

## THE YOUNGEST COLONEL IN THE SERVICE.

A MEMORIAL OF ALEXANDER ROBERTS DUNN, &c.

[From Good Words for July.]

Canada is entitled to the first place among our colonies for the warlike, patriotic spirit it has displayed. Of all the dependencies of the Crown, it alone has contributed a regiment for the defence of the mother country, and the 100th, or Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian Regiment will always be associated with the name of the gallant young soldier whose brilliant career and untimely end form the subject of the following memoir.

Alexander Roberts Dunn was descended, on his father's side, from an old and well-known Northumbrian family of that name, and on his mother's from the Robertses of Glastonbury. He was born at Toronto, in 1833, and was the second son of the Honourable John Henry Dunn, who for more than twenty years held the high and responsible office of Receiver-General of Canada. After the Union he resigned that appointment, and became a member of the Legislative Assembly, where he took an active interest in all that concerned the welfare of his adopted country. As a public man he was highly esteemed for his political consistency, while his private worth and many virtues endeared him to all who knew him.

His second son, Alexander, was intended for the army. It was his desire almost from childhood to enter the service, and he was educated in England, chiefly at Harrow, with a view to his future profession. In 1852, before he had completed his nineteenth year, he was gazetted to a cornetcy in the 11th (Prince Albert's Own) Hussars, a regiment which can boast of a hundred and fifty years service, and of "Egypt," "the Peninsula," "Waterloo," and "Bhurtpore," inscribed on its colours.

Our young soldier, while at Harrow, without neglecting his studies, delighted in all those manly sports and exercises which are practiced there, and on joining his regiment he devoted himself, with equal ardour, to mastering the details of his new profession. He was a splendid swordsman, a skilful rider, and an unrivalled marksman. A friend, who witnessed it, has given us a singular proof of his almost unerring aim. He placed a small cap-case on the head of a favourite servant, and fired at it with his pistol at the distance of sixteen yards. Out of forty shots, he hit the cap-case thirty-six times, and the servant stood as steady as a post. This eccentric feat, recalling the days of William Tell, might appear incredible, but it was actually witnessed by our informant. It must be borne in mind that Mr. Dunn was at this time a very young officer, and we may venture to add, that this proof of his skill is more to be admired than imitated. The servant must certainly have had great confidence in his master before he would submit to such an ordeal.

The honour of his regiment was dear to the young soldier, and Cornet Dunn was resolved on joining the 11th Hussars, to prove, if the occasion ever presented itself, that he was worthy of the rank he held. He had not long to wait for that occasion. In less than two years after he was gazetted, he landed with his regiment in the Crimea, and took part in the first skirmish we had with the enemy. Our cavalry division was under the command of the Earl of Lucan: it was divided into two parts—the Light Dragoons under the command of the Earl of Cardigan, and the Heavy Dragoons under the command

of Brigadier General Scarlett. The 11th Hussars belonged to the Light Cavalry Brigade.

On the 19th of September, 1854, Lieutenant Dunn (he had now attained that rank) was under fire for the first time. On the afternoon of that day, while our army was on the march, and before it had reached the Bulganak, curling wreaths of smoke were seen on the south and east, marking the spots where the Cossacks had set fire to the houses of the poor Tatars. Then, on the distant hills, appeared dark bodies of cavalry, drawn up as if to check the advance of the Allies by attacking them on the left flank. Lieutenant Dunn was one of the party of light cavalry that dashed forward, under the command of Lord Cardigan, to drive the Cossacks from their position. The latter remained in possession of the brow of the hill; they were thrice the number of the English, and could only have been attacked at great disadvantage. Lord Cardigan was about to charge up the hill, when Lord Raglan, deeming the odds, both in numbers and position, to be too great, gave orders to recall the skirmishers, and retire slowly. On this the Cossack squadrons separated, and some guns hitherto concealed, began to play upon our cavalry as they retired; a few hussars and dragoons were wounded, but no lives were lost. There was a feeling of disappointment, not confined to Lieutenant Dunn, that our hussars had not had an opportunity of measuring swords with the enemy, but there can be no doubt that an uphill attack against such superior members must have been attended with serious loss.

