to march to Stevensville. This would have precluded the necessity for a halt at New Germany, and the force could have pushed on to the Ridgeway battle ground, and thence to Fort Erie.

In the afternoon, about four o'clock, Col. Peacock received absolute information that the Fenians were falling back on Fort Erie, and he immediately made arrangements to move off in pursuit, hoping to reach them before night. It was particularly unfortunate that Col. Peacock had not decided to move on Fort Erie three hours or so sooner; had he marched direct to Ridgeway, he would at once have obtained positive information as to the Fenian retreat, and could have followed them direct to the river, and might have defeated them before dark. Had this delay not occurred, the Fenians in all probability would not have escaped, or at least not without loss. It was about half past five when he started from New Germany; and the columns had only just got in motion, when he was joined by the "Governor-General's Body Guard," under my command. On reporting to him, I was immediately ordered to push on to the front, and form the advance guard. This we did, at the gallop, being loudly cheered by the column while passing. The column moved on past Stevensville, and down the Lower Ferry Road, towards Fort Erie.

After marching about nine miles, it began to get dusk, just as the advance guard had arrived at a point on the road where the woods (after skirting it on both sides for nearly a mile, at the distance of about 600 or 700 yards) came close up on both sides, leaving only the road allowance clear through, for about a quarter of a mile.

The cavalry advanced files, on arriving within about 200 yards of where the woods came up to the road, noticed a body of men standing in the opening. They immediately

halted, and signalled back, that men were in sight. I galloped on to the front, and, enquiring from my men, heard that a force was in front, and continually dropping into the woods on the right, and, on looking myself, saw that it was so. Col. Peacock, soon after, also galloped up, and, on learning the cause of the halt, requested me to send two men on to reconnoitre more closely. By this time, nearly all had gone into the woods on the right. I rode on with Cornet Denison and three men, and, detaching him with two to go down a side road, to the right, rode on myself, with the other, to where we saw, in the dusk, a vidette standing, where the others had been. He, also, moved into the woods, while we were yet some distance from him. We rode on about 150 yards through the woods, but, by this time, it had got so late that I could see nothing under the trees, it being much darker there than in the open road. They did not fire on us, consequently I could form no opinion of their position or probable numbers. I thereupon returned to Col. Peacock, and reported that I could see nothing, suggesting to him, that, as their outposts should properly have fired upon us to alarm their camp, their not having done so, was a sign their force were on the alert, and, the place being so suitable, it seemed to point to an ambuscade, and that I thought the wood should be searched.

Col. Peacock seemed to have had a somewhat similar opinion, as, in my absence, he had sent for two companies of the 16th to come up to search the bush, the main force being some distance to the rear. While we were speaking, the two companies came up, and I went on with Col. Peacock, who moved with them to direct their movements. They opened out to the right of the road, to skirmishing distance, and moved on to the front. It was so dark, by this time, that the men could not, in the woods, see from one to the other, and, there being a great deal of tangled brush and logs, and being very marshy and wet, the men could make no headway whatever. At this time, while I was sitting close beside Col.



Peacock, a voice in the dark said, "You can't go down that way, sir!" On looking closely, we saw that it was a farmer, living about a quarter of a mile back, who had given us some information as we passed. Col. Peacock asked him, "Why not?" He answered, "The bridge is broken." The Colonel questioned him closely, and he adhered to it positively, that he could not get through. This information, together with the inability of the skirmishers to make their way through the woods, decided Col. Peacock to halt until daybreak.

He at once recalled the skirmishers, and, going back about 200 yards met the 47th Regiment, sent one company out, in skirmishing order, to the right of the road, and ordered the remainder of the regiment to form up in a line, about 200 yards behind the skirmishers. The 16th took up a similar position on the left of the road. The 10th "Royals" supported the 47th, in a line about 200 yards in the rear, the two right companies, wheeling to the right, and extending in skirmishing order, connecting with the skirmishers of the 47th, and circling round to the rear, as far as the road. The 19th Battalion, Lieut.-Col. Currie, took up a similar position on the left, in the rear of the 16th. The cavalry were in column on the road. The artillery in the rear of them, and the baggage waggons in the extreme rear. In this formation the men slept on their arms all night.

The disposition was admirable, as the force could show front to either flank by merely changing front on the centre of each regiment, and to the rear by countermarching, or quicker still by facing about.

I have entered very minutely into the circumstances that caused Col. Peacock to delay that night and to bivouac until day break, because there have appeared in the newspapers many strictures upon him for not pushing on at once, and because no account of the reasons which induced him to halt has ever been published. I was struck at the time with the pertinacity with which he endeavoured to push on, wondering

myself how he would be able to execute a night attack upon a force of whose situation or position he was ignorant.*

It should also be remembered that Col. Peacock was under the impression, as was every one else, that these Fenians meant to fight, and that even if they did not he thought he had secured against their escape by means of the Tug "Robb" which he had sent round for that purpose.

The bivouac having been formed, no fires were allowed to be lighted, and the men laid down in their ranks and went supperless to sleep, with no covering but the sky. It was a novelty to them, that, and the hope of meeting the Fenians the next morning, kept up their cheerfulness, and with numberless jokes on the comparative merits of their beds and the warmth of the bed clothing, the mass of them went to sleep. The cavalry men laying on the dusty road with their arms through their horses bridles, while the horses either laid down to sleep along with their riders or nibbled at the grass on the roadside. The artillerymen slept on their waggons and under them. The officers generally were wakeful, being under the impression that the enemy were within a mile or two of them.

During the night, while the watchful ones were looking anxiously for the day to break, so that they could move on once more, Col. Peacock received some important information. He heard that a reinforcement had reached his old camp at New Germany, and that Col. Lowry with an additional force was on the way to join him. Before day he also received a telegram informing him that large reinforcements to the extent of some 2000 or 3000 had crossed over from Buffalo and joined the Fenians.

The news of the enemy being augmented to an extent that would have given them a great preponderance over his com-

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* It turned out afterwards that the force we had seen were the regular line of Fenian pickets, and that seeing us push on they had retreated into Fort Erie, reporting that they had been driven in by a detachment of the British cavalry. This statement of theirs was published very generally in the papers.

mand, and the knowledge that reinforcements for himself were within two or three hours march of him caused him to decide to wait until these other forces came within supporting distance before he moved to the attack, and it being then breaking day he ordered rations to be distributed and the men to prepare their breakfasts ; after they had made a rough meal, it being then about 5 o'clock, he decided to move on at once without waiting longer, thinking that his reinforcements would come up before the action (which the whole force expected was about to take place) had fairly commenced. The troops were preparing to fall in when Lieut.-Col. Cameron rode into camp and said he had heard the Fenians had gone. Col. Peacock about the same time requested me to ride on with my command and reconnoitre, sending him back all the information I could obtain.

I shall now leave Col. Peacock preparing to start and describe what took place on the Tug "Robb" and the proceedings of the force that left Port Colborne in it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE EXPEDITION ON THE TUG "ROBB."

In a former chapter it will be remembered that we stated that Col. Peacock, in forming his plan of campaign, decided, as a portion of it, to send a vessel round from Port Colborne to Fort Erie, to patrol the river and prevent, if possible, reinforcements coming over, or the Fenians from escaping. It will also be remembered that Lieut.-Col. Dennis, in carrying out his orders, telegraphed for the Tug "Robb," from Dunnville, which came down under Captain L. McCallum who also brought with him a portion of his company, the Dunnville Naval Brigade, and that on its arrival the Welland Canal Field Battery, under command of Captain R. S. King of Port Robinson (being armed with Enfield Rifles) were placed upon it, and that Lieut.-Col. Dennis and Captain Akers proceeded to the Niagara River to patrol between Fort Erie and Black Creek.

On passing down the river they saw the enemy's camp at Frenchman's Creek, which had been evacuated by the Fenians about 9 p.m. the previous evening; they moved on down as far as Black Creek, carefully examining the shore, but seeing no signs of any armed force. They went ashore there and were informed the enemy had moved from their camp during the night. After getting all the information possible from the inhabitants, they went back to Fort Erie, in order to keep their appointment with Lieut.-Col. Booker at eight, in accordance with the plan which, as before stated, had been agreed upon between them before starting. As Lieut.-Col. Booker and his command did not appear, Lieut.-Col. Dennis and Captain Akers came to the conclusion that Col. Peacock had disapproved of their plan, and that Lieut.-Col. Booker was carrying out the original arrangement.

Col. Dennis then landed the artillery company, and desired

Captain Akers, with one half of it, to proceed inland about a mile and a-half or two miles, and to patrol down one of the side roads which lead to the river, in the direction of Black Creek ; and ordered Captain King to patrol by the River Road in the same direction, with the other half of his command. These two parties, consisting of about 25 men in each, picked up a few stragglers, and took over some prisoners which had been captured by the citizens, and, meeting at some distance from Fort Erie, the whole company marched on by the River Road towards Chippawa.

