

BACK FROM THE WAR.
TIMARU OFFICER IN AUCKLAND
PAYS A TRIBUTE TO KITCHENER'S ARMY.

Under ordinary circumstances three months' travelling would be regarded as full payment for the privilege of spending three weeks with one's friends, but the life of a soldier, perhaps, is not regulated by ordinary conditions. A passenger by the Niagara from Vancouver is Lieut. R. Sterndale, who leaves to-night en route to his home in Timaru. When war broke out he was visiting England and having held a commission in the New Zealand Senior Cadets, he threw in his lot with Kitchener's new army. Before going on active service, however, he was transferred to the Royal North Lancashire Regiment, with whom he fought for six months in France. Last January, while with his men in the front trenches at Loos, Lieut. Sterndale was struck by a high explosive grenade with disastrous results to his shoulders, arms and legs — eight wounds, including a toe blown off. On leaving hospital he decided to utilise his four months' leave for a flying visit home, and when he joined the Niagara at Vancouver was an invalid. The sea-trip, however, has made a wonderful improvement.

Although Lieut. Sterndale did not go on active service with Kitchener's Army, he states that it has given a splendid account of itself. The training he passed through was thorough in the extreme, the late War Lord having realised the bigness of the undertaking, and decided to leave nothing to chance. At first there were no firearms for the men, but when the munition works got busy, they received the very latest patterns procurable — 1915 and 1916 models. "I firmly believe," said the Lieutenant, "that the men of Kitchener's Army are as good as the old regulars. Our 6th Battalion went out to Gallipoli, and I have since met colonels who have said that they have reason to be thankful for what those boys did at the Dardanelles." The returned officer has no doubt whatever that the new British army will do all that is expected — and perhaps more.

"The finest thing in the world," was the lieutenant's enthusiastic comment on the British Air Service. He said that the opinion in military circles in England is that our airships and aeroplanes dominate the position on the Somme. He had not seen or heard much of the armoured cars which are mentioned in to-day's cables as playing an important part in the British operations, but thinks they are probably an improvement on armoured cars which were used at an earlier stage of the war. Lieut. Sterndale says that the people of England are more confident than ever as to the result of the war, and, judging by the manner in which all classes — including the women — are co-operating, there is no thought whatever of anything but a complete victory.