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Britain's Greatest General

A Rare Soldier and a Good Man—Character Sketch of Field Marshal Earl Roberts, K. G., V. O.—Duty Before Everything and War Not Altogether an Evil.

In its series of "Master Workers," The Pall Mall Magazine for July gives the following character sketch of Britain's greatest general.

"Your best understanding of these matters," replied Corporal Trim, "better than any officer in his majesty's service."—*Tristram Shandy.*

A neat little man, with notable forehead, grizzled hair, heavily lidded eyes, a prominent smooth nose, a broad wiry moustache and tufted chin. The face is flushed and blue-veined; the eyes are Irish grey; the long, slender ears stand away from the thin hair. Over the forehead and round about the face are many creases and wrinkles as there are seams in the wings of a ladybird, and the throat is thickly corded, as though it had shouted battle-cries into all the zones. The eyes are set deep into the head, and the ears attract your first glance. They tell you of the mind which is always looking and always listening, a mind which has lived its life in the midst of many and many dangers. A glimmer on the horizon would not escape those eyes; a steady footstep from behind would surely beat the alarm on the drums of those ears. The eyes are not those of the sailor with the wide sea look across, placid and open; they are the eyes of a man whose days are passed in a broken land where bushes and every boulder may be the rifle of his enemy. And they may, in this merry green land, to look cheerfully into the face of day, the eyes of this trim soldier never can quite lose the daring glance and the strained hard peer which they learned in the Indian hills. They may look into your eyes with a smile for a moment, but they are soon off on some mystical quest of the mind, gazing straight and definitely under their stiffening lids into the distances of imagination.

He walks vigorously, with the shoulders pressing him forward. For three or four paces the stick is struck sharply and deliberately to the ground keeping monotonous step with the march; then as though the mind relaxed his tension, the cane swings loosely forward for a moment, but is presently brought back to its old measured stab of the ground. And as he talks his voice sounds note of discipline and severity. It has the slight throatiness of a veteran, as though the hoarse word of command were its native language. But the enunciation is careful and pleasant, with an engaging tone of distinction and that precision of utterance which is common with professors of science than with soldiers.

But there is no mistaking this great veteran of the British army for anything but a soldier. One does not think of him as anything else. He is a soldier pure and simple, the most typical British soldier now alive, the very pattern and effect of the British army. In his spryness, in his walk, in his glance, in his enunciation, he is the fighting Briton, to whom discipline and directness and the open air are the very breath of existence. The future historian, I think, will make mention of Lord Roberts not for his victories and his work in the Indian hills, but to cite him as the very perfect type of the British officer of our period. He does not, indeed, to sum up in his dapper person all the qualities, attributes and mannerisms of our little army. What the poets and historians have written concerning the British army you may read in the face and catch in the voice of this victorious soldier.

But if the future historian trusts to the innumerable anecdotes which have gathered around Lord Roberts' career, he may be tempted to over-emphasize one particular aspect of this interesting personality, and so minimize the soldier. Lord Roberts is a genial and a gentle person, and he is a religious man; but he is certainly not the "Chaplain Bode" or the sentimental philanthropist of some people's too hasty imagination. He does not preach, he does not talk easily of religion, and he entertains no fanciful or emotional views of life. To a man credited with so much tenderness, and even sentimentalism, it might be thought that he appeared only a little less horrible than it does to pistol. One might fancy that he would battle to his enemy praying for mercy, and that he looked impatiently forward to the golden day when his sword shall become a pruning-hook, and every soldier a husbandman. Think of the agonies which he has witnessed on the stricken field; the vain valor of the bleeding private, the fruitless daring of the young batman, and the noise of battle, always succeeded in the hour of victory by the shuddering groans of those who were reproaching across the field. If ever a man has witnessed the outrageous barbarities, it is surely this grizzled hero of a hundred fights; but, though he is the very reverse of a swashbuckler—is, indeed, a serious and religious man—he has but little sympathy for the professional apostle of peace.

And him if he had ever experi-

enced that senseless intoxication in battle which Lord Wolseley has described so graphically in his book. No, he could remember nothing of such a sensation; the nearest to it, perhaps, was the joy he experienced on riding a sweating horse into Delhi and finding that he was in time for the siege. In actual fighting he could recall no exultation of the senses; there was excitement, no doubt, tremendous excitement, but he had always studied, from the very first, to fight against that excitement, in order to preserve an absolutely unclouded intellect. "The first virtue of an officer," he said, "is calmness."