After landing the artillery, Col. Dennis went on with the Tug to Black Creek, which is about eight miles from Fort Erie ; in consequence of the swiftness of the current he reached that place while the force with Captains King and Akers were yet five or six miles from it. Between Fort Erie and Black Creek there is no dock at which the " Robb " could have put in to have embarked the artillery, consequently that corps, for some two or three hours, were blundering about inside (as we may say) the Fenian lines, and part of that time divided, without any opportunity of support if attacked, and without the slightest chance of escape in case of defeat. It was the merest accident that the fate which befel this command in the afternoon of the same day did not overtake them at any moment on this march. What was to be gained by sending them on shore, and especially by dividing them, cannot readily be imagined. The few prisoners that were captured, mere stragglers as they were, were certainly not worth the risk of disaster that was undergone in taking them, especially when it is considered that the object for which the vessel was sent was to prevent the escape of the whole force, and to secure its ultimate surrender.

Col. Dennis, on arriving at Black Creek the second time, communicated with the rear end of Col. Peacock's column, which, as we have seen, marched up the river road as far as that place, and then turned inland towards New Germany.

He did not see Col. Peacock, however, as that officer was

riding at the head of the advanced guard, and was by that time some distance in the interior.

Colonel Dennis, on his returning to Fort Erie, met Captains King and Akers, and the force with them, about two miles from Black Creek. They were embarked by means of small boats and all the prisoners were taken on board and placed below; this occupied some little time. The Tug then proceeded up the river as far as the village of Fort Erie, where she was moored to the dock, and a portion of the Artillery landed and some more prisoners which had been taken by the citizens of the place were taken over and placed on board. After staying there some time, Col. Dennis, and Captain Akers, decided to leave the Welland Canal Field Battery* at Fort Erie in charge of the prisoners and to go round with the tug to Port Colborne for information and further orders. Captain King remonstrated against this, and especially against leaving the prisoners with him, for fear of their being rescued, Dr. Kempson, also advised them not to leave them. It was decided however to billet the artillery in the village, and arrangements were being made to carry it out, when parties began to arrive from the interior, with news that the Fenians were coming in full force from the west, and that a battle had been fought on Ridge Road.

Lieut.-Col. Dennis, and Captain Akers, did not seem to lay much stress on this information, for Captain Akers, took a buggy and went off in the direction of the Railway telegraph office up the river to see if telegraphic communication had been reopened between Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Before he could get back the Fenians had cut him off from his

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* N.B.—It is to be distinctly remembered that although called a Field Battery this corps was little else than an infantry company armed with Enfield Rifles. Their guns had been taken away from them some months before, from a fear that they might not be able to defend them in the exposed place in which they are situated at Port Robinson. The noble way in which these brave fellows in spite of this discouragement, fought against ten times their number, proved that the government did not appreciate their value, and has since had the effect of causing their guns to be restored to them.

force, and he made for Port Colborne by way of the Lake shore. Col. Dennis, after repeated solicitations from Captain King, allowed the men to embark on board the tug. They were scarcely all on board when he came over from a house which he had been using as a sort of head quarters and ordered them all on shore again, except a small portion of the Naval Company.

The force landed consisted of about 52 artillery and 18 of the Naval corps. He led them on to the road running along the front of the village between it and the dock and marched them up towards the Railway Station. A body of the Fenians were by this time coming down the road. The Volunteers were drawn up in line to meet them, but, almost immediately, a very large force appeared along the top of the hill (which runs parallel to the river at the distance of about 300 yards) they were moving northwards as if to surround them. The firing began at once, and after a volley or two Captain King, seeing they were outnumbered ten to one, ordered them to break, and get under cover, and fight independently, as they were thoroughly exposed in the position in which they were placed. At this time Lieut.-Col. Dennis, seeing he would soon be cut off ran down the river for about a quarter of a mile with two artillery men, and took refuge in Mr. Thomas' house, the three concealed themselves, the artillerymen were captured, but Col. Dennis, escaped and disguising himself made his way through the enemy's lines, and joined Col. Peacock in the night.

The remainder under Capt. King getting cover behind a pile of cordwood, and behind houses and fences kept up a heavy fire, keeping the Fenians at bay for some 15 or 20 minutes. About 25 or 30 who had taken refuge in the house of Mr. George Lewis the Postmaster, fought desperately for some time longer firing out of the house with the greatest spirit, inflicting heavy loss upon the Fenians. This house was a wooden one clapboarded on the outside, and lathed and plastered on the inside, and consequently afforded no protec-

tion against the bullets, which whistled through it by scores. When our forces entered Fort Erie this building showed proofs of the desperate nature of the fight which had taken place about it. The walls were perfectly riddled, one small room having some 32 bullet holes through it, all the windows were broken, and it seems a perfect miracle that any of them escaped. Seeing at length that it was impossible to prolong the resistance, this gallant little band of men were obliged to surrender.

Those who with Capt. King fought around the pile of cordwood behaved with the greatest gallantry, fighting desperately against overwhelming odds even until the Fenians had closed in upon them, some of them using the bayonet freely. There is no doubt that one man was killed by a bayonet thrust while endeavouring to effect an entrance into Lewis' house, and I myself found among the prisoners taken by my command the next morning, one man who had a terrible bayonet wound in his chest close up to his neck, this man was wounded by one of those fighting with Capt. King.

Capt. King himself behaved nobly, he stayed with his men encouraging them to fight to the last, and even when struck to the ground by a shot that caused him the loss of his leg, he still cheered on his men setting the example by emptying his revolver at the Fenians while lying on the ground. Seeing the enemy closing in upon him, and not wishing to be taken, he rolled himself off the dock into the river, and was carried by the current under the wharf used by the Waterloo ferry boat, where he held on to one of the piles keeping himself above water. After the fight was over he was taken out by some of the citizens and was sent over to Buffalo with Col. O'Neil's consent.

It would be useless to particularize instances of bravery in this affair, where all behaved so well. Capt. L. McCallum, with fifteen men, after fighting gallantly for some time, retreated along the river road, firing as they went, and were able, some distance down the river, to get on board the tug,



which had been set adrift by the officer in charge, who saw that the vessel would, probably, be captured in case he delayed.

This little force, without doubt, in this affair, covered itself with glory; and, to them is due the highest post in the roll of honour in this campaign. Although completely overpowered, they fought to the last, suffering severely, several brave fellows, including the Captain, losing limbs, and many others being seriously wounded. As a proof of the pertinacity and stubbornness with which they fought, it may be stated that they killed and wounded more Fenians than had the Queen's Own and 13th both together at the fight at Ridgeway the same morning.

Col. Bailey, one of the Fenian leaders who commanded the attacking party, was shot through the body while bravely riding at the head of his men leading them on. His being mounted drew all the fire on him, and he was very soon brought down, although the wound was thought mortal at the time, strange to say he has recovered from it. He was the only Fenian officer of rank wounded in the raid.

The Fenians lost at Ridgeway six men killed dead, and probably one or two may have died since—how many were wounded it is impossible to say. At the engagement at Fort Erie seven were killed and a great many wounded, some of whom afterwards died. This was the entire loss, although the general impression has been that the loss was much greater. Wild stories have been circulated of immense graves filled with Fenian dead, and waggon loads carried away, but there is not a word of truth in them. They are only the effects of the strong imaginative powers of that class of people who indulge their love for the marvellous at the expense of the truth.

The result of this fight was the loss of the whole expedition. The two commanding officers were wandering about the country, the main body of the men captured or lying wounded about the village, the Captain of the Artillery struck down with

the loss of a leg, and the "Tug" almost denuded of men, and the few left so hampered with a lot of worthless prisoners as to be unable to undertake anything.

Capt. McCallum finding he had no force with which to effect anything, decided to go back to Port Colborne and place the prisoners in safety. In doing so he was obliged to run the gauntlet of the fire of the Fenians who posted along the shore, kept up a heavy fire on them as they were steaming past, fortunately no one was hurt, the only effect being a number of bullet marks in the vessel.

It was most unfortunate that Col. Dennis and Capt. Akers so exceeded their instructions as to land their command at all. Col. Peacock would never for one moment have authorized the disembarkation of so small a force, especially as there was no object to be gained by it. It is remarkable that neither of these officers and one of them an engineer officer, should have thought of trying to strengthen the bulwarks of their vessel, and place her in as favourable a condition for fighting as possible. There was a pile of cord wood on the dock at Fort Erie and plenty also at Black Creek, if that had been piled up against the bulwarks, sloping up from the inside it would have made them musket proof, and the men could have fought behind a defence of that kind with comparative safety. The wheel could also have been protected in a somewhat similar manner, and then the vessel and its crew could have moved about with perfect impunity.

What was to have been gained by landing the men at Fort Erie cannot be imagined. Why these officers should give up the advantage of their vessel to fight ten times their number on shore is perfectly unaccountable. Had they barricaded the vessel and staid in the stream they could have made the village too hot to hold the enemy, and would, without doubt, have inflicted great loss on them, and have prevented vessels from coming over to take them away, or if they had come over could have run them down if they attempted to leave. Even had they been unsuccessful in all these points still it

would have been better than as it turned out, for they would not have been separated from their command, and would have had the satisfaction of knowing that they had obeyed orders, a satisfaction which under the present circumstances they are deprived of.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE FENIAN MOVEMENTS.

In a former chapter an account was given of the manner in which the Fenians effected their crossing and their movements until they camped at Frenchman's Creek on Friday, the first of June.

