

STRATHCONA'S HORSE.

But the sweet wild grass of mountain pass, and the shimmering summer streams
Must vanish forevermore, perchance, into the land of dreams.—DRUMMOND.

The stirring and touching poetical reverie of Dr. W. H. Drummond's trooper pictures the possibility that some at least of the gallant riders from the boundless plains of the North may never return to us. They have answered

"The bugles ringing shrill,"

and the trail they ride to-day ends across the seas, in the land where some of Otter's men, whom we cheered only a few months ago, lie "cold, and stiff, and still." Yet no sad thoughts were permitted to check the warmth of the wild welcome extended by the Canadian metropolis to the men of the "strong young North," who have answered the shrill clarion of war sounded by the sturdy patriot, Lord Strathcona. From the time when the first spurred boot touched the platform of the Canadian Pacific station, until the last train steamed out from Bonaventure and disappeared into the night, the feelings of the multitude of Montrealers which assembled to greet their Western brethren found vent in a continuous shout of welcome and good wishes. Public sentiment, love of country, reverence for Queen and Empire, could only find partial expression in cheers and songs, and the sounds that rent the frosty air, and made the rafters of the Windsor ring, were apparently totally inadequate to convey with sufficient warmth the frenzied desire of thousands and thousands of loyal Canadians to honour the Queen and her faithful subject, Lord Strathcona, a citizen of Montreal. No pen-picture of the scenes of Monday last can convey aught save the faintest outline thereof. It was a carnival of merriment and revelry, happiness reigned supreme, and, while waiting for the arrival of their gallant guests, amid a profusion of patriotic decorations, the laughing, shouting, cheering, singing sea of humanity swayed hither and thither with never-waning enthusiasm, mad with merriment and jubilant with joy.

The daily papers have told the story of the day's doings with an attention to detail peculiar to the experienced reporter of events. There is little, if anything, left to record in the pages of a journal devoted to sober, serious business. Yet even THE CHRONICLE may be pardoned if, above the confusion of the editor's vague recollections of Strathcona Day, certain of its best prized pictures lift themselves, long to remain perfect in tint and outline.

The men were a discordantly composite lot; but we venture to say no more serviceable body can be found in any part of the British Empire. There were men of medium height who were "tall crosswise," being broad-shouldered and deep-chested; there were lank, lean-looking cow-boys, keen, active and grey-eyed, with whom, unless their looks belied them, it would be dangerous to quarrel; there were tall, bronzed, handsome fellows from the ranch and from the police-force of the North-West, "blue-eyed and bull-throated," like the Dane at Fultah Fisher's; there were handsome, wild, laughing, curly-haired lads,

claiming the British Isles as a birth-place and Canada as their adopted home; and there were the solid, soldierly, middle-aged White Riders of the Plains prepared with the assistance of Kingston cadets and trained militia officers to pull these hundreds of reckless, daring spirits into shape to render service to their Queen and the Empire. It is not surprising that the sight of these splendid, stalwart fellows caused men to cheer and maidens to cast tender looks at them. And the bright eyes of the latter met with many an answering challenge from the men of Strathcona's Horse, and if, under cover of the semi-darkness of Bonaventure railway station, some of the girls they were leaving behind them did exchange kisses for tunic buttons, the brothers and sweethearts of the fair ones forgot to interpose objections to such a pronounced avowal of a liking for the men from "the strong young North." It is true they did not march well, when compared with the trained citizen soldiers. But they loped along in a way suggestive of strength and endurance, and, as Colonel Steele has said of the horses "they are as good as were ever ridden by western men," it is safe to say that our recent visitors will make any one of the crack cavalry commanders now in South Africa cast an approving eye at them when into the saddles they leap, with bridles swinging free.

When the present war is only a memory, Strathcona Day as celebrated by our citizens on Monday last will be recalled as evidence that when the people of the Canadian metropolis do abandon themselves to patriotic feeling, the maddest, merriest crowd in the British Isles cannot sing better, shout louder or show greater signs of loyal devotion to the Empire of which this Dominion forms such a glorious part.

No one who enjoyed the privilege of being present at the entertainment tendered to Strathcona's Horse is likely to forget the scene at the banquet, one feature of which to properly portray would require the skillful hand of an artist, the warm feeling of a poet. In fancy, we can see it now. The row after row of bronzed faces turned with sympathetic and wistful eyes to the elevated platform, as the little daughters of their commander were lifted to the table to present him with a bunch of roses and to receive his parting kisses. The hoarse cheer that rent the smoke cloud hovering over the tables proved that these splendid men from the West, some of whom looked as if they might have stepped out of the pages of one of Bret Harte's novels, had big hearts.

Loyal to the core, and eager to meet the Queen's enemies. Yet the sight of their colonel's little ones made the men of Strathcona's Horse tender as women. Perhaps some of them thought of their own firesides in the far North, and, looking out into the months of danger to come, realized, if only for the moment, how they would miss the "good nights" and the kisses, and the gush of the innocent glee of their children.

God send them safe home.