ried, and the rest of the book is chiefly concerned with the fortunes of Miranda, who marries a handsome but dissipated husband. After a while the husband deserts her and goes to Tonga, where he becomes enamoured of a dusky island belle. Miranda is left to earn her own living, save for a small remittance from her husband, who conceals from her the fact that he has another wife in Tonga. The discovery by the injured woman of her husband's treachery is well and dramatically told, as is the story of the ultimate reconciliation of husband and wife and the tragic death of Stanhope in the eruption at Tarawera. The book is especially interesting by reason of the many vivid pictures it contains of the early days in New Zealand. The chapters dealing with the Maori war are exceptionally realistic, and bring before us, as no mere history could do, the sufferings and dangers so bravely endured and faced by our pioneer settlers during that time of terror. In addition to this, we have a graphic account of the Tarawera eruption, as well as an excellent sketch of the manner in which the early settlers carved out their homes in the bush. We had marked many passages for quotation, but space forbids the giving of more than one or two extracts. The following will be recognised by anyone who has had experience of a Maori store: "Much hindered he was too by his curious brown customers, who sat and lounged around, watching him as he moved about, asking the price of everything, and sometimes, after long chattering, buying some tobacco or a gaily-striped bush rug or blanket. He soon found that one of their characteristics was an utter disregard of the value of time—either his or their own. Did one man want to buy a rug, or one woman a dress, the whole family would camp out for the day, dig pipis on the beach, boil and eat them, coming into the store at intervals to examine once more the coveted goods, until at last, towards night perhaps, the purchase would be made, and the whole party depart rejoicing to their whares." The account of the murder of Hangi's men by Te Kooti is a good example of the writer's powers of graphic description: "They followed a mere cattle track which they knew would bring them quickly and unseen to the kainga, or Maori village, which was inhabited by Hangi's men, a part of the tribe of the Arawas, or friendly Maoris. It was still early when they emerged on the clearing, and they felt no surprise at the silence, for the tribe might still be sleeping; but not even a dog barked, and Roger whispered to his master: 'This place is just a little too quiet. 'Taint altogether natural, I don't think.' But Frank strode on and entered the nearest whare. His foot touched something—he stumbled in the uncertain light, then stepped back in horror, pale beneath his tan. Roger stepped to his side, and they gazed spellbound, then went on to another hut. Not a living soul was there. From whare to whare they went, and each one held one or more corpses, and mutilated corpses at that. The very dogs lay stiff in death beside the masters they had striven to defend." We may mention that any profits arising from the sale of the book will be devoted to the Auckland branch of the Y.W.C.A., of which the authoress is President.

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New Zealand Literature.

We have devoted some space to the notice of this book because it shows what can be done in the way of book production in the Dominion. The book is excellently printed in a bold, clear type, and we have only detected two slight misprints in a volume of 188 pages. The word "Index" at the beginning should, of course, be "Contents," and on page 66 "gy" is a misprint for "by." We have a number of writers in our midst capable of turning out really good work, if they would only put into narrative form their impressions of life in New Zealand. The field is practically virgin soil. We have no book dealing with our coastal shipping, or with the humours of life in the back blocks, or with the many subtle character studies to be found in small townships. One curious thing about such literature as we have is that most of it is pitched in a minor key. In the book we have just noticed the tragic side of life is uppermost. The same thing is noticeable in much of the best Australian literature. "For the Term of His Natural Life" is nothing but tragedy from start to finish. Much of Henry Lawson's best work is on the sad side, while no one can pick up a volume of Australian or New Zealand verse without feeling that in the finest of it there is a note of regret. Yet we ought not to be sad. We have unbounded prosperity, a genial climate, an abundance of beautiful scenery, a varied, open-air life, people who are genial and hospitable to a fault, and laws framed to do away with the worst abuses of older lands. Can it be that material prosperity fails to satisfy the deeped needs of our nature? Perhaps so. But another reason is certainly this: We take ourselves too seriously, and in doing this we lose all sense of proportion, and, in consequence, all sense of humour. Nay, more than this. The average colonial is not only innocent himself of any sense of humour, but in many cases he actually resents it. He is suspicious of it, and suspects that either he or one of his most cherished fads is being made fun of. If a visitor like Mr Foster Fraser, or the late Max O'Rell, pokes gentle fun at some of our foibles we deluge the Press with letters stating that we are not resentful of criticism, that we always welcome it and respect it, but that if anyone says that we are not the most wonderful people on the face of the whole earth he is talking of something he does not understand, and that he ought to be slowly boiled to death. The same lack of any sense of proportion probably leads us to magnify our sorrows, and so the tragic note is ever uppermost.

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The Policy of the Paper.