They remained there until about 9 or 10 o'clock that evening, when they again took up the line of march and set off in the direction of Chippawa, by the river road. After marching some two or three miles they turned off from the river by a cross road that comes out quite close to McCarty's farm; they then marched westward until they came to the Black Creek, and, spreading out upon both sides of the road, they camped in the angle formed by the Creek and the Niagara River, keeping the Creek between them and Chippawa. In this place they were quite close to the railway track.

Their position here was admirable. How they happened to discover it so soon is extraordinary, and tends to show that they must have had the ground reconnoitred, and the position of their camp chosen, before they came over.

The Black Creek, rising to the south-west of Stevensville, runs in a general north-easterly direction, and empties itself into the Niagara River, about eight miles from Fort Erie, at the village which takes its name from the stream. It is very sluggish, running through a marsh for a portion of its course, and for two or three miles from its mouth appears quite deep and unfordable. Its left bank on approaching the river is low and marshy, while on the right bank, close to the stream, a ridge about ten feet high and about thirty or forty yards wide, runs parallel to it nearly as far as the river. This ridge is covered with trees, and forms a natural entrenchment in rear of the stream, which makes a natural moat in front of it. There are only two or three bridges across Black Creek at

this place. There is a good deal of bush on the southerly side of the stream, while the fields on the other bank are open and cultivated for half a mile back. Behind this creek, taking advantage of the cover obtained by the ridge, and the obstruction afforded by the stream, the Fenians made their camp.

Had Colonel Peacock pushed on by rail on Friday night with a pilot engine, (that popular idea of an advanced guard), as some of the press have been abusing him for not doing, he would have received the summary chastisement his recklessness and want of judgment would have so richly deserved. The Fenians knew he was at Chippawa with a force of artillery and infantry, and might probably come on in the night, so they moved up to Black Creek and were ready to waylay him if he attempted it.

After remaining there and resting some three or four hours they obtained accurate information from Port Colborne that a force of volunteers were there, and that they were preparing to move down by rail towards Fort Erie. It will be remembered that the force at Port Colborne were put in the cars about twelve o'clock that night; the Fenians heard of it about three o'clock on Saturday morning, and at once set off for Ridgeway, in order, if possible, to meet the volunteers and defeat them before the force under Colonel Peacock could move to their assistance.

After breakfasting they accordingly set off for Ridgeway, marching up the right bank of the Black Creek for about two miles or more, and then turning to the east as far as a side road which strikes the Ridge road at a place called Orchard's farm, and thence they followed the Ridge road until they came to the battle ground. I was much struck while driving along this road with the ability with which their route was chosen. It may have been the result of accident, or they may have decided upon it by design, but under any circumstances the local features of the ground were certainly most favorable for their purpose. During this march the only way in which they had reason to expect an attack was from their right flank, and

for two miles this was thoroughly protected by the marshy stream, which, with its thick shrubbery and tall trees, formed an impenetrable screen, behind which they pursued their march with perfect safety. The road they used was an old track through woods and low ground which had been fenced up, but was opened out by them as they went along. So bad was the road that they lost an ammunition waggon in one of the bogs they were obliged to go through.

This march at early day break was so skilfully and secretly effected that for many days after they left their movements were a perfect mystery, their real line of march has never before been published to my knowledge, and it was only after close investigation that I was able to discover it accurately. After leaving the bank of the Black Creek the Fenians as before stated moved by a side line on to the Ridge Road, which runs along on the top of the Limestone Ridge, which extends in a circular direction from Lake Erie around to the Niagara River; to the west of this ridge where they came upon it for a mile and a half or two miles wide, extends an unbroken plain of open cultivated fields, on which troops could be seen distinctly for two or three miles if coming from that direction. If, therefore, the Fenians had been attacked at any point on this march on their right flank, by merely facing to the right they occupied a beautiful position on the top of a hill, 30 or 40 feet high, thickly covered with shade trees and woods, which would hide their position and give them cover, while the broad expanse of level unbroken country formed a *glacis* that would not afford the slightest cover to an attacking force against the heavy fire that might be brought to bear against them. Along this ridge might be erected a splendid line of works to cover Fort Erie if it was used as a base by an army attacking Canada.

While the Fenians were marching along the Road, a short distance from the scene of the fight, a few mounted scouts who were some distance in advance heard the whistle of the locomotive of the train which at this time was just arriving at

Ridgeway Station, with the forces under Lieut.-Col. Booker. They immediately halted and listened and soon after hearing bugle sounds they went back and met the main force, which on receipt of the information was at once halted and closed up in its formation; they then moved on until they came to the fence dividing Hoffman's from Kirkpatrick's farm, where the mounted men had already turned in, and here the main body were posted along that fence as stated in the chapter relating to the battle; about half or more were then moved on to the cross road and the rail barricade already referred to was hastily constructed, while a few advanced skirmishers were thrown forward almost as far as the Garrison road. In this position they awaited the attack, their numbers being between 750 and 800 men.

After the retreat of our forces they followed them at a respectable distance, as far as Ridgeway and a short distance beyond, when they were recalled, and during the afternoon marched back by the Garrison Road into Fort Erie, where they came upon the Welland Canal Field Battery and Dunnville Naval Company as already described. After defeating them, when night came on, the leaders hearing of the near approach of Col. Peacock's force, and of its numbers, desired either to be reinforced or to withdraw. At first it seems to have been decided by the leaders in Buffalo to reinforce them and a very large force was embarked for that purpose, but whether they were afraid that they would not succeed in eluding the vigilance of the United States vessels which were patrolling the river, or that they would be unable to effect a crossing of sufficient numbers to ensure success it is impossible to say; but the result was that the Fenians in Canada were to be withdrawn. A scow was taken over by a Tug and they were loaded upon it and taken out into the river where they were arrested by the Tug Harrison, and being taken down the stream were moored under the guns of the U. S. Revenue Cutter Michigan. A few days after they were taken on shore and released. It was the loading of the scows

in Buffalo with reinforcements that led to Col. Peacock being informed in the night that 2000 or 3000 more Fenians had crossed.

Before closing this chapter I must mention that from all accounts the Fenians, except in so far as they were wrong in invading a peaceful country, in carrying on an unjustifiable war, behaved remarkably well to the inhabitants, I spent three weeks in Fort Erie and conversed with dozens of the people of the place, and was astonished at the universal testimony borne by them to the unvarying good conduct of this rabble while among them. They claimed food and horses, but they can hardly be blamed for that as an act of war, but can only be blamed because the war itself, which alone could give them the right to take these things was unjustifiable and wicked. They have been called plunderers, robbers and marauders, yet, no matter how unwilling we may be to admit it, the positive fact remains, that they stole but few valuables, that they destroyed, comparatively speaking, little or nothing, and that they committed no outrages on the inhabitants, but treated every one with unvarying courtesy.

It seems like a perfect burlesque to see a ragged rabble without a government, country or flag, affecting chivalrous sentiments and doing acts, that put one in mind of the days of knight errantry.

On taking a number of the Welland Battery and the Naval Company prisoners they treated them with the greatest kindness, putting the officers under their parole and returning them their side arms, taking them down to the wharf on their departure and releasing them, bidding them adieu with expressions of good will.

Another incident occurred worth mentioning. A number of them went to a widow lady's house near Fort Erie, and asked her for something to eat. They were about going into the kitchen to sit down, and she told them she would not let them in, they laughingly replied, "very well maam, we'll do here very well, it is a very nice yard," and accordingly they sat



down on the grass and ate the bread and butter and milk that she gave them. Another squad in the same way took breakfast there. In the evening, a man came ragged and tired, looking for something to eat. Seeing a loaf of bread on the table, he took it up. The lady said, "That is the last loaf I have." The man looked at her and said slowly, "Is that the last loaf of bread you have?" "Then I'll not take it;" and laid it on the window-sill.

Seeing this, she asked him to take half. After pressing it upon him, he at length took a portion of it. This story is undoubtedly true, as I obtained it from the lady herself, with whom I am intimately acquainted.

It perhaps does not come with good grace from a Canadian to give any credit to the Fenians, who without any ground of complaint against us invade our country, and cause the loss of valuable lives among us, but as a truthful narrator of facts, I must give them credit on the only ground on which they can claim it.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OCCUPATION OF FORT ERIE BY OUR FORCES.

In the sixth chapter we left Col. Peacock just preparing to start when Lieut.-Col. Cameron came in with a rumour that the Fenians had evacuated Fort Erie. It was also stated that Col. Peacock had ordered the "Governor General's Body Guard" to ride on in the direction of Fort Erie, to reconnoitre and send back information to him as received.

I at once moved on with my command down the road leading to the Lower Ferry, and inquired from all the farmers that I met the position and number of the Fenians. It was only about 5 a.m. and not many people were stirring, but they all agreed in stating that a large force of Fenians were in the woods on our right, where we had heard they were the night before; these stories were so confirmed by every one I saw, that by the time I reached the river I felt rather confident that my retreat to Col. Peacock's column was cut off. On coming in sight of the river we saw a scow black with men crowded upon it, who had just been emptying their rifles into the stream; wishing to obtain accurate information before sending back to Col. Peacock I went to a gentleman who lived almost opposite to where the scow was lying, and was told by him that the men on it were a reinforcement which had been prevented from crossing, and that the Fenians were still on our side.* Fearing that Col. Peacock might be under the impression they had gone, and feeling that my command was cut off from his force, I sent an orderly to him at full speed with the substance of the information I had received, sending back, at the same time, a small patrol to give notice

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* This mistake was occasioned by the fact that the tug after capturing the scow up the river took it down by the American side, and then turned outwards and moved over to the middle of the stream where it was moored; seeing it came from the far side he concluded it was a reinforcement.

of any force that might attempt to close round our rear, and also detached a number of scouts into the interior, to the right and up the river road towards Fort Erie, to search the woods and give notice of the approach of the enemy, whilst I proceeded up the bank in search of a boat, in order to go on board the Michigan. By the kindness of Mr. Molesworth, Civil Engineer, I was enabled to reach the Michigan, and was informed by Captain Bryson that the men he had captured were the main force, that had been in Canada, and that he did not believe there were many left. On reaching the shore I sent a despatch to Col. Peacock stating these facts and stating that the first information I had sent him was incorrect. This despatch was about fifteen minutes after the first.