I spoke about the shock which many people feel in reading of this joy and delight in battle, and himself did not regard war as something barbarous, and whether he did not look forward to a millennium of universal peace.

He shook his head and smiled. "I think," he said, with measured, clean-cut words, "that there is a purpose in war. It is true that fighting is a stern remedy; but we are quite sure that frail humanity does not need stern remedies. A war is a wicked war when it is needlessly waged, or when it is waged for greed; but even in these cases it may have its benefits for a nation. Without war—at any rate without the vigilance and discipline which prepare for that stern emergency—a nation is in risk of running to seed. And where a war is a just one—where it is waged as an act of self-defense, as in the case of the Japanese, who are now fighting for their life—their benefit to the nation is great. It is an appeal to the manhood and the virtue of a people. It prevents decadence and effeminacy. It corrects the selfishness and querulousness which are inevitably bred by a long peace. Without the preparation for an armed defence of its boundaries, an empire would slip into habits of sloth and luxury, and dangerous for the whole of humanity. Even in the Anglo-Saxon race, which is as vigorous as any in the world, we find that a long peace breeds a complaining and luxurious spirit, to which every hardship and every little inconvenience becomes an intolerable injustice. Fortitude and the cheerful bearing of adversity are apt to fall out of the category of human duties in a long and luxurious peace. And since character is tried by sorrow and affliction, this querulous antipathy to hardship is bad for the individual, and consequently for the state. We are all tried by fire, are we not? and the test of a man's character is his ability to bear gallantly the sorrows and afflictions of his life; so, too, I think, a nation needs to be tried by fire—needs to be put down upon its trial every now and then, and tested by the laws which govern this planet—the law, I mean particularly, that only the efficient survive."

I think that if Lord Roberts were pressed on the immortality of war by an enthusiastic member of the Peace Society, he would defend, not war from the attacks of its critic, but rather the Creator from the missionary's insinuations. For this soldier, who has grown grey in the service of his country, and who has established a military reputation which is without blemish and famous throughout the world, is one to whom the methods of creation are sacrosanct and just. The problem of pain is for the philosophers; to him the effect of pain is manifest. Man, because of his high destiny awaiting him, in other spheres, may imagine evil of the conditions governing his environment; but this man at least, those conditions are inevitable and necessary for the future. The metaphor which likens the Christian to a soldier, is one that Lord Roberts understands and appreciates; without battle there can be no victory, and without victory there can only be stagnation and unrest. The Judge of all earth has done his marching orders. All that remains is to go forward and obey.

"No," he said to me. "I do not think there will come a time of universal peace; and, considering the stuff of which humanity is made, I doubt if such a future is desirable. Remember, an army does not inculcate any lust for blood. It is not as though every man who goes into battle is a peaceable citizen comes out at the end of his service a professional homicide. On the contrary, the army takes many an unprofitable individual, and turns him into a useful and intelligent citizen. Military training is an education. No man can become a soldier without acquiring at least some of the foundational qualities of character. Look at the private soldier of to-day! Why, he goes back to civil life with ideas, habits and aspirations which are the very highest virtues of citizenship. He becomes an example in his act, his character is an influence over all his fellows, and he certainly becomes the best recruiting agent in his district. It is not now as it was in the old days. The period of the drunken, dissolute and improvident soldier is past; it can never come back. The modern soldier is steady,

self-respecting, painstaking and clean-minded. He takes trouble with himself. He is anxious to get on. He is provident and ambitious. The change in the private soldier of late years is extraordinary; and, mark you, far from having lost any of the dash and spirit of his more dissolute predecessors, he is a keener and more efficient fighting man, and just as brave."

I asked Lord Roberts how he thought this change had come about, what agency had been at work to metamorphose "Tommy Atkins" into the "Service man." He referred first to the general change in public opinion—that mysterious force in social evolution—and then ascribed the reality of the change to the example of the officers. In the old days, he told me—and it is charming to hear this vigorous veteran referring to "the old days" like a stripling with his commission fresh in his pocket—it was not thought greatly amiss for an officer to get drunk at mess. There came a time when men gradually came to consider that lapses of this kind were bad form; and as Mr. Punch's motto, "It's worse than wicked—it's vulgar," holds sway in particular over the life of the British soldier, drunkenness became unworthy of an officer and a gentleman. To-day, if an officer so misbehaved himself at mess, he would be dismissed the service, and any

bood, he recovers them then. He has to think and to act, to weigh and to consider; anything that he may plot and contrive, except turning tail, is, practically speaking, his duty and his right. So, you see, the private soldier of to-day is bound to become a man of resource. He is bound to develop quick wits and sagacity. And all these things are good for a man to acquire, and well for a state to possess in its citizens."

