

**The Sirdar's Sword.** It may be interesting, even to men engaged in the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce, banking and insurance,

to read a description of the Sword of Honour presented by the City of London to the victorious Sirdar, General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. On the invitation of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company, of Regent Street, a number of representatives of the press had an opportunity of inspecting this weapon, which is evidently not intended to be tested on a whirling Dervish's neck, but only to represent the high esteem and regard of a grateful nation to the destroyer of the warriors, whose valour has been immortalized by Rudyard Kipling in the line:

*"But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller."*

The hilt of the weapon is of solid 18-carat gold, the decoration including, very appropriately, figures representing the British Lion, Britannia and Justice, all of which are emblems naturally associated with the Soudan expedition. The blade, which is of the finest steel, is elaborately damascened with solid gold in true Oriental fashion. The steel takes, also, a true Oriental curve resembling that of the Turkish scimitar. Altogether, the sword and scabbard are beautiful examples of the goldsmith's art. The Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company have executed the work in the most refined artistic style, and have, as is usual with them, shown great skill in the execution of even the minutest details.

*This heart, my own dear mother, bends*

**A Son's View** *With love's true instinct, back to thee.*  
**of the Yukon.**

Much has been said and written of the Yukon river and its tributaries. Representatives of newspapers, of railways, mining and transportation companies have flooded the waiting world with wearisome accounts of the condition of things in Klondyke from their points of view; but, as true testimony, we prefer to place the loving letter of a son to his mother above all the epistles of special correspondents and disappointed company-promoting gold-hunters. In the following extracts from a letter written to one of the many mothers throughout the world who wait for news from loved ones may possibly be found a plain, unvarnished tale of the Yukon as it appears to an Englishman of the type of the early adventurers who, regardless of hardships and undaunted by obstacles, frequently sought fame and fortune in foreign or almost unknown lands. We quote:—

"In the future we should be able to hear from one another sooner, as many new routes are being opened up. I am sorry if you are sorry that I am further away, but on the other hand everything here looks towards a bright future. The country is immensely big and enormously rich, and there is no reason why one shouldn't have a little share. Indeed, so far, I have one claim worth at least £1,000, and very probably it may sell in the spring for £2,000. If I were at liberty now, I might work it myself, and make even more out of it."

The writer of this affectionate letter is evidently a good, ordinary, all-round English boy, possibly with not a few accomplishments, as his next reference to

the sale of etchings doctoring, etc., would seem to indicate. Perhaps, judging from his description of himself as a "kind of a sort of a doctor," he has studied medicine, and realizing the over-crowded state of a noble profession, has abandoned that field for what looked like a shorter road to fortune. He writes:

"In other ways, too, I am gathering in 'oof.' For instance, small etchings, 6 inches by 10 inches, of places around sell for from £3 to £5 each, and as a kind of a sort of a doctor I make—or shall make—a nice little bit: £1 to £3 per visit I have received. But, of course, other things are correspondingly high, and luxuries are practically non-existent.

"The winter here seems to be very similar to that of the North-West."

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Again, we find ourselves attaching weight to the words of this Englishman when, in writing to his mother, from whom he has no secrets to hide, he says:—

"Most of the stories told of the wealth of this country are true enough. Gold, and coarse gold at that, seems to exist all through it, and during the coming few years many fortunes will be lost and won here.

\* \* \* This country is "all right" for years to come."

With his letter the loving mother receives some of the "small etchings," by the sale of which this adventurer, artist and doctor is gathering "oof," and the following bit of description warrants the belief that what his eye sees he can faithfully reproduce with pen or brush, perfect in tint and outline:

"In future we should be able to communicate in at least two months, as the police are now running the mail from Dawson to Skaguay.

"Since I wrote last the country has put on its most gorgeous apparel, and at present it is without exception the most beautiful I ever saw. The colours of trees, hills, rivers, birds, butterflies, are most vivid, and in the enclosed poor attempts to reproduce some scenes for you no one colour is vivid enough to represent reality. The greens in particular are wonderful. I can imagine no finer trip for a man of leisure than to come in over one of the passes, Skaguay or Dyea, and after getting his stores, tent, stove, boat, and grub, over on to Lake Bennett, to come down the whole length of the Yukon River, just floating with the current, which is very swift, from four to seven miles per hour. He could transfer himself to river steamer at Circle City and get round to Victoria by ocean steamer, and during the trip would see some grand scenery, from the beauty of the banks of the St. Lawrence, the wild, stern, aridness of the north shore of Lake Superior, the luxuriant beauty of the Lake of the Woods (Rat Portage), the immensity of the plains, the grandeur of the Rockies, with their rocks rising 8,000 feet sheer from the railway bed, the horn-like appearance of the Western Rocky Slope, the tree-clad mountainous sides of the inland seas, the rocks and mountains again in the passes, the lakes, rivers, canons, rapids and flats of the Yukon River, to the ocean voyage back to Victoria or on to San Francisco."

Then, as if fearful that his little bit of word painting may appeal too strongly to British lads at home, he dwells in closing upon some of the dangers and discomforts of life in the land of gold, and asks that the boys be warned of what awaits them:—

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