Recalling some of the scouts we then proceeded on the gallop up the river road towards Fort Erie, being informed by the people we met that a number of Fenians were still there; on coming in sight of the village we saw men dodging in every direction, but when we got up nearly all were hidden or gone; muskets, bayonets, and belts were scattered along the road, where men had dropped them in their flight; a few prisoners were taken by us and the wounded were placed under a guard.

Here we saw a number of the men who had been captured in the fight in Fort Erie, they received us with great manifestations of delight. We ourselves were greatly relieved on seeing them, as news had arrived in the camp the night before to the effect that the whole command, with the exception of four, had been killed and thrown into the river. After placing guards over the prisoners and over the arms, which were lying on the dock, the men and horses were billeted in the taverns, as both were nearly used up by about 40 hours almost continuous exertions. We reached Fort Erie about 6 a.m.

Col. Peacock shortly after our departure from his camp started for Fort Erie, turning to the right immediately on

leaving his camp, and moving down to the next cross road. With one portion of his command he took that route to the village, sending the other portion under command of Lieut.-Col. Villiers down in the direction of the Lake shore. Just as he was starting he received the first message sent to him by me, to the effect that there was still a body of Fenians about the old Fort. He consequently threw out skirmishers, and advanced in proper order to secure them. He soon received my second message contradicting the first, but he heard so many stories from the people similar to those which had at first imposed upon me, all corroborating each other, that he continued his march with skirmishers thrown out. A few stragglers were seen, and four reported shot, one of whom unfortunately turned out to be a farmer in the neighbourhood, who had foolishly armed himself with a Fenian musket and bayonet which he was taking home as relics of the raid. This column afterwards captured a number of stragglers in the woods.

While Col. Peacock was marching in by the west and south west, Col. Lowry with 4 guns under Capt. Crowe, R.A., the Oakville Rifles under Col. Chisholm, a battalion of Simcoe Volunteers under Lieut.-Col. Stephen, in all about 500 men, after having staid at Clifton over night, left there at 3.40 a.m. for Black Creek, and waited at that place until he was joined by 200 rank and file of the 60th Rifles under Capt. Traverse and 140 of the 16th under Capt. Hogge, who had been at New Germany during the night, while waiting for them, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. J. H. Cameron went on in a pilot engine to examine the state of the road, on his report that the road was passable, Col. Lowry moved on to Frenchman's Creek where he unloaded his force from the cars, and sending some skirmishers into the woods moved out to the river, and there was informed by Col. Wolsely who had passed on horse-back to the front that they were too late, that the Fenians had escaped. He then marched on to Fort Erie, reaching there about 8.15 a.m. Col. Peacock arrived shortly after.

The column at Port Colborne being placed under the command of Capt. Akers, by Col. Lowry with the consent of the officers, was also ordered in the night to move down in the direction of Fort Erie to partake in the engagement which it was thought would take place on Sunday.

At 3 a.m. Capt. Akers ordered the *réveille* to sound, and arrangements were made for serving out rations and ammunition. At 5 o'clock he started by rail towards Fort Erie with about 1000 men, preceded by a pilot engine, leaving the 13th behind to guard Port Colborne.

Arriving at Shirks' crossing, he disembarked the men and threw out a line of skirmishers with supports from the 7th P.A.O., with orders for the flank supporters to wheel outwards and extend at once in case of any sign of flank attack. In this order he advanced to the Garrison road, and by that to Fort Erie. After resting the men for about an hour at the scene of the battle of the day before, the command marched quietly into Fort Erie, and were encamped on the high ground above the village, where the other corps had already been stationed. By noon on Sunday, about 3500 men were concentrated on the heights above Fort Erie, while the 13th Battalion held Port Colborne, and a battalion of 450 men under command of Lieut.-Col. Robert B. Denison were stationed at Clifton to hold the Suspension Bridge.

The force at Fort Erie was reduced during Monday and Tuesday the 4th and 5th June, to about 2000 men which were detained there for three weeks watching the proceedings of some 6000 or 8000 Fenians, who were said to have gathered in Buffalo and intended to effect another crossing, after some days these Fenians were sent to their homes, the United States Government furnishing their transportation, and thereupon the main portion of our force were sent home, 800 men and 6 guns, without cavalry, being detained on the frontier for some three weeks longer.

## APPENDIX.

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### A

#### LIST OF OFFICERS PRESENT AT THE BATTLE OF RIDGEWAY.

##### “QUEEN’S OWN.”

- Major Charles J. Gillmor.  
No. 1 COMPANY.—Captain Brown, Lieut. Davids, Ensign Fahey.  
No. 2.—Captain Dixon, Lieut. Morrison, Ensign Bennett.  
No. 3.—Captain Boustead, Lieut. Beaven, Ensign Wharin.  
No. 4.—Captain Douglas, Lieut. Arthurs, Ensign Davis.  
No. 5.—Captain Edwards, Lieut. Lee, Ensign McEachren.  
No. 6.—Captain Adam, Lieut. Campbell, Ensign McLean.  
No. 7.—Captain McPherson, Acting Lieut. Stinson, Acting Ensign  
Smith.  
No. 8.—Captain Sherwood, Lieut. O’Reilly.  
No. 9.—Acting Captain Whitney (Trinity College Company).  
No. 10.—Captain Gardner, Lieut. Ramsay, Ensign Gibson.  
Paymaster W. H. Harris, Quartermaster Jackson, Adjutant W. D.  
Otter, Surgeon J. Thorburn, Assistant Surgeon May.
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##### 13TH BATTALION.

- Majors Skinner and Cattley.  
No. 1 COMPANY.—Captain Grant, Lieut. Gibson, Ensign McKenzie.  
No. 2.—Captain Watson, Lieut. Sewell, Ensign Baker.  
No. 3.—Lieut. Ferguson, Ensign Armstrong.  
No. 4.—Lieut. Routh, Ensign J. B. Young.  
No. 5.—Captain Askin, Lieut. Ritchie.  
No. 6.—Ensign Roy.  
Adjutant Henery.
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##### YORK RIFLES.

- Captain Davis. Lieut. Davis, Ensign Hill.
- 

##### CALEDONIA RIFLES.

- Captain Jackson, Lieut. Thorburn, Ensign Chrystal, Ensign Mc-  
Kinnon (attached).

**B**LIST OF KILLED AND WOUNDED AT THE BATTLE OF  
RIDGEWAY.

**KILLED.**—Ensign Malcolm McEachren, No. 5 Company, "Queen's Own" Rifles. Sergeant H. Matheson, No. 1, ditto. Private Christopher Alderson, No. 7, ditto. Private M. Defries, No. 3, ditto. Private W. F. Tempest, No. 9, ditto. Private William Smith, No. 2, ditto. Private J. H. Mewburn, No. 9, ditto. Private M. McKenzie, No. 9, ditto. Private F. Lackie, No. —, ditto.

**WOUNDED.**—Captain J. B. Boustead, No. 3 Company, "Queen's Own" Rifles. Lieut. J. H. Beaven, No. 3, ditto. Lieut. W. C. Campbell, No. 6, ditto. Ensign Fahey, No. 1, ditto. Color Sergeant Forbes McHardy, No. 10, ditto. Private C. F. Bell, No. 5, ditto. Private W. Vandersmissen, No. 9, ditto. Private Kingsford, No. 9, ditto. Private John White, No. 10, ditto. Private Paul Robbins, No. 6, ditto. Private Thomas Oulster, No. 1, ditto. Private William Thompson, No. 2, ditto. Private Charles Winter, No. 3, ditto. Private Colin Forsyth, No. 10, ditto. Private Edward Copp, No. 5, ditto. Private J. H. Rutherford, No. 6, ditto. Private E. J. Paterson, No. 9 ditto. Private Joseph Lugsden, No. 4, ditto. Private Alexander Muir, No. 10, ditto. Private E. T. Paul, No. 9 ditto. Sergeant William Foster, No. 7, ditto. Color Sergeant John Tuck, York Rifles. Private Robert Cranston, ditto.

Lieut. Routh, and 6 Privates, 13th Battalion.

**C**

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Ottawa, 21st June, 1866,

The following reports relating to the Volunteer Force have been received by His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, and are now published for the information of all concerned.

P. L. MACDOUGALL, Colonel,  
Adjutant General of Militia.

[Copy.]

Fort Erie, 4th June, 1866.

Sir,

I have the honor to make the following report of my operations in the Field since the 1st instant.

