brave men of Smithville flew to arms, and soon the bay was alive with boats hurrying them to the aid of their comrades within the fort. Women, as in the old days, armed sons and fathers and urged them to the front. But the steamer proved to be a friendly one.

Upon receipt of unofficial information of this movement, Gov. John W. Ellis, captain general and commander-in-chief of the North Carolina Militia, on the 11th of January, 1861, addressed a letter to Col. John L. Cantwell, commanding the Thirtieth Regiment North Carolina Militia, at Wilmington, in which, after stating his belief that the men were "actuated by patriotic motives," he continued:

"Yet, in view of the relations existing between the General Government and the State of North Carolina, there is no authority of law, under existing circumstances, for the occupation of the United States forts situated in this State. I can not, therefore, sustain the action of Captain Thurston, however patriotic his motives may have been, and am compelled by an imperative sense of duty to order that Fort Caswell be restored to the possession of the authorities of the United States.

"You will proceed to Smithville on receipt of this communication and communicate orders to Captain Thurston to withdraw his troops from Fort Caswell. You will also investigate and report the facts to this department."

Upon receipt of this order on the 12th, Col. J. L. Cantwell notified the Governor that he would proceed at once to Fort Caswell, accompanied by Robert E. Calder, acting adjutant, and William Calder, acting quartermaster, two staff officers temporarily appointed for that duty. Transportation facilities between Wilmington and Smithville were very limited. Colonel Cantwell and his aides embarked on a slow-sailing sloop which became becalmed within four miles of Smithville. They were put into shallow water, out of which they waded and walked to Smithville, where they secured, with difficulty, because the populace was almost unanimously opposed to their supposed mission, a pilot boat in which they sailed to Fort Caswell, arriving there after dark.

After some parleying, and not without reluctance, they were admitted and conducted to Major Hedrick, to whom the following order was delivered:

To Major John J. Hedrick, Commanding Fort Caswell:

Sir:—In obedience to the order of His Excellency, John W. Ellis, governor, etc., a copy of which I herewith transmit, it becomes my duty to direct that you withdraw the troops under your command from Fort Caswell and restore the same to the custody of the officer of the United States whom you found in charge.

Respectfully, John L. Cantwell,
Colonel Thirtieth North Carolina Militia.

Robert E. Calder, *Acting Adjutant.*

The garrison asked until the next morning to consider what reply should be made, and, on the morning of the 13th, this was returned:

Colonel John L. Cantwell:

Sir:—Your communication, with the copy of the order of Governor Ellis demanding the surrender of this post, has been received. In reply, I have to inform you that we, as North Carolinians, will obey his command. This post will be evacuated tomorrow at 9 o'clock a. m.

John J. Hedrick,
Major Commanding.

George Wortham, *Acting Adjutant.*

The fort was evacuated on the next day. Colonel Cantwell and his aides returned to Wilmington and reported the facts to Governor Ellis. The United States sergeant again assumed control of the government property.

Thus matters remained in this section until April of the same year, the State in the meantime drifting steadily towards secession and war, and the people sternly arming and preparing. The local military companies in Wilmington were fully recruited, and the former minute men permanently organized as the Cape Fear Light Artillery, under which name they served throughout the war.

On the 12th of April came the firing upon Fort Sumter, followed on the 15th by a call from the Secretary of War upon the Governor of North Carolina for "two regiments of military for immediate service." Immediately the Governor telegraphed orders to Col. J. L. Cantwell, at Wilmington, "to take Forts Caswell and Johnston without delay, and hold them until further orders against all comers." Colonel Cantwell, as commander of the Thirtieth Regiment North Carolina Militia, promptly issued orders to "the officers in command of the Wilmington Light Infantry, the German Volunteers, and the Wil-