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EDITORIAL.

THE HOMECOMING OF EDITH CAVELL.

On October 12th, 1915, in the cold light of dawn, a British nurse faced the loaded rifles of a firing party of German soldiers in the Tir-National, on the North-Eastern outskirts of Brussels, then a volley, and the brave spirit of Edith Cavell—brave to the last, as testified by the German chaplain who was with her at the end—was released from the confines of a German prison, and passed to the life beyond. In the sordid environment of a prison yard her body was buried in the clothes in which she fell, pierced through the heart by German bullets, and that apparently was the end—a dishonoured grave in a foreign land in the occupation of an implacable foe.

But the British nation has prepared a different burial for the woman whose death stirred the world more profoundly than that of any of its many sons and daughters who perished in the great war; and on March 17th last her body was exhumed, and in a little chamber draped with Belgian Flags it has rested in all honour, awaiting removal to England.

On Tuesday last, with military honours, the first stage of the long journey was accomplished. In the station hall, at the Gare du Nord, a halt was made while a short service was conducted by the Rev. H. S. Gahan—the British Chaplain in Brussels who was with Edith Cavell shortly before her execution—and the coffin was then entrained in a mortuary van for Ostend, accompanied by the sisters and brother-in-law of the deceased nurse, and by a doctor and nurses representing the Ecole Belge d'Infirmières Diplômées of Brussels.

At Ostend it was placed on a British warship, and arrived at Dover on Wednesday evening, where it was handed over to the naval and military authorities. At the pier entrance it was met by the Mayor and Corporation of

Dover, and—escorted by a naval, military, and civic procession, the pall bearers being Army nurses and members of the W.A.A.C., W.R.N.S., and W.R.A.F.—passed along the route, lined with sympathetic and reverent spectators, to the station, where the body rested for the night in a chapelle ardente specially prepared to receive it.

On Thursday, May 15th, a special train leaves Dover at 7.30 a.m., in which a draped saloon has been provided for the coffin. It is timed to arrive at Victoria at 11.25 a.m., and here the body will be placed on a gun-carriage, and a military procession formed, with an escort of 100 of all ranks, accompanied by the bands of the Welsh and the Coldstream Guards. So the body of Edith Cavell will be received by the clergy of Westminster Abbey, where those to whom the nation desires to render special homage are commemorated, and will rest for a while on a catafalque in the nave during the memorial service, which will be fully choral. The occasion will be one of great historical interest; and only a small proportion of the nurses who desire to be present will be able to secure seats in the Abbey, where every corner will, we may be sure, be crowded to its utmost limits.

The long journey will not end until Norwich is reached, where at 5.30 p.m. a committal service, which will be fully choral, will be held. There will be present, in addition to the relatives, Sir Richard Temple, Chairman, and other officers of the Edith Cavell Homes for Nurses, representatives of the Anglo-Belgian Union, M. Gaston de Leval representing the Belgian Minister, the Lord Mayor of Norwich, and others. So, at last, the body of Edith Cavell will be laid to rest in English soil, in the quiet precincts of the Cathedral where she so often worshipped, and gained fortitude and strength for the difficult tasks which lay before her in the unknown future.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)