In compliance with a telegram received from you, I joined at 2 o'clock, at Hamilton, with 200 men of my own Battn., the force pro-

ceeding from Toronto to St. Catharines consisting of one Batty. Royl. Arty., under the command of Lt. Col. Hoste, C. B., and 200 men, 47th Regt. under the command of Major Lodder.

You had also placed under my Command, for the defence of the frontier, 7 Cos. Volunteer Force stationed at St. Catharines, under the Command of Lieut. Col. Currie, the Queen's Own Regt. of Volunteers at Port Colborne, under ———, and the 13th Batt. Volunteer Militia commanded by Lt. Col. Booker, at Dunnville, and you had informed me that I should be re-inforced at St. Catharines that evening by 800 men.

Your instructions were that I was to make St. Catharines my base, to act according to my own discretion as to advancing on Clifton or elsewhere, and to attack the enemy as soon as I could do so with a force sufficient to ensure success.

On arriving at St. Catharines I received telegrams to the effect that the Fenians, about 800 strong, were marching on the suspension bridge and were actually 2 or 3 miles from Chippawa. I pushed on immediately to the bridge, leaving orders for all troops arriving at St Catharines to follow as soon as possible.

On reaching the Bridge I heard the enemy had not yet reached Chippawa, and, being anxious to save the bridge over the creek, I pressed on with the 400 Infantry in the train, preceded by a Pilot Engine, the Battery marching by road in consequence of the reported want of platform accommodation at the Chippawa Station. It was dark when we arrived at Chippawa. We bivouacked there that night.

I here received numerous reports from scouts sent out by Mr. Kirkpatrick, the Reeve. They agreed generally in the statement that the Fenians had entrenched themselves roughly a little below Fort Erie, at Frenchman's Creek and had sent on a party towards Chippawa. Their strength was variously estimated from 800 to 1,500.

I resolved on effecting a junction with the force at Port Colborne, to which place I had already ordered the Battn. from Dunnville.

With this object in view, I selected Stevensville as the point of junction and having explained to Captain Akers, Royal Engineers, who accompanied the force from Toronto, what my object was, and that this point was chosen because, judging from the information received we could not be anticipated at it by the evening. I despatched that Officer at 12 o'clock to communicate with the Officer Commdg. at Port Colborne, to make him conversant with my views, and to order him to meet me at Stevensville between 10 and 11 o'clock next morning, informing him that I should start at 6 o'clock.

I continued to send out scouts during the night, and to receive reports which made me believe that my information was correct, and that the enemy had not left their camp.

At about 2 o'clock I received a telegram from Col. Booker, dispatched before he was joined by Captain Akers, informing me that he had given orders to attack the enemy at Fort Erie.



At about 3:30 I received another one from Captain Akers, dispatched after he had reached Port Colborne, saying that the enemy was at French Creek, and proposing that Lt. Col. Booker's force should advance on Fort Erie and join us at Frenchman's Creek.

At about 4:30 o'clock I was joined by the 7 Cos. of Volunteer Force from St. Catharines, formed into a Battalion 350 strong, under Lt. Colonel Currie, and by the expected reinforcement under Lt. Col. Villiers, 47th Regt., which consisted of 150 men 47th and of the 10th Royals 415 strong, under Major Boxall.

The Volunteers being unprovided with means of carrying provisions and of cooking them, had not been able to comply with an order I had sent the previous evening, that they were to bring provisions in their Haversacks.

I saw that the absolute necessity of furnishing them with some would cause delay, and I telegraphed to Port Colborne that I should be one hour later in starting.

We marched at 7 o'clock, leaving the Garrison, Volunteer Batty. from St. Catharines, under Captain Stoker, to hold Chippawa.

The day was oppressively hot, and our guides took us by a road much longer than necessary. When about 3 miles from Stevensville, at about 11 o'clock, I received a few lines from Lt. Col. Booker, written at 7:30 o'clock, to the effect that, he had just received my telegram, but that he was attacked in force by the enemy at a place 3 miles south of Stevensville. At the same time I received information that he had retired on Ridgeway. I encamped a mile further on at a small place called New Germany, across a road leading due south to Stevensville.

At about 4 o'clock, having gathered information that the enemy was falling back on Fort Erie, I left everything behind which would encumber the men, and started to follow them.

At the moment of starting we received an important accession to our strength by the arrival of the Cavalry Body Guard of His Excellency the Governor General, 55 strong, under Major Denison.

We marched until dark, and halted  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Fort Erie, the men sleeping on their arms and due precaution being observed.

During the night I sent out scouts to collect information. It appeared that the Fenians on retiring had posted themselves at once near the old Fort; some said they had been reinforced, some that they were attempting to recross into the United States.

I also heard that 3 Cos. 16th Regt. and 3 Cos. 60th Rifles had arrived at our vacated camp at New Germany and that a force had reached Black Creek, also that 10 more companies of Volunteer Militia had arrived at Port Colborne.

The Volunteer Garrison Battery which I had left at Chippawa joined me during the night.

Anxious to prevent the escape of the Fenians, I sent word to the Officers Comdg. at those three places that I was going to attack Fort Erie, and asked when they would be able to co-operate.

Subsequently, fresh reports of attempts of the Fenians to escape having reached me, I determined on advancing at once.

We were about to move when Lt. Col. the Honble. John Hillyard Cameron, came into Camp and informed me that they had escaped.

This intelligence caused great mortification in my little force. I desired Major Denison to scour the country and enter the town; he sent me a message that he was informed that there were still a body of Fenians about the old Fort.

We at once marched in that direction skirmishing through the woods though Major Denison soon informed us that they really had escaped, as many scouts and farm people assured us they had not escaped. We took a long sweep through the woods, our right on Lake Erie; a few stragglers were seen and 4 reported shot.

On entering the Old Fort traces were found of its having been recently occupied.

During the short operation which extended only over forty hours, the troops under my command underwent very great fatigue, and bore it with the best spirit and great cheerfulness.

I received all possible support and co-operation from officers of all ranks, the conduct of the men was excellent—a great number of private individuals rendered me services in various ways and the inhabitants generally displayed a good and loyal feeling.

Mr. Swinyard, Manager of the Great Western Railroad, gave me the benefit of his services in person; he placed at my disposal the resources of the railway and the officials on the line exerted themselves to render these available.

I have the honor to enclose a report of Lt.-Col. Booker, of his operation on the 2nd instant.

(Signed,)

GEORGE PEACOCKE,  
Col. and Lt. Col. 1—16th Regt.

MAJOR-GENERAL G. NAPIER, C. B.,  
Commanding First Military District,  
Toronto, C. W.

Port Colborne, 2nd June, 1866.

Sir,

I have the honor to report that in accordance with instructions received from Colonel Peacocke through Captain Akers, I proceeded by train at 5 a.m., today to Ridgeway station, on the B. and L. H. R. R. with the Queen's Own of Toronto, Major Gilmor, say 480 men of all ranks, the York Rifles, Captain Davis, the Caledonia Rifles, Captain Jackson, and the 13th Battalion of Hamilton, together about 360 men total of all ranks, say 840 men, in order to form a junction with Col. Peacocke at Stevensville at 9 to 9:30 a. m. On arriving at Ridgeway I sent the G. W. R. train away, and as I could not obtain a horse or

wagon in the place for conveyance of stores, I was compelled to leave without the stores, and sent them back to Port Colborne. At a little before 8 a. m., we were feeling our way upon the Stevensville Road, and were about three miles from that village when our advanced guard felt the enemy. Major Gilmor extended the Queen's Own in skirmishing order, in admirable style; the men advancing in good spirits, they were supported and relieved as required, by the 13th of Hamilton, and the Rifle Companies from York and Caledonia. After Major Gilmor had expended much ammunition, he reported to me that his ammunition was failing at 9:30, after being engaged under a hot fire for an hour and a half, I observed the enemy, throwing back his right and reinforcing his left flank. I immediately ordered up two companies in support to counteract the movement; at this moment I received a telegram by the hands of Mr. Stovin, Welland R. R., on the field, informing me that Col. Peacock could not leave Chippawa before 7 o'clock, instead of 5 a.m., the hour named by Capt. Akers on his behalf. The enemy was strongly posted in the woods on the west of the Garrison Road, the road forming the entrance as it were, to a Cul-de-Sac. We out-flanked him, when he brought up his centre reserves, and out-flanked us. We drove them in the first place, over a mile, and held possession of their rifle pits. A cry of cavalry from the front, and retreat of a number of men in our centre on the reserves caused me to form a square, and prepare for cavalry. This mistake originated from relieved skirmishers doubling back. I immediately reformed column, and endeavoured to deploy to the right. A panic here seized our men, and I could not bring them again to the front. I regret to say we have lost several valuable officers and men. I estimate the strength of the enemy as greater than ours, and from the rapid firing they were evidently armed with repeating rifles.

I have, &c.,

(Signed),

A. BOOKER,  
Lt.-Col. Com. Vol. Militia.

[Copy.]

Head Quarter Force,  
Fort Erie, 7th June, 1866.

FORT ERIE, C.W.

5 p.m., 4th June, 1866.

