

Greater Vancouver Peace Celebrations, 1919

"Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures,
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front."

—Shakespeare.

The sun is always shining on some portion of the British Empire; certain it is that it illuminated no more hearty, joyful, yet reverent PEACE CELEBRATIONS than those which have taken place in Vancouver, B. C.

THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Sunday, July 6, 1919, was set aside for a Thanksgiving Service which is thus described by the "Vancouver World:"

"—The Lord our God is good,
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure."

Of all the millions of people who, following the sun, encircled the round globe with the grand old hymn, comparatively few sang it amidst such lovely surroundings as the ten or fifteen thousand people who assembled in Stanley Park to take part in the civic thanksgiving for peace which was part of the thanksgiving of the whole Empire. It was a perfect day and a perfect place for an outdoor service.

It was a democratic service. There was no distinction of creed. A bishop gave the address and a Salvation Army Officer pronounced the Benediction. The great orthodox evangelical bodies were represented by the oldest and most beloved of their ministers, the Rev. E. D. McLaren, who, like Bishop de Pencier, had carried the consolations of religion to wounded and dying in the shell-torn advanced casualty stations.

Mayor Gale presided.

Mayor's Proclamation

As was eminently fitting the service began with the "Old Hundredth." The Mayor then read the following proclamation:

"Throughout the British Empire to-day a most grateful people is giving thanks; giving thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings vouchsafed to us and especially for the glorious victory which is now unquestionably ours—a victory made possible through the brave and noble deeds of our gallant men and through the marvellous fortitude and sacrifice of our splendid women. It is my very great privilege to call upon my fellow-citizens assembled in this heavenly-bestowed park to join in this, Vancouver's Official Thanksgiving Service."

After the singing of "O Canada," the Rev. E. D. McLaren offered the prayer of thanksgiving. "O God, our help in ages past," followed, the congregation, which had been considerably augmented by this time, singing lustily, led by a massed choir and orchestra under the leadership of Mr. G. P. Hicks.

Bishop De Pencier's Address

And then the Bishop, in stentorian tones that had been heard in many a bivouac behind the lines in France and Flanders, declared it right and fitting that they should thus meet together to thank God for a peace which was a just peace and not a coward's peace, nor a peace of ignorance, nor a peace of despair."

The National Anthem

The rest of the programme, except for the benediction delivered by Commander C. Allen, was choral. "Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven," sang the people, and the "Amen" had hardly died away before the thrilling notes of "Rule Britannia" rang out. And, lastly, "God Save the King."

The Benediction, and the concourse broke up, streaming away in every direction, not a few with eyes which for the moment saw nothing of the loveliness around but were set on that awful past which already is beginning to seem distant.