It is this necessity for quickness and resource in the private soldier which leads Lord Roberts to say that the old days of the drunken and careless soldier can never return. It is impossible with the modern conditions and the present drill methods, that a fool can keep his place in the army. And therefore the army, more than ever before, is an educational force in the affairs of the state. Not only does the present military training tend to make a man resourceful, vigorous and clean-living; it also educates him in the ordinary subjects of the board school curriculum, and so qualifies him for civil employment when he leaves the colors. Many recruits who join the army, even in these days—astounding as it may seem—can neither read nor write.

I told Lord Roberts that Mr. Chamberlain had expressed to me his admiration for the character of the British officer, and had ridiculed the



A HAT OF ROUGH STRAW.

Above is a pretty hat of rough straw with a facing of quillings of maline in pale blue. Forget-me-nots are the flowers used, and an attractive feature of the hat is the crown extension which rises abruptly on the left side, and is faced also with pale blue.

approach to this kind of frailty is most vigorously resented by the other officers. "I know many officers," Lord Roberts told me, "who drink only water at mess—many of them." The result of this change in the habits of the officer is a change in the habits of the soldier. He has been taught to realize that most of those things which society has labelled "bad form" are, in their reality, enemies to the peace of mind and body. And since the officer has now got to make himself efficient in order to earn promotion, and therefore has begun to take his profession in earnest, so, too, the private has become a keen and ambitious soldier, taking himself and his work as seriously as the officer above him. "He has to, or he won't get on."

"The new order of warfare, too," said Lord Roberts, "is producing a new spirit in the army. In the old days men fought shoulder to shoulder, a compact mass, with the colonel in touch with the major, the major with the captain, the captain with the sergeant, and so on down to the private soldier. Under those conditions it was necessary for only one man to think; the rest simply came on, and fought like bulldogs until the enemy had had enough. But consider the difference, for a moment, between the old and the new warfare. When the Duke of Wellington woke on June 18, 1815, his videttes were almost touching the videttes of the French army! The field of Waterloo is something like a line three miles in extent. The commanders on either side, therefore, never lost their grip on the changing fortunes of the day from the first shot to the last; and they were able, throughout the battle, to direct the troops with an inclusive intention. But what are the methods of modern warfare? Many of the battles in South Africa were fought over a field of 20 miles in breadth; in one case I think it was 25 miles! You see what that means? It means that a commander cannot possibly control the whole battle. His captains must be something more than brave leaders of a charge. They must be strategists, tacticians, men of resource and judgment. And as with the officers, so with the men. The soldier no longer fights between the sympathetic elbows of his comrades, but in a mass of humanity. In battle he finds himself alone; his comrades are spread far out across the field, and he himself has nothing but his own wits to keep him company. If he has ever lost his individuality and his personal man-

idea that the soldier does not take his work seriously.

"I know," said Lord Roberts. "Much of the criticism of our soldiers is both cruel and unjust. Only the other day I was talking to a member of the House of Commons who had lately studied our military system at Aldershot and Salisbury and Shorncliffe and Hythe. He told me how struck he had been by the seriousness and earnestness of our men, how surprised he had been by the keenness and enthusiasm they showed for their work. The public, I think, was misled during the South African war by much of the newspaper gossip. There were, of course, mistakes and disappointments, and even follies. But, on the whole, the officers were keen and the men incomparable. And the result of that campaign has been to stimulate the keenness and seriousness of the officers, and so to develop a greater enthusiasm among the men. The British army is still the best in the world."

Of the recent changes in the administration of the army, Lord Roberts is neither eulogist nor critic. A change, he says, was inevitable, and, in common with many other thoughtful soldiers, he had long known that the change must come. But it is too early in the day to express a definite opinion as to the wisdom of all the new arrangements, even those which have his warmest sympathy. "The system is on its trial; only experience can decide its merits. However, the