Sir,

In accordance with your orders I left Toronto per Train at 2 p. m. on the second instant with four Field Guns, &c., under Command of Captain Crowe, R.A. and accompanied by Col. Wolseley, A. Q. M. G. by Lieut. Turner, R.E. by Lieut. Dent, 47th, and by Lieut.-Col. Cumberland, Provincial A. D. C. to the Governor General and Managing Director of the Northern Railway, who had

kindly placed his services at my disposal. There were also two gentlemen, Mr. Clarke and Mr. Kingsmill, possessing considerable knowledge of the country through which we were to pass, attached to me by order of the Major General, and Mr. Hunter, Telegraphic Operator.

On arrival at Oakville, I was joined by its company of Rifle Volunteers, 52 Rank and file, under Capt. Chisholm.

On arrival at Hamilton, I, requiring information, telegraphed to Officer Commanding at Port Colborne, asking to know the state of affairs there, and requesting an answer to St Catharines.

At the Hamilton station, I learned that the detachment of the 60th Royal Rifles, and 1-16th Regiments which had been at first ordered to join me there, had already proceeded by Railway to reinforce Col. Peacock, who, the Superintendent of the G. W. Railway said had twice telegraphed for reinforcements.

Under these circumstances, and finding at St. Catharines no answer from Port Colborne, and that difficulty and delay would be occasioned in getting the train from the G.W.R. to the line of the Welland R.R., I determined to proceed to Clifton, and thence to the support of Col. Peacock en route to Fort Erie.

I arrived at Clifton about 8 p.m. and was there a few hours after joined by Col. Stephens with a Volunteer force to the number of 350, which had been dispatched from Toronto to Port Dalhousie to meet me at St Catharines.

At Clifton, I received pressing telegrams urging me to proceed to assume command at Port Colborne, whence I also received urgent request for rations and ammunition, reported exhausted.

Believing early arrival at Fort Erie to be most important, I dispatched all the rations and ammunition I could spare to Port Colborne.

I telegraphed to Col. Peacock to send Lieut.-Col. Villiers, if possible, across the country to Port Colborne, to command the Volunteers at that place, but soon finding that impossible, telegraphed to Capt. Akers, R.E. to assume that duty, adding that I did not anticipate pressure at that point.

Having waited for the Erie Railway line to be cleared of other trains, I proceeded at 3.40 a.m., 3rd instant, to Black Creek, at which place I had telegraphed to Officers Commanding Detachments of 60th Rifles and 1-16th Regiments, if not in communication with Col. Peacock, to meet me at day break.

After some delay I was joined by 200 rank and file of the 60th under Capt. Traverse, and by 140 rank and file of the 1-16th under Capt. Hogge.

As the Railway line had not been previously open for transport, I awaited its examination by Lieut.-Col the Hon. J. H. Cameron, who had joined me at midnight at Clifton, from some point in advance and who proceeded with a Locomotive Engine for that purpose.

On Lieut. Col. Cameron's report that the road was passable, I proceeded to a point about three miles north of Fort Erie, called Frenchman's Creek, said to be the nearest point to where the Fenians were reported skirmishing and fast escaping across the river.

Here, unloading the force from the Railway Cars, I advanced with some Volunteer Companies, the detachment 1-16th Regiment and 60th R.R. towards the Niagara River, throwing out an advanced guard and a few skirmishers in the woods on either flank. As soon as 3 Field Guns could be got out they were pressed to the front, but on opening the river, Col. Wolseley who had passed on horseback to the front found we were too late, and that Fenian Prisoners to the number apparently of some 5 or 7 hundred, were in a large barge made fast astern of the U. S. War steamer "Michigan" lying in the centre of the stream.

I reached Fort Erie at about 8.15 a.m. and found that the whole village had been abandoned.

Soon afterwards I was joined by the force under Col. Peacock, who had come up, through the woods to the right bringing in some prisoners.

The whole force was now hurriedly placed in position on the rising ground at the rear of the long village of Erie, and shortly afterwards a small steamer, having been sent from the U.S. ship "Michigan," with a proposal that I should communicate with its commander and H. B. Majesty's Consul then with him, accompanied by Col. Wolseley, Captain Crowe, R.A. and Lieut. Turner, R.E., I proceeded on board, and had an interview with Captain Bryson, U.S.N., M. Daue U.S. Dist. Attorney and Mr. H. W. Hemans H.M. Consul at Buffalo, and subsequently with General Barry, commanding U.S. troops in the Erie and Ontario districts of the State of New York.

These officers, in expressing their reprehension of the infraction of international law, said, that nothing in their power had been or would be neglected to arrest such infraction, that such were their orders, and that they had prevented many reinforcements from getting across to the British Territory on the two previous nights.

In the course of the afternoon, Captain Akers, R. E. with a force of about 1000 men arrived from Port Colborne, making the number of my command about 3000 of all arms.

Captain Crowe's In compliance with telegraphic orders, I Field Battery, 4 despatched to Kingston at 7 p. m., the troops as Guns and 200 47th per margin, sending 22 Fenians prisoners by the Regt. under Major same train under escort of the 47th Regiment. Lodder.

Further telegraphic orders directed me to send forward to London, without delay, the detachment of the 60th Royal Rifles, the London Companies of the 1-16 Regt. and the London Volunteers.

In consequence of the difficulty of procuring the necessary railway transport, that order could not be carried out till 10 30 to-day, when

about 800 men were forwarded by G. W. Railway, via Clifton, to Hamilton.

Any delays in transport of troops so far as relates to the service of the G. W. R. have arisen chiefly from the fact that on the Erie and Ontario Railway (being but a single line of track and with sidings still incomplete) there were no means of shunting or of passing trains, whilst that part of the line approaching Fort Erie is still in a very unfinished and unserviceable state. It was impossible therefore even with the most prompt assistance afforded by Mr. Swinyard, the manager and all the subordinate officials of the G. W. R. to secure the desired rapidity of movement.

The weather during the last few days has been uninterruptedly fine.

The force at present encamped here is a little over 2000 men, and considering the nature of the emergency and of the place itself, the troops are pretty well supplied.

I telegraphed to Lieutenant-Colonel Denison (with 450 men) to halt at the Suspension Bridge. One Company of volunteers is at Chippawa, and more than 250 men are at Port Colborne under Major Skinner.

In concluding my report of the last 48 hours, a Report which should—but for the nature of the duties, and the pressure of telegraphic communication—have been submitted before, I have the honor to state the following:—

That I have received greater benefit than I can well express from Col. Walseley's indefatigable energy, judgment and promptitude of resource.

That Lieut. Turner, R. E., has proved the greatest assistance to me, night and day working with a thorough spirit and most wise forethought.

That Lt.-Col. Cumberland A. D. C., has spared no trouble or exertions to give me information, and to render valuable assistance in every way. In matters connected with Railway transit, his knowledge has proved specially useful.

The untiring nature of the exertions made by the Hon. J. Hillyard Cameron, M. P., also deserves cordial acknowledgment.

Officers and men, whether of the regulars or volunteer service did all in their power to reach and re-occupy Fort Erie at the earliest moment, and to arrest the flight which had been almost completed before our arrival.

All appears quiet on this frontier.

I find that I have forgotten to state that General Barry, U. S. A., offered to furnish me with the earliest notice of any intended movement of importance which might come to his knowledge among Fenians in the States.

Capt. Bryson, commander of the U. S. War Steamer "Michigan," apprised me that he had telegraphed to Washington for instructions as to the disposal of his 700 prisoners.

I replied that that was a matter for settlement by our respective Governments.

(Signed) R. W. LOWRY,  
Colonel,  
Commanding Field Force on  
Niagara Frontier.

The Brigade Major.

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Montreal, 7th June, 1866.

Sir,

In accordance with the orders of Major-General Napier, C.B., I reported myself to Colonel Peacocke, at Hamilton, on Friday, 1st June, and proceeded with him to Chippawa.

The same night about midnight, I was directed by Lt.-Colonel Peacocke to proceed to Port Colborne to arrange with Lt.-Colonel Dennis for making a combined attack on the enemy supposed to be intrenched on Black Creek, about three miles down the river Erie, seven miles from Chippawa and two from Stevensville.

Colonel Peacocke was to move on Stevensville so as to arrive there about 9:30 a. m. Lt.-Colonel Dennis to move along the railway to Ridgeway, as far as the state of the railroad would permit, and march from thence to meet Colonel Peacocke, at Stevensville, at the above hour, and from thence the combined forces were to march on the supposed position at A. Arriving at Port Colborne at about 2 a. m., I found the whole force under arms and in the cars.

Lt.-Colonel Booker being senior to Lt.-Colonel Dennis, had taken over the command.

They had obtained from a Custom House officer arrived from Erie, exact information, as to the position of the Fenian Camp. This was on Frenchman's creek about half way between Black Creek and Fort Erie. The officer who had been in the camp at 6 o'clock considered there were not more than 700 men, that they had been drinking hard during the day, and might fall an easy prey to a sudden attack. Lieut.-Col. Dennis was anxious to move off at once to the attack, and Lieut.-Col. Booker was prepared to carry out the proposal if properly authorized. Knowing Colonel Peacocke's anxiety to combine his force with the volunteers, before attacking the enemy, I could not in his name authorize the movement; nor did I think it prudent, as from the accounts we had received it appeared probable that the enemy's force would be doubled during the night.

Having ascertained, however, that the railway bridge at Ridgeway, partially burnt in the morning, had been repaired, and that the line to Erie was open, I arranged a somewhat different plan of attack, subject, of course, to Colonel Peacocke's approval.

