

RETURNED IN TRIUMPH

Victoria Paid Her Tribute to the Valor of Soldier Sons.

Enthusiastic Welcome Accorded the Home Coming Men of First Contingent.

Grand Procession to Drill Hall—Address by Governor and Mayor.

The steamer *Charmar*, which arrived at the inner dock last evening, carried among her passengers a quartette of stalwart young men who awaited with no little impatience the moment when the boat was securely moored and the gang plank placed in position.

Their appearance was the signal for a general, sustained roar of enthusiasm from the crowds who lined the pier—an acclamation in which triumph, exultation, adulation and patriotism vied with each other for ascendancy.

At first bluish this whirlwind of enthusiasm may have appeared inexplicable to the stranger who beheld the gates of this city. But a comprehension of the scene would have convinced him that such a display of welcome could have been engendered by only one circumstance—the return from the front of Victoria's gallant sons.

After more than a year's absence from this city, in which the grandest work of the century has been consummated, Sergt. Joe Northcott, popularly known as "Joe" by his legion of friends, and Privates Alex. Wood, William Stewart and George Neil, last evening returned to their homes, bearing with them the greatest reward possible, the commendation of their country—encomium of their noble leader and the praise, almost a benediction, of their Queen.

It should not be forgotten that in the welcome last night those who returned previously occupy equal portions, and the cheers that went forth from thousands of throats were given not only for those who were drawn enthusiastically through the streets in the carriage of honor, but for those who arrived several weeks ago, for those still at the seat of war, and for those who sleep beneath the vault in the new addition of Her Majesty's empire.

When the magic news was telegraphed here that the five Victorians—Corporal O'Dell being with them—had arrived at Halifax, the citizens realized that it was high time they instituted arrangements for a rich royal welcome. Each stage of the journey from the Nova Scotia capital across the continent was watched in the dispatch with eager eyes. Each triumph accorded them along the route was shared in some degree by the awaiting citizens here. Each enthusiastic reception tendered them by the patriotic citizens of the various cities of the east drew grateful smiles from the proud parents and relatives who were seen to welcome their boys, as only those knit together by the bonds of relationship can.

The illness of Corporal O'Dell caused many expressions of regret, and it was hoped that he would overtake the others at Winnipeg or Vancouver in order to share the welcome demonstration arranged for them. Unfortunately an adventurous circumstance, the delay of the train, prevented this, and the other "man of Paardeberg" will probably arrive in a day or so.

The patriotic committee had been busy during the past few days in perfecting arrangements for the reception. The various details were published and the public were in possession of all information of what was to take place. Long before the stately steamer of the C. P. N. Company announced her approach by the blast of the whistle the streets were lined. Down at the pier acquaintances and friends were endeavoring to repress their impatience, while less demonstrative but infinitely more concerned were the parents and other relatives who naturally were entitled to the first embrace and handshake of welcome, and to whose welcome the crowd was ready to almost reverently give way.

On the wharf were the carriages ornamented with flags, British and Canadian, round which the men of Paardeberg had rallied with all the characteristic gallantry and tenacity of the sons of the empire, and in the center of which five of Victoria's heroes nobly fell.

Among the carriages was one for the "boys," and Messrs. W. J. Deasy and A. Gray, of the fire department, deftly removed the horses and attached long ropes to the vehicle, the significance of these operations not being lost on the crowd. The members of the Fifth Regiment were ready to grasp the ropes, the band was on hand with instruments, a detachment of the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery, under Capt. Bowdler, stood close by, while up on Wharf street were the gallant khaki-clad soldiers of Col. McKay and Lieut. Clarke. Many officials stood on the pier, and thousands of citizens made a solid phalanx straining to catch a glimpse of the boys as the steamer neared her mooring.

As nearer and nearer drew the boat the impatience became more pronounced, until suddenly the band struck up "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and restraint was cast to the winds. A mighty shout went up when the four passengers in khaki were discerned, and this was continued for several minutes and almost drowned the music of the band.

As soon as the steamer was moored there was a rush for the gang plank. Among the first to board the steamer were Privates Finch-Sailes, Beach and Gamble, also in the khaki, and the meeting between the comrades-in-arms was striking. Involuntarily each thought of the trials and the experiences they had gone through shoulder to shoulder, and the grip of welcome spoke more eloquently than any words that passed between them. It was also interesting how commonplaces were exchanged, but these were not formalities, and when one asked the other "How are you?" he meant it from his heart, and did not give utterance to the words from force of habit.

The meeting of relatives and friends

was as only such a meeting could be, but the latter generously surrendered their boys to the waiting multitude, and after receiving a hearty welcome from Governor and Lady Joly, the mayor and aldermen and others, the procession began.

It was more like a revival of the old Roman triumph than a modern demonstration. There was a spontaneity and a vim that left no doubt of the sentiment that actuated the many who participated actively and passively. The Fifth Regiment band led the procession with the "Maple Leaf Forever," and other patriotic airs. Then followed the detachment of Royal Artillery, and behind them marched the red-coated Royal Engineers, the contrast between their uniforms and those of the others affording a striking spectacle. Then came the R. C. R. in their natty khaki uniforms, and after them the Fifth regiment, under their colonel.

The streets were crowded. From Wharf to Yates people were standing on tip-toes striving to catch a glimpse of the carriage of all carriages. Government street was equally crowded.

When Col. Gregory's men were observed preceding a gaily draped carriage there was a murmur of "Here they are!" and "Here they come!" Then when the men were seen drawing the carriage, this murmur became louder, and when the vehicle, draped with flags and containing the quartette of heroes, loomed into view a perfect torrent of cheers broke out. There was an expression in those exclamations which admitted of only one interpretation—pride and patriotism—and the boys in the carriage knew it, for their countenances were aglow with gratitude and appreciation, and smiles of greeting constantly appeared as "Hello, Joe!" or "Stewart," or "Neil," or "Wood," were heard.

Government street truly presented a remarkable appearance. All traffic was suspended, and some of the establishments were splendidly decorated. From the first floor of Spencer's Arcade huge flags, symbolic of a nation's greatness, waved proudly, while banners and streamers hung from the White House and the B. C. Book & Stationery premises. The store of North & Richardson was beautifully draped with flags and other emblems, while Chinese lanterns contributed to the general illumination.

When the procession passed Davies Brothers red lights were burned, bathing the vicinity in crimson. All the while there was a continuous fusillade of fire crackers, punctuated at intervals by the heavier detonations of bombs and other contrivances manufactured by adepts, the Chinese.

The small boy was also very much in evidence. Groups of them preceded the procession, and their treble cheers defiantly refused to be drowned by the medley of basses, baritones, and tenors that echoed and re-echoed along the route.

The "currus triumphalis" or "the car of triumph," as the Romans would say, was followed by vehicles carrying Lieut. Governor, Lady Joly's party, the mayor and aldermen, members of parliament and other officials.

AT THE DRILL HALL.

An hour before the steamer had pulled up to the wharf the drill hall was well filled. Every one was waiting to give the returning soldiers a welcome. Some are less demonstrative than others, but all equally sincere. Suddenly the inspiring strains of "The Maple Leaf" and the "Red, White and Blue" heralded the approach of the parade, and then the rush on the entrance began.

The detachment of Royal Engineers, followed by the R. C. R. and the Fifth regiment, marched in and formed in a triple line from the main entrance to the platform erected in the centre of the hall, enclosing a spacious avenue and preventing the people from surging over the space.

Before the boys entered His Honor Sir Henri and Lady Joly, His Worship the Mayor and Miss Hayward and Ald. Yates, Brydon, Williams and Cameron advanced and took their places on the stage.

The party received a cordial ovation, the band playing the national anthem. They were escorted to the apartments for a brief period. Finally the door opened a yell broke out from the gallery, which was repeated from one end of the vast hall to the other as the men of the first contingent, erect and hearty, marched toward the platform. The crowd could hardly wait until they reached their destination, for cries of "platform" "platform" were shouted from different parts of the hall.

As they lined up and saluted the cheering broke out afresh and after the tumult had subsided, Mayor Hayward stepped forward and spoke as follows:

"Your Honor, Ladies and Gentlemen, Soldiers of the First Contingent: It affords me great pleasure to have the privilege this evening of extending to you, on behalf of the people of Victoria, as well as on my own account, a cordial and hearty welcome, and to congratulate you on your safe return to your homes. When bidding you good-bye and God speed in this very place, little over a year ago, you left us untried—full of loyalty and patriotism, but inexperienced, knowing nothing of the art of war—but you have proved your worth and valor on all occasions and under the most trying circumstances, and return to us to-night after having distinguished yourselves with honor. (Applause.)

"From the moment you left your homes we watched your movements from day to day, feeling confident that you would do your duty to yourselves and to your country, and our anxiety has been more than fulfilled. On the march on the field of battle, in the face of death, you have shown yourselves worthy of the confidence we reposed in you, the comrades in arms and the equals in bravery of the tried veterans of the British army. We are proud to feel that the Canadian contingent, throughout the arduous campaign, so lived up to the traditions of the British nation as to draw praise from Her Most Gracious Majesty the

Queen, Lord Roberts, Gen. Buller, Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, Gen. Smuts-Dorrer, and on all occasions aroused the emulation and admiration of your comrades in the field. We rejoice and feel grateful that the name of Canada has been honored and made famous by you and your fellows. (Applause.)

"The Motherland will never forget the sympathy and aid rendered by her colonies in the darkest hour of the Empire's time of trouble and trial, nor the fervor with which her citizens and soldiers hastened to her support and fought and died to maintain the flag and the common interests of a united Empire. (Applause.) But that rally to arms by the men of Canada and the colonies generally has shown the world that the love of freedom, equality and justice is inherent in men of British blood, and that however separated we may be by oceans from the Motherland, we are ready to give our best and bravest in defending those precious heirlooms of our forefathers. (Applause.)

"Above all, both you, your brothers in arms and those, alas, who will never return to us, who nobly died a soldier's death, and whose bodies lie in soldiers' graves of the cold South African wild to-night, but whose immortal souls, we hope, are conscious in some way of the grateful, loving appreciation of their memories and noble deeds that pervades our utmost hearts to-night. (Applause.) I say that you, brave boys, both living and dead, and those from the uttermost parts of Her Majesty's vast possessions, have demonstrated, in a way not to be misunderstood, that we are a loyal unit of the Empire, ready always to defend its prestige and preserve its honor; that I say that you, brave boys, both living and dead, and those from the uttermost parts of Her Majesty's vast possessions, have demonstrated, in a way not to be misunderstood, that we are a loyal unit of the Empire, ready always to defend its prestige and preserve its honor; that I say that you, brave boys, both living and dead, and those from the uttermost parts of Her Majesty's vast possessions, have demonstrated, in a way not to be misunderstood, that we are a loyal unit of the Empire, ready always to defend its prestige and preserve its honor; that I say that you, brave boys, both living and dead, and those from the uttermost parts of Her Majesty's vast possessions, have demonstrated, in a way not to be misunderstood, that we are a loyal unit of the Empire, ready always to defend its prestige and preserve its honor; 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