

CONNECTICUT'S VETERANS

DELIVERING THEIR BATTLE-FLAGS TO THE STATE.

AN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY IN HARTFORD—
TEN THOUSAND VETERANS IN LINE—UN-
FURLING TATTERED FLAGS—SPEECHES
AT THE NEW CAPITOL.

HARTFORD, Conn., Sept. 17.—This city is one of the few which have had no centennial celebrations, but to-day it has witnessed ceremonies which in impressiveness surpassed many of the anniversaries of the past three years. To-day the veterans of this State held their reunion in this city, again marched under their old battle-flags, and placed them in the keeping of the Commonwealth. It was a day which had long been looked forward to by the citizens of Hartford, and everything was done to make the visit of the veterans one to be remembered with pleasure by them. The battle-flags of the different regiments have been, up to this time, kept in the old State Arsenal in Main-street, but when the Legislature authorized the building of the new State Capitol, it appropriated a certain amount for the erection of suitable cases in that building to preserve the battle-flags of the different regiments of the State. To-day was set apart as the day for the removal of these flags from the arsenal, and their deposit in the Capitol. The regiments themselves, 30 in number, performed the ceremony.

The entire State had part in the celebration, and before daylight the veterans began to pour into Hartford from all parts of Connecticut. It was estimated that over 100,000 strangers were in the city during the day, and the New-York, New-Haven and Hartford Railroad is said to have carried over 50,000 excursion passengers during the forenoon. The streets of the city were fairly packed with people all day long, and Hartford, with her 50,000 inhabitants, found herself lost in the throng of her visitors. By 9 o'clock, long before the time announced for the procession, Main-street was so densely packed that walking was almost impossible, and when the march finally did begin, the street was one mass of people. Windows, balconies, hallways, were filled.

The programme contemplated the moving of the procession at 11 o'clock, but at that hour many of the regiments which were to come from a distance had not arrived, and so the proceedings halted. At East Park, beneath the walls of the new Capitol, small tents had been erected for the accommodation of the different regiments, and one large tent, capable of seating 3,000 persons, in which the veterans were to dine after the ceremonies of the day. In the small tents the different regiments held their reunions and elected their officers for the coming year. I was 1 o'clock before the procession was in line, and at that hour a national salute began. This was the signal for the start, and as the first gun sounded, the First Division marched out of the park into High-street. This comprised the Militia of the State, and veterans of the war, belonging to other States, who had fought in Connecticut regiments. In this division, also, were Gov. Andrews and his private secretary, in a carriage, followed by his staff, mounted. The Governor kept his head bared during the entire march, and he was greeted by rousing cheers from the thousands who lined the sidewalks along the line. The staff of ex-Gov. Buckingham was in this division also. The Second Division comprised the Union Battalion and the prominent guests in carriages. Among the latter were Gen. J. M. Schofield, Gen. Burnside, of Rhode Island; ex-Govs. Jewell, Hubbard, and Cleveland, of Connecticut; Gen. Smith and staff, the Judges of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, Mayor Sumner, of Hartford, and the members of the City Government. The third and last division was the great feature of the day. It was composed entirely of the veteran soldiers of Connecticut, and embraced fully 10,000 men, with representatives from all the regiments from the First to the Thirty-sixth. This division was headed by Major-Gen. Joseph R. Hawley, the chief marshal of the day, and his staff. The men were dressed in citizens' clothing, but many wore the hats of the Grand Army of the Republic, and all wore badges or medals. Some were lame, some had lost an arm, and two men hobbled along on wooden legs. Carriages were provided for the veterans who could not walk, and these were used by all except the two mentioned. These two followed the march until their battle-flags had been taken from the arsenal, and then they joined their comrades in the carriage.

The line of march was through High-street to Main, up Main to the Arsenal, where the battle-flags were taken, and then down Main to Washington-street, and thence to the new Capitol. The buildings in the streets through which the procession moved, were literally hidden in bunting. Across Main-street three arches were erected, decorated with red, white, and blue, and surrounded with evergreen devices. On these the names of all the battles in which the Connecticut regiments have taken part were emblazoned, and the word "Welcome," worked in evergreen, depended from one. Flags were thrown across the street, and in many houses were pictures of Lincoln or Grant, and sometimes both together. Whenever these pictures were seen by the veterans they cheered long and lustily. The stoops and lawns in front of the private houses were thronged with people, and in many cases little girls and boys were found representing patriotic characters. On the balcony of one house in High-street were two small boys, one dressed as a midshipman, and sitting on a coil of rope, and the other as a soldier, standing guard. Scores of little girls, dressed in the habit supposed to be assumed by the Goddess of Liberty, and waving tiny flags, saluted the veterans on their march, and the children's part in the celebration of Battle Day was not the least interesting of the ceremonies.