The plan was as follows: Lieut.-Col. Booker to proceed by rail to Erie with the greater part of his force, to arrive at Fort Erie at 8 a.m.

Lieut.-Col. Dennis and myself to go round the coast in a steam tug, taking a company of volunteer artillery, to reconnoitre the shore between Fort Erie and Black Creek, and to return to Fort Erie in time to meet Lieut.-Col. Booker at eight. Should Colonel Peacocke approve of this, he would march by the river road from Chippawa, and make a combined attack with Lieut.-Col. Booker at some point between Fort Erie and Black Creek, cutting off the enemy's retreat by the river. The tug to be employed cruising up and down the river, cutting off any boats that might attempt to escape, and communicating between the forces advancing from Chippawa and from Erie. I communicated this proposed change to Colonel Peacocke both by letter and telegraph, omitting however, I think, to mention the use proposed to be made of the tug.

The plan was merely a modification of that proposed by Lieut.-Col. Dennis, who wished to move at once with the volunteers without arranging a junction with Colonel Peacocke. Before receiving any answer from Colonel Peacocke, I went off in the tug with Lieut.-Col. Dennis, and the company of artillery, leaving word with Lieut.-Col. Booker to take care and obtain Colonel Peacocke's approval to the proposed change before acting on it, and explaining the plan previously determined on in case Colonel Peacocke should desire him to adhere to it.

We arrived at Fort Erie about 5 a.m. Steamed along there, and past Frenchman's Creek, where we saw the enemy's camp apparently deserted. After carefully examining the shore from Erie to Black Creek, and seeing no signs of any armed force, we went ashore at Black Creek, and were informed that the enemy had broken up their camp during the night.

A part was seen by the inhabitants moving along the river in the direction of Chippawa, and the remainder to have turned inland at Black Creek.

As far as I could make out from the size and appearance of their Camp, and from the reports of the people, their combined force could not have exceeded 700 or 800 men. I then returned with Lieut.-Col. Dennis by water to Fort Erie, as appointed with Lieut.-Col. Booker. That officer not having arrived, I became aware that Colonel Peacocke had acted on his original plan, but from the information I had gained, was of opinion that he would not have more than 400 or 500 men to contend with. Lieut.-Col. Dennis then landed the Company of Artillery, and I proceeded with it patrolling the road and heights between Fort Erie and Black Creek.

Between 30 and 40 prisoners were taken by the Company, or handed over by civilians and put on board the tug at Black Creek.

Seeing nothing more to be done at Fort Erie, I drove up to the Railway station, on the line to Colborne to ascertain whether telegraphic communication had been opened, and obtain what information I could.



This station is about half a mile from Erie and to the westward of the high road from Colborne; I had hardly entered the station, when I heard a cry that troops were coming down the hill between myself and the town.

I jumped into my conveyance and turned towards Erie to give the alarm to the Company of Volunteers left there. Finding the approach to Erie cut off and the enemy's skirmishers stealing round to surround me, I turned round and drove to the shore in the direction of Colborne. Near Ridgeway, I turned up towards the high road and passing the Railway Bridge found it on fire. I stopped and got some buckets from a neighbouring farm and with the assistance of the driver managed to put out the fire. I then went on to the Garrison road, where I heard an account of the engagement with Colonel Booker's force, and of its retreat to Colborne. I found two wounded men at a road side-house. One of them I took into Colborne. The other was too badly hurt to move.

I arrived at Colborne between 6 and 7 in the evening. The force had been increased since the previous day, and now consisted of the 7 P. A. O. with 4 companies of 22 Oxford, and the Drumbo Company attached, two Companies of Home Guard, the Caledonian Company, and the Queen's Own and 13th, in all about 1400 men. The Garrison was in the greatest state of confusion, and the troops that had been engaged in the morning considerably exhausted from want of rest and food.

I rendered what assistance I could to Lieut.-Col. Booker who appeared quite overcome by fatigue and anxiety. He begged me to undertake all necessary arrangements, and later in the evening requested me to take the command out of his hands. Finding this was also the wish of the other Volunteer Officers of superior rank to myself, I telegraphed for instructions and was desired by Colonel Lowry to take the command. I posted a line of outlying pickets at a radius of one mile, from the town extending from the shore to the Welland Canal with strong supports in rear, and ordered the remainder of the troops to lie down and get what rest they could.

I telegraphed in various directions for food and ammunition, and by 2 A.M., Sunday 3rd, had an ample supply of both.

About 1 o'clock the alarm was sounded, and officers and civilians rushed up, informing me that the enemy was marching on us in force, and within 500 yards west of the town where I had placed no pickets.

The alarm was entirely without foundation, but had the effect of depriving the troops of the few hours rest they might have had. All through the night reports were coming in of large forces being landed on the shore between Colborne and Erie, also entirely without foundation. I sent the tug boat, however, still kept at our service by its owner Mr. McCallum, to watch the shore between Colborne and Erie, and called on some of the civilians to act as scouts, and keep me informed of any movements in the neighbourhood.

Réveille was sounded at 3 and I immediately made what arrangements I could for serving out rations and ammunition.

At 5 o'clock, sending a pilot engine in front, I moved by rail towards Erie, taking the whole of the troops, except the 13th, whom I left to guard Port Colborne. Hearing that the enemy were posted near Ridgeway, and finding a favourable position for forming up the troops at B in sketch, on a road known as Shirks crossing, I disembarked the men, threw out a line of skirmishers with four supports from the 7th P. A. O. with orders for the flank supports to wheel outwards and extend at once, in case of any sign of a flank attack. In this order and with a strong rear guard, I advanced from B to the Garrison road and from thence towards Fort Erie. On coming to the scene of the previous days engagement at C, I ascertained that the enemy had attempted to cross the river during the night and that Erie was in possession of our troops.

After halting the men for about an hour at this spot, I marched them quietly in to Erie, where I reported myself to Colonel Lowry. On the following morning I was relieved from my command.

I have, &c.,

(Signed), CHAS. S. AKERS,  
Capt. R. E.

[Copy.]

Erie, 4th June, 1866.

Colonel Lowry,  
Commanding Niagara Frontier.

Sir,

Availing myself of the earliest moment, I have the honor to report for the information of His Excellency the Commander in Chief, the following narrative of events connected with the late Fenian Invasion at this place, in which I was directly concerned, subsequently to my leaving Toronto on the morning of Friday last.

My orders were on that occasion to proceed with the 2nd or Queen's Own, 400 strong, to Port Colborne, occupy, and if necessary, entrench a position there and wait for re-inforcements and further orders before any attack was made on the enemy, who it was represented numbered some 1,500 men and was advancing on that point—although finding great excitement at the different stations along the Welland R.R., on the way up, at Port Colborne, where I arrived about noon, things were quiet, no definite news having reached there in consequence of the Fenians having cut the wires at Fort Erie, out of which place they had driven the officials at 5 a.m. that morning. Report, however, said that they had some two hours subsequently, sent a party up the track and burned a bridge crossing a small stream known as Sarwine's Creek, six miles

from Erie, on the Railway to Port Colborne. No news of any further approach having been brought in by any of the numerous scouts sent out by the villagers during the forenoon, I proceeded to billet the men in order to get them dinner, and then before determining to commence the construction of any defences, I despatched messengers across to Buck's Tavern and Stevensville, between Erie and the town of Welland, to ascertain and report any movement of the enemy in that direction, which I thought probable, as sufficient time had elapsed to enable him to reach Port Colborne, had that been his intention, and having through the kindness of Mr. Larmont, the Superintendent of the Line, obtained a locomotive, I started down the railway upon a re-connoissance, getting down to within six miles of Erie. The burning of the bridge mentioned preventing any closer approach. I then learned that the bridge had been destroyed by a party of some seven men who had come up about seven, a.m., who in addition stole a number of horses from the farmers in the vicinity, and then went back towards the main body, which from testimony I received, it appeared had gone down the river about a mile below the lower Ferry—and camped close to the river road on one Newbigging's farm.

Their numbers variously estimated at from 450 to 1,200 men. This testimony was corroborated by the statement of the mounted scouts from Buck's Tavern and Stevensville, who returned in the evening and went to show that with the exception of parties out stealing horses there had been no Fenians seen in that direction and was rendered certain by the arrival about 10 p.m. of Mr. Graham, the Officer of Customs at Fort Erie, who had been in their camp at six o'clock that evening. Shortly before this time, however, Lt.-Col. Booker, of Hamilton, had arrived with the 13th Battalion of volunteers, and being senior officer, took command, and continued the communication by telegraph which had been going on between Col. Peacocke and myself respecting the position and strength of the enemy and best method of attacking him. Col. Peacocke, then at Clifton, having at about 5 p.m. telegraphed me that he had ordered the International Railway Steamer up to Port Colborne for me to put upon her a gun or detachment, in order to patrol the River from Fort Erie to Chippawa, she not having arrived at 10:30 p.m., I ordered the "Robb," a powerful Tug Boat, owned by Captain McCallum, down from Dunnville for that purpose, intending to place upon her the Welland Battery without guns, (the men armed with Enfield Rifles), and received a reply that she would be down at 3 a.m. the following morning. This was the position of affairs when Captain Akers, R.E., arrived from Chippawa, sent over by Col. Peacocke, to consult and to explain Col. Peacocke's views as to the best mode of attack.