The following editorial from a New Zealand daily on the thorny subject of Prohibition strikes us as being so exceptionally discreet that we cannot forbear quoting a part of it: "Our readers will not unnaturally look to us for some definite pronouncement on the much-vexed questions of No-License and Dominion Prohibition, as well as the merits or demerits of a bare majority. As our readers know, we have never hesitated to express our convictions on any question affecting the public welfare, and we shall not do so on this occasion. We fully recognise that in speaking our mind fully and freely on this momentous matter we may offend some of our readers or advertisers, but we have never allowed considerations of this sort to weigh for a moment when any great interest is affected. We firmly believe that the question of Prohibition is one of the most important and pressing questions of the day, and that it behoves us to do all in our power to assist our readers to come to some decision in the matter. We have to consider the question from the point of view of both parties. We have every sympathy with those who seek to banish once and for ever the drink evil from our midst, but we also feel that there is a good deal to be said for those who have been accustomed to take a little drink in moderation with their meals. Many elderly people find some slight stimulant necessary as an aid to digestion, and one cannot but feel that they would suffer some hardship were they to be deprived of their comparatively harmless glass of weak claret and water. But there is also another side. Ought not these same people be willing to give up what is at best a luxury for the sake of those who are unable to take drink in moderation? That is the real point at issue, and it is one which we feel can be safely left to the individual conscience to decide. We have no desire to dictate in matters of conscience. As regards the bare majority we must confess that we have much sympathy with those who maintain that a majority should rule. This is of the very essence of democracy. But it is open to question whether in a case like the present, where there are many who do not look on moderate drinking as a crime, it would be altogether wise to pass a law which was not backed by a fairly substantial majority. It is at least worth considering, though we feel that in ordinary matters nothing ought to be allowed to stand in the way of the wishes of even the barest majority of voters. To our mind the whole matter is intimately bound up with the question of the settlement of Native lands. As long as the Government sees fit to lock up these lands, as they are at present doing, so long will people throng to the towns, and we know that the drink evil is greatest in our cities. The taihoa policy of the present Government in the matter of opening up the land is mainly responsible for the magnitude which the question of Prohibition has assumed."

After this, no elector should have any difficulty in making up his mind how to vote. The obvious remedy for the liquor problem implied by the pregnant utterance of our contemporary is to hand over the Native lands to the Prohibitionists.

The Grand Old Man of the Empire.

LORD STRATHCONA.

By W. T. STEAD.

IT is not on record that Lord Strathcona has ever made a joke. Nor has he yet lived to be a hundred. But there is every probability that he will do one of these things, and he may even do the other. Which I mean as "the one" and which "the other" I decline to say. With these trifling exceptions, Lord Strathcona has most of the distinctions that can fall to the lot of a British subject. The spectacle of solid, steady, continuous success,— of Pelion upon Ossa of success—is, as a rule, uninspiring. And Lord Strathcona has succeeded so overwhelmingly that at first hearing it is incongruous to associate romance with him. Yet when one reads that the High Commissioner of Canada was about to resign his post, one could not help feeling that a chapter in one of the most interesting of modern politico-commercial romances was closing to the world. For a romance it has been, in a way, from the time that

LORD STRATHCONA.

Donald Smith, a lad of 18, embarked in 1838, on the first steamship to cross the Atlantic, until the day when, as Lord Strathcona, he accepted the post of High Commissioner for Canada in London. His early life as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company, on the St. Lawrence River, was singularly monotonous, and would have daunted a less strong-minded man. But, as it was afterwards proved, that experience in the wilderness gave him the self-reliance and judgment which may perhaps be singled out as his chief characteristics.

In the life of many a statesman his political career seems more or less marked out from the beginning. In Lord Strathcona's case this was not so. His life may be said to have been divided into three parts. His youth, as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company, was spent among Indians in the dreary frozen wilderness; his manhood, in promoting railway companies and building up a nation; and his old age as astatesman and an Imperial force. Every period has been interesting, and every period has called forth the same characteristics — patience, perseverance, and blind devotion to duty. In the first years of Lord Strathcona's life in Canada there was no Dominion, nor were the provinces united. Neither the French Canadians nor the English-speaking people in Upper Canada were friendly towards England. The revenues of the country were small, there were no railways across the continent, and the Hudson's Bay Company was in the hands of trappers and traders. In 1838 Donald Smith entered this region. For ten years he remained in the St. Lawrence ports, doing the work of an ordinary clerk, with intervals of boating, fishing and shooting. But in some respects he differed from the ordinary clerk. While his companions in the office were what they called "skylarking," Smith would get out his sheets of notepaper and "enter into spiritual intercourse with home." "To this," says Mr. Beckles Willson in his interesting book, "Lord Strathcona," "there can be no doubt that Lord Strathcona owes his facility of composition and his unusually ordered habits of mind." In 1848 Donald Smith went to Labrador as an administrator of the Hudson's Bay Company.

IRON BANDS OF UNITY.

For a long time the idea of uniting the Eastern Provinces of Canada with the West had filled Mr. Smith's mind. To become a nation Canada must have railways, and with that end in view, after becoming member for Winnipeg in the Provincial Assembly, he used all his ingenuity and energy. In 1871 he was elected to the Dominion House as member for Selkirk, by the almost unanimous vote of the community. As a result of hard and steady work for the good of his constituents, his district rapidly gained a name for sobriety and order. One of his first steps was to abolish the liquor traffic among the Indians. For some time the Hudson's Bay Company had been accused of being at the bottom of all the trade in drink. To stop this, Mr. Smith had a law passed by the Council forbidding any intoxicating drink to pass the boundary. Even officers were not exempt from the law, and a small quantity of wine, which was brought out for a factory was actually sent back to England. When Governor Archibald, in October, 1870, appointed Mr. Smith to the North-West Council, he had this prohibitory law carried out in the name of Canada. This Act is still known as the Smith Act.

The next great undertaking of this tireless worker was the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Money was wanting, and nothing but sheer pluck and energy could have pulled it through. The expenses were enormous, and both Mr. Smith and his colleague, Mr Stephen, were obliged to pledge their private fortune in order that the work could go on. In Montreal to-day there are many stories in circulation of the meetings which used to be held at which the Board of Directors sat with blank faces, discussing ways and means.

At one of these meetings Mr. Smith is alleged to have said: "It's clear we want money. Well, we can't raise it amongst ourselves. Let us come back to-morrow and report progress."

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