From the skirmish at Bulganak we hasten on to the battle of Balaklava, where the 11th Hussars gained for themselves an imperishable name, and Lieutenant Dunn proved himself the bravest of the brave. It would be foreign to our purpose to try to describe the battle, but we must trace the course of the 11th Hussars till we reach the point where Lieutenant Dunn, forgetful of his own safety, displayed a chivalrous courage and noble humanity, in saving the lives of his comrades when they were at the mercy of the enemy. The Turks had been driven from the redoubts by the enemy. The 93rd Highlanders, under the command of their gallant old chief, standing in double rank only, had repelled the attack of the Russian cavalry. The Scots Greys and the Inniskillings had made their gallant and successful charge, described by a French general as "truly magnificent—the most glorious thing I ever saw." Then came the most brilliant episode in the whole campaign, the fatal charge of the Light Brigade. It was a blunder, but that detracts nothing from our admiration of those who took part in it. The first duty of a soldier is obedience; beyond that they have no responsibility. Lord Cardigan was not the man to reason, to cavil, or to doubt. "I received an order, and I obeyed it." Before the first line, but when the order was given, "Forward the Light Brigade! Charge for the guns!" it advanced in support of the 17th Lancers. When Lieutenant Dunn heard that order, he grasped his sword more firmly and rode steadily on. He heard Nolan's death-cry: he saw his horse rush riderless away. The havoc in front was fearful; it could not be called fighting; our soldiers were powerless till they reached them advancing down the valley, the front of the Light Brigade was narrowed, and the 11th Hussars removed from the first line and stationed so as to act in support. The Officers of the regiment present on this occasion were Colonel Douglas, Captain Edwin Cook, Lieutenants Trevelyan, Alexander R. Dunn, Roger Palmer, and George Powell Haughton.

At first it formed the left of a battery. As the saddles in front became empty, there rose the steady cry, "Close in—close into the centre—close in!" and every gap was at once filled up. The front became narrower as they neared the battery, but there was no vacant place. Horses with empty saddles, guided by the habit of discipline, retained their places, or fell back and joined other troops.—The Russian artillerymen stood to their guns, and fought with obstinate courage; only a few lay hid beneath the tumbrils to escape the sabres of our troopers. The right troop of the 11th Hussars was confronted by the battery; little resistance was offered, as most of the gunners were already cut down. The other troops outflanked the line of the battery, and rejoined the right troop, which had now reached a clear space beyond the limbers and tumbrils. At this point a Russian colonel, imagining that all was lost, gave up his sword to an officer of the 11th Hussars, but there was no time to make prisoners. As the smoke cleared away, several squadrons of Russian lancers were seen drawn up a little in advance; they lowered their lances as if about to charge, but when the 11th Hussars rushed forward to attack them, they retreated and were followed into the gorge between the aqueduct and the eastern base of the Fedoukins hills. On approaching the bank of the aqueduct, the Hussars found themselves confronted by large bodies of Russian cavalry. A mere handful of men, they could do nothing against such overpowering numbers; their only chance of safety was to fall back. At some distance they met the 4th Light Dragoons, who also fell back, aligning with the 11th Hussars. The collision, so to speak, of the two regiments necessarily caused some degree of confusion, and if the enemy had attacked them at that moment, the loss might have been very serious. They failed to do so, and order was soon restored. When the two regiments (numbering only seventy troopers in all) wheeled round and presented a bold front to the enemy, the Russian cavalry, panic-struck by their audacity, halted and began to fall back. At this moment a large body of cavalry appeared on our left rear, and a joyful cry rose from the little band: "Hurrah! it is the 17th." A closer inspection soon proved that it was not the 17th Lancers, but a large body of Russian cavalry, consisting of five or six squadrons, drawn up to cut off their retreat. They were then placed between two bodies of the enemy, so that to advance or to retreat became equally difficult and dangerous. If the Russian cavalry had known their advantage, and how to profit by it, they might have closed up and crushed our handful of troopers by the mere weight of numbers; they seem never to have recovered from their first surprise on seeing the audacity of our attack. At this moment our troopers were fronting the enemy in the rear when the order was given to go about; it thus happened that when this movement was effected the rear rank were in front and the officers behind. This inversion of the usual order of things gave them one advantage, they could see all that happened to their own men. The danger was greatest for the first few yards, but fortunately the Russian cavalry failed to attack them in the rear. As they advanced two in front three in depth, the Russian guns opened fire on them. But this was rather an advantage, as it served to distract the attention of the cavalry. If the Russian lancers had only kept their ground, they would have broken our small bands as a rock breaks the wave that dashes against it, for they were ten times their number, but at the moment the Russian commande