After due consideration between Captain Akers, Lt.-Col. Booker and myself, a certain course was decided arranging for an attack in

concert on that morning, and Colonel Peacocke was telegraphed accordingly.

In accordance with this plan Capt. Akers and myself embarked on the Tug,* which did not arrive (however) till about 4 a.m., having been delayed in consequence of Captain McCallum wishing to bring with him his Naval Company from Dunnville, and proceeded down to reconnoitre the river and Fenian Camp, arranging to meet the Port Colborne Force back at the Railway Depot, 3 miles above the enemy's camp, at 7 or at the latest half-past 7. On our way past the village of Fort Erie we were brought to by the armed Patrol Tug Boat from the U.S. Str. "Michigan," who on finding out who we were informed us that the Fenian Camp on the Newbigging farm had been broken up at 3 a.m. that morning, the enemy having marched down the River Road.

We proceeded down the River to the mouth of the Black Creek, 8 miles above Chippawa, when we learned that they had turned off the River to the West a short distance above and were then at a point 2 miles directly in rear of a place called "New Germany." A messenger was at once sent off to Col. Peacocke, presumed then under previously concocted arrangement, to be near there moving up, and we returned with the Tug in accordance with that arrangement to meet Col. Booker and the Port Colborne Force at the Upper R.R. Depot, at Fort Erie.

On our arrival there we could see or hear nothing of them. This was accounted for subsequently, by the fact that Lt.-Col. Booker had received after we left an order from Col. Peacocke directing him to turn off the R.R. at *Ridgeway*, some 8 miles above Fort Erie and cross the country in order to meet and attack in concert.

This being the case, presuming a combined attack would be made in the course of the day, of the result of which we could have no doubt, I considered as I could not then join my proper force, that important service could be rendered by patrolling the River to intercept and capture fugitives and to prevent by every possible means the escape across the river of any large body of the enemy.

This having been determined on Captain Akers and myself were engaged all day in patrolling the shore, and scouring the woods along the river as far down as Black Creek, arresting in all, including 6 prisoners made about 9 o'clock in the morning, at Fort Erie, some 23 men; during the course of the afternoon we learned through some of the prisoners that an engagement had taken place at some point in the interior, in which the Fenians had been utterly dispersed. This I was quite prepared to believe as I had from the steamer observed Colonel Peacocke with a strong force on his way up from Chippawa turn in from the River Road towards New Germany, and I knew that Lt.-Colonel Booker's force was coming down upon him from the south.

Concluding that the action which had been known to come off

had resulted in the capture of the enemy, I returned to Fort Erie about half-past 5 o'clock, p.m., proposing to get what information I could about the position of our troops, and to telegraph for instructions as to what should be done with the prisoners, who had amounted now, including those taken in the village and neighbourhood during the day, also, to some 60 or 65 men. The numbers I cannot

- give precisely as I had only got as far as those names given in the margin, making out a memorandum of each case, and (having in the meantime made up my mind to send the prisoners by the Tug to Welland Gaol) had brought down and embarked those in confinement in charge of the Reeve, when the alarm was given that the Fenians were entering the town in force. In fact, the first messenger had hardly delivered the news when a second came in to say that they were within a quarter of a mile, coming down the street along the River. I went over from the Pier to satisfy myself and saw them, in numbers, as I judged, about 150, advancing upon the street indicated. Supposing them to be of the material and of the same miserable character physically as the prisoners we had been taking all day, I thought the detachment I had with the boat, even if we had to resort to the bayonet, sufficient to do for them, and concluded that my duty lay in making a stand against them.
- Names.
  1. Dan. Drummond,
  2. Pat. O'Nally,
  3. Benj. Perry,
  4. Jno. Coruey,
  5. John Mahoney,
  6. W. Maddigan,
  7. Jno. Hughes,
  8. W. H. Harden,  
or Slarin,
  9. Denis Lanahan,
  10. Jno. Murphy,
  11. Owen Kennedy,
  12. Francis Miles,
  13. J. A. Heckman,
  14. W. Baker,
  15. W. Orr,
  16. Jno. Maxfield,
  17. Terin McCarthy,
  18. Michael Kilfather,
  19. Jno. Gray,
  20. Rev. Jno. Lumoden.

This detachment consisted, as before mentioned, of the Welland Field Battery, 54 men and 3 officers, and of a portion, some 13 men and one officer, exclusive of the Guard over the prisoners on the boat, of the Dunnville Naval Company.

I first took the precaution to put the prisoners under hatches, and then advancing to meet the enemy about 150 yards, drew up my little command across the street; as they came within about 200 yards they opened fire on us when my detachment by order fired a volley from each of the companies, upon which a severe flank fire was opened on us from the west, and on looking in that direction I observed for the first time two considerable bodies of the enemy running northerly parallel with the river, evidently with the intention of cutting us off, and getting possession both of us and the steamer at the same time. Under the circumstances, as I considered, if we tried to escape by the Tug the enemy might be here as soon as us, and so achieve his double object; and I therefore concluded that my duty lay in saving the prisoners we had on board and preventing the enemy from getting possession of the vessel, what I knew, and he probably also, was his only means of escape, and I therefore ordered the Captain to cast off and get out in the stream and ordered my men to retreat and do the best they could to get away each man for himself.

During this time a heavy fire was kept up on us both front and flank, and I had the grief of seeing several of my men fall; we retreated down the Front Street under a very heavy—though, comparatively, ineffective fire—several of the men contrary to my advice taking shelter in a house the door of which stood open as they passed.

There being little or no cessation in the fire upon us in retreat, I had no desire to remain under it longer than was necessary, and accordingly turned into the premises of a friend in the lower part of the village, where I lay concealed, although the premises were searched twice, the ruffians stating their intention to come a third time, and threatening, if I were not given up as they had seen me enter the gate, that they would destroy the property. Two of my men, one of them wounded, had previously taken shelter in the house, whom they captured.

Fearing another search I dressed in disguise furnished by my friends and then came out and remained in the village till night fall when I got through the lines, and struck across the country in search of Col. Peacocke, finding his camp out about 5 miles back of Fort Erie, arriving there at 3 o'clock A. M., I then accompanied his force to this place, during its operations later in the day of all which, as also of the escape of the enemy, during the night, that officer's report will doubtless inform you.

On my return, I was able to learn for the first time something of the casualties in the affairs of the previous evening.

I feel rejoiced not to have to report any loss of life in my detachment, although I was given to understand that there were some 5 wounded in the Welland Battery, 3 of them so severely as to result in each case of the loss of a Leg, among which cases I regret to say Captain King, of the Welland Battery, and one man of the Dunnville Naval Company. None of the Officers excepting Captain King were wounded. A return of the Casualties is appended hereto.

The enemy suffered more severely. Three of his number were killed outright, and 4 were mortally wounded, 2 of whom died yesterday morning. The other 2 had been allowed under the circumstances by the Reeve Dr. Kempson, with the permission, as I understood of Col. Lowry, to be taken to the Buffalo Hospital.

Mr. Scholfield, the Lieutenant of the Welland Battery, having gone to Welland to get his men together again, some of them having escaped across country to their homes during the night, is ordered without delay, when in a position to do so, to prepare an accurate list of the casualties in the Battery.

I have detained this report somewhat in order to get his return.

Should there prove to have been any casualties not as yet reported, I will lose no time in sending forward a list of the same.

I append the report of Capt. McCallum, Commanding Dunnville Naval Company, and owner of the Steam Tug referred to, to whom particularly, as also to his Lieutenant W. Robb, the sailing master

of the Steamer, I have to express my obligation for their zealous and efficient assistance during the operations of Saturday. I have also the gratification of saying that the other Officers and the men forming my little Command behaved most nobly in the affair during the afternoon at Fort Erie. I firmly believe, that had I not ordered them to retreat they would have remained steady and fought until shot down in their ranks.

(Signed)

J. STOUGHTON DENNIS,

Lieutenant-Colonel,

Commanding Detachment on Saturday, 2nd June.

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*To Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis, Fort Erie.*

Sir,

At your request I have the honor to make the following Report:—

On Saturday last, 2nd June, between the hours of three and four p.m., after your departure, I retreated down the river under a galling fire, a distance of about three miles, with two men of the Naval Brigade, and thirteen men of the Welland Canal Field Battery, the rest having been cut off and consequently taken prisoners, including the following officers, viz: 2nd Lieutenant Macdonald, of Naval Brigade, and Lieut. Scholfield and Ensign Nimmo, of Field Battery, being wounded, and one man of the Naval Brigade. Lieut. Robb, with steamer "Robb," came in boats and took us on board. I then held consultation with Lieut. Robb as to future proceedings, we then determined on account of being encumbered with so many prisoners on board (fifty-seven in number) and so very few men left to guard them, to run to Port Colborne and send the prisoners to a place of safety. In passing Fort Erie up the river we, for a distance of a mile's run, were under a heavy fire of musketry from the Canada shore; we passed without any casualties worth mentioning and arrived safely at Port Colborne, at half-past six, p.m. of same day, and delivered the prisoners over to Lieut. Col. McGiverin, with commitment and names inserted.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed)

L. McCALLUM,

Captain, N.B., Dunnville.

