

CHAPTER XLII.

THE VOYAGE HOME.

Troopship Rosslyn Castle, Cape Verde Islands,
December 28.

Two weeks ago we were camped on a hot hill overlooking the rebel town of Worcester in Cape Colony. An hour after I wrote my last letter we got orders to entrain immediately for Cape Town, and by 3 o'clock next day were in Maitland camp under the shadow of Table Mountain and felt the cool salt sea breeze, which also blew in the reverberations of the big guns of the men-of-war as they saluted the departure of the Canada with Lord Roberts on board homeward bound. The camp was full of Australians, who were also to sail the next day, but one. On the 12th we embarked our guns and baggage. Nearly all the baggage of officers left at the base when we went up country a year ago had been broken into or opened with duplicate keys and rifled, which was not very creditable to somebody. That day Surgeon-Major Devine arrived from Pretoria with all our sick and wounded who could be moved, but a considerable number had to be left, including Lieutenants Emslie, Turner and Straubenzie of the R. C. D's. Of dead we are leaving behind us 41, divided among the three corps as follows: Royal Canadian Dragoons, 20; Canadian Mounted Rifles, 12; Royal Canadian Artillery, 9.

On the morning of the 13th the Canadians and Australians paraded through Cape Town and were addressed by the mayor and cheered by the populace. At 4 o'clock the Rosslyn Castle cast off and an immense crowd cheered us from the dock. Among those who came down to see us off were Major "Gat" Howard, Captain King, of the R. C. D's, who is remaining on the staff;