The arsenal is a very old building, but it was so covered to-day with national and State flags that a stranger would never have discovered its age. In front of this building were ranged 80 men, and each man held in his hand a tattered battle-flag. When the procession passed the veterans uncovered their heads, and the throng near the flags stood during the entire march bareheaded. On the countermarch the men who were guarding the flags stepped into line in their respective regiments, and unfurled the banner amid the cheers of the spectators and their comrades. The ladies of Hartford had spent all last night in preparing these flags for to-day's celebration. No rents were mended, and no stains were erased, but the banners were put in a condition to be carried through the streets unfurled. The 80 battle-flags, torn and dirty, bearing evidence as they did of terribly rough usage, were greeted on all sides with uncovered heads and loud, enthusiastic cheers. That of the Sixteenth Regiment attracted the most attention, because its history is a peculiar one. The regiment was captured in 1864 at Plymouth, N. C., and taken to Andersonville. The members resolved that their flag should not be taken, and in order to preserve it, they tore it into narrow strips, and bound the strips around their bodies, under their clothing. During their long imprisonment they never lost a single strip, and yesterday all these been put together and attached to a white banner, and this was the battle-flag which the members of the Sixteenth to-day deposited in the capitol.

The procession was fully three miles long, and took just an hour and 10 minutes in passing the arsenal. Coming down Main-street the enthusiasm of the spectators who lined the streets was intense. The air fairly rung with their cheers, and those of the veterans in response. It was a scene never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Down Main-street the procession moved, with the tattered banners flying in the air. At South Green a pyramid of 200 girls, ranging in age from 4 to 12 years, all dressed in white, and wearing red, white, and blue sashes, greeted the veterans with waving handkerchiefs and fans. At the base of the pyramid was a cordon of boys, dressed as soldiers, and

carrying muskets, standing on guard. This was the great feature of the display. The Capitol was reached at 4 o'clock, and here the ceremony of transferring the flags was performed. There were fully 50,000 people on the grounds. A stand had been erected in front of the main entrance, and here Gov. Andrews and the guests assembled.

Gen. Hawley made the transfer in these words:

"We are more than 10,000 citizens, who were soldiers from Connecticut in the late war for union and liberty. We come in obedience to an invitation of our beloved Commonwealth to bring these eight flags from their temporary resting-place to their final home in this new and beautiful Capitol. For the great honor and pleasure of the day we are grateful to the General Assembly, to you the Chief Magistrate, and to the great concourse of citizens who have testified their extreme goodwill in many ways. We shall make many pilgrimages to the shrine where these standards are to rest. We shall often recall, as we do to-day, the comrades who dared to die in following these emblems of duty and glory; and shall revive the innumerable memories of four years of marvellous national exaltation. But it is quite certain that we shall never again be summoned as a battalion, with trumpet and drum and cannon, for even a noble holiday like this. Let the flags rest! In a few years the men will no longer be able to bear arms for the land they love; but these weather-worn and battle-torn folds shall remain through the centuries, testifying that Connecticut was true to free government and pledging her future fidelity. It can never again be doubted that the great Republic can find millions of defenders in a day of trouble, and millions of blessed women to sustain them. The poor shreds and humble staves to be glorified in the eyes of future generations, have witnessed the dedication of a continent to justice, equal rights, union, and liberty. We bid them good-bye! Thanks be to God! Abundant and exulting thanks to the Almighty Father that we lived in those days, and were permitted to do something toward seeing that the Government of, by, and for the people shall not perish from the earth!"

Gov. Andrews responded as follows: "Gen. Hawley and Veterans of Connecticut: In the name and on behalf of the State, I accept these flags from the hands of the men who carried them in war. For more than four years of conflict, wherever the camp was the hardest, wherever the siege was the fiercest, wherever the march was the longest, wherever the fight was the sorest, they were always to be seen. For all that period, through all the blasting winds, through Summer and Winter and all the alternating seasons, they were at all times unfurled. They come back to us riddled by shot, tattered and torn, blacked and grimed with the smoke and powder of battle, but they bring us no word of flight or dishonor. They speak to us of the many displays of manly and heroic virtue, which amid the duties of war have illustrated the character of the sons of Connecticut. With a pathos at which every heart softens and every eye grows dim, they tell us of the many thousand soldiers from our State, who, counting not their lives dear, willingly laid them down for the honor of their country. That sacred and mysterious sympathy, which goes out from almost every fireside in their own borders to all the battle-fields of the rebellion, finds in these ragged ensigns its dearest and its intensest expression. Lovingly then and tenderly let us lay them away in the motherly arms of the State, whose trophies they now become, that they may teach these lessons of patriotism and of duty to all future generations."

The flags were then deposited in the cases prepared for them in the vestibule of the new Capitol, and the veterans repaired to the large tent, where they were served with dinner. This ended the ceremonies of the day. To-night the city is illuminated, and the Capitol and old Court-house are one blaze of light.