

**PATRIOTIC ADDRESS**

Delivered at Montreal to the Members of the Strathcona Horse by W. Peterson, Esq., L.L.D., Principal of McGill University, on the Day of Their Departure for South Africa.

"Gentlemen of the Strathcona Horse, I tell you, on the eve of your departure, that to know Lord Strathcona is in itself a liberal education. His action in regard to this matter has challenged the admiration not only of the home country, but of the Empire at large; and in the century that lies before us, a century which we hope and trust will see a large expansion given to the idea and sentiment of Imperial unity, Lord Strathcona's name will go down to history as one of the master builders of the Empire. Canadians had already given proof in the expedition of the Nile, of their readiness to serve the common cause, (hear, hear) but that, gentlemen, was but the faint prelude of the grand Imperial chorus that was soon to swell forth. No more dramatic scenes have ever been enacted in history than the landing on South African shores of the various children of the Grey Mother of Nations. "Lo," she says:

"Lo, how they come to me!  
 Ah, how they turn to me!  
 East and South my children scatter.  
 North and West, the world they wander,  
 Yet they come back to me—come  
 with their brave hearts beating.  
 Longing to die for me."

Gentlemen, the great war, which in the view of certain prophets of evil omen, was to strain the bonds of Empire to the breaking point, has proved, instead, the most potent instrument of Imperial federation. Gentlemen, the fear has been expressed in the interest of your fighting qualities, that by the time you get to South Africa, the war may be well-nigh ended. We shall welcome peace, whenever it comes, but I think our judgment of the character of our enemies is greatly at fault, if we do not see they are likely, even after the inevitable surrender of their capital, to carry on a warfare behind the fortresses at Pretoria, with which I know no men more fitted to cope than the men

of Strathcona's Horse. And it may be, in any case, an army of occupation will be required while the settlement of the country is going on.

One and all of you, starting from the heart of this province of Quebec, I think you can tell the dwellers in the Transvaal they have nothing to fear from such a settlement. The history of this province is proof of it. The independence she enjoys, limited only by the obligations of Confederation and loyalty to the throne, attests that British sympathy with the aspirations of self-governing communities, for which Great Britain is reaping her reward to-day. When that settlement has been effected, one more proof will have been given to the world that it is not the ascendancy of one race over another that lies nearest to the British heart, but equal rights for all in the ample folds of the British flag. Great Britain has never acted upon the Roman maxim, that empire must be retained by the same forceful methods by which it was acquired; and the reward of that she is reaping to-day in the loyal affection and willing and enthusiastic co-operation of the new nations within the Empire, imbued with the pride for liberty which she has been successful in inspiring in all the nations under her sway. Gentlemen, in the name of all who strained their eyes to see your martial forms to-day—men, women, and children—I wish you God-speed. Go forth to play your part in the great Imperial drama that is being enacted on the plains of South Africa! We shall follow your career with affectionate interest. Mingle your ranks with those of the men from the Old Country, with the contingents from Cape Colony and Natal, and from New Zealand and other parts of the great Australian continent. Never in the history of the world could such a scene have been witnessed before, and it would be altogether impossible to-day for any other country to duplicate it.

The thought of it will strengthen and consolidate the growing sentiment of Imperial unity,—the feeling of fellowship with the old land in common duties, joint aspirations, like sacrifice and like suffering. What is the gain for all of us. But your special joy and pride it will be to hear the "Grey Mother" greet you in heart-stirring words:—  
 "Truly ye come of THE BLOOD!