

# "Camp Wascana"

by SERGT. B. G. MEYRICK

(With apologies to the author of "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast")

On the banks of the Wascana  
Lo, there stands a big encampment  
Which is known throughout the country  
As the Red-coats' training depot.  
It is not a place of comfort  
Nor of ease or recreation,  
But a place to get away from  
As recruits do in the evening.  
In one corner stands the tepee  
Of the Big White Chief's assistant;  
In another is the wigwam  
Where the medicine-man comes daily,  
He who mixes mystic potions,  
He who says "Just put your tongue out",  
Ere he sends you back to duty,  
In a third unsheltered corner  
Is the place of many tomb-stones  
And of little concrete crosses;  
In this little spot sequestered  
Lie the bones of former warriors  
Who have passed beyond the sunset  
To the grounds of happy hunting.  
In the one remaining corner  
Stands a gaunt forbidding structure  
Which was recently erected  
By a scrupulous contractor  
At a cost of sixty thousand  
Goodly dollars of the treasury.  
In this "hall of fame" each morning,  
Bits and buckles all a-sparkle,  
May be seen a group of riders  
Going through their evolutions  
At the gentle instigation  
Of instructors whose deportment  
Would convey a strong impression  
That their matutinal slumbers  
Had been prematurely ended.  
Though they be not great of stature  
These instructors know their business,  
And the doughty sergeant-major  
Sees that others know it also  
As he brandishes his black-snake  
With a smile like clouds of thunder.  
In this dreadful torture-chamber  
Long and oft the riders suffer  
As they breathe unholy curses  
'Pon the brigands who invented  
Forms of torture such as riding  
With crossed stirrups and arms folded.  
Come with me and I will show you

From the safety of the gallery  
Pulsing nostrils filled with tan-bark,  
Sweating faces dust-beclouded  
That you cannot recognize them,  
While outside upon the roof-top  
Shrills a meadow-lark enraptured  
With the joy of spring's warm sunshine.

But lest you be nauseated  
With this scene of human suffering,  
Let us see another aspect;  
Let's perambulate the sports-field.  
Here we see more budding warriors  
Who with robot-like precision  
Execute amazing movements  
While an apoplectic sergeant  
Utters incoherent war-whoops,  
Unintelligible war-whoops  
Such as scandalise the ladies.  
Here the Braves display their prowess  
With their shooting-sticks a-glitter,  
Muttering acrid imprecations  
On what they describe as useless  
Sabre-rattling, till the welkin  
Rings with protest unrestrained;  
And the corporals assisting  
In the role of drill-instructors  
Add their quota to the tumult.

See the column marches hither,  
Marches thither, turning, wheeling,  
Jostling, pushing, doubling, walking,  
Till they reach the wooden side-walk  
Slimy with its film of gumbo,  
And as each man treads more firmly  
Forth they sally to the precincts  
Of administrative buildings,  
And when just outside the windows  
Of the chiefs who sit in conclave  
And of those whose office duties  
Call for utmost concentration,  
Inexorably they're halted  
To receive loud admonitions  
On the step that they've been keeping,  
On the way they swing their right arms.  
And when due time has been given  
To create a good impression  
And sufficient interruption  
In affairs within the office,