

The Last Review

By Pte. SANDY McCracken

'Twas a cold, dark and dour day in Seaford Camp. The wind soughed round the corners of the huts and whistled across the parade ground, for Spring had not yet smiled upon this part of old England. Away up on the hillside the "Maclean Highlanders" were astir even before the Reveilles from so many different Units filled the valley with their rippling notes. This was to be a big day for "The Macleans," the greatest of all their days since they joined together as a Clan Battalion to uphold the traditions of their race on the Fields of France. They had looked forward to it for a long time, and now it had dawned they were stirred in their hearts and souls with anticipation. Their Chief, Colonel Sir Fitzroy Donald Maclean, Bart., K.C.B., was to review them on the great open field near Headquarters.

A little after the noon hour the Battalion, led by the Pipe Band, swung jauntily down through the Camp to the reviewing ground. The skirl of the Pipes and the flirt of the red tartan caught the ears and the eyes of their khaki clad comrades, who swarmed out from highways and byways to give them a lusty cheer as they passed. They formed up in line in Review order and a long line it was, reaching the entire length of the field, and then they waited for the coming of their Clan Leader.

The approach of a car announced the arrival of the Chief, a grand old man of 83, who had fought in the Crimea in 1854 and in many other of Britain's wars since that time, and had become, during his period of service, Colonel of one of the foremost of the British Cavalry Regiments, clad in his Clan tartan, garbed as a Chief as well as a Colonel of the British Forces.

The Battalion had been called to attention and upon the command of the O.C., gave him the General Salute, while the Pipe Band played the "Maclean March."

The Chief then made his inspection, shaking hands with the Officers,

numerous Non-Commissioned Officers and men as he passed, and admiring the stalwart sons of Gillean who had come from across the sea to uphold the traditions of Clan Maclean. The Battalion then marched past in column of platoons, after which it again formed into line and advanced in Review order and once more honoured itself by giving the General Salute to its Chief.

A very pretty movement was then carried out by which a hollow square was formed in a manner not laid down in the drill book, and the Chief came to the centre with Lady Maclean, Lady Llangattock, Colonel and Mrs. Bramhall, Nursing Sister Maclean, and Mrs. (Major) Maclean (Chief's Daughter-in-law), Mr. Douglas Maclean, Mr. G. B. Daniels, Colonel Gardner, M.C., Mrs. Gardner, Major Haines, D.S.O., Mrs. Haines and others.

Because of the wind, which was blowing rather briskly, the men were allowed to break off and gather round their Chief. It was indeed a proud moment for the Chief when they gathered round him without ceremony to hearken to what he had to say, and he addressed them as follows:—

"Colonel Guthrie, Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men of the 'Maclean Highlanders,' I am very sensible of the honour you have conferred upon me as Chief of the Clan by inviting me to inspect your Regiment, which I have done with the greatest pleasure and with the critical eye of an old Commanding Officer. I congratulate you on the magnificent physique of your men, your soldierly appearance and steadiness on parade.

The greatest credit is due to every member of this splendid Regiment for the way you came forward when the Fiery Cross reached you in your far distant homes beyond the Atlantic and you knew that your services were required; the true spirit of the noblest traditions of your forefathers arose within you, and without hesitation you left your farm, your business and your occupation, to fight for *freedom* and the rights of *humanity*! Scotland is proud of you!

I am glad of this opportunity to give you, in the name of the Clan Mac-

lean Association, a very hearty welcome (to those who speak Gaelic, I say 'Caed mile failte'). We quite appreciate the trouble your gallant Colonel has taken in raising this Regiment. The example he has set by his bravery in action and his energy in organization (in spite of his severe wounds) is deserving of the greatest credit; I understand that 20 out of 33 of your Officers have also been wounded and that they could have retired but preferred to continue their service and lead their men to victory.

I feel certain that under the able leadership of your officers you will nobly uphold the lofty traditions of the Maclean Clan for the past centuries.

Men! now that you have finished your training you may shortly be ordered to take your turn in the front line of this important war zone. Alas! I am too "sick in years" to accompany you. My eldest son is there now to uphold the House of Duart.

The Clan Association has also authorized me to convey to you our *gratitude* for your *patriotism*. Our pride in your *manly bearing*, wearing the Tartan Kilt of the Clan, and our *sincere* wishes for your welfare. Our *earnest prayers* accompany you in your strenuous engagements.

When you meet the foe "dinna forget." The slogan or War Cries are "Fear eile air son Eachuinn," "Bas no beatha."

All can shout "Scotland forever."

I wish you all God speed and in Gaelic I say "Beannachd leibh."

The Macleans then gave three lusty cheers, the Tiger and the Bear, after which the O.C. on behalf of the Unit replied as follows:—

"Sir Fitzroy Donald, Chief of the Macleans.

This is the proudest moment of my life and as well is it the proudest moment in the life of every clansman gathered here to-day to do you honour. You are surrounded by men of the blood of Gillean who come from practically every part of the British Empire to fight for our flag and our King. They are 'True Macleans' and you are surrounded to-day by true Macleans just as was Prince Chairlie at Culloden Moor when our fathers fought and bled and died for a Cause and a Principle, for Scotland's freedom, just as these Macleans will fight very shortly for the liberty of the world and the cause of the British Empire.

Because of their loyalty to Scotland their love of liberty, and their devotion to their Prince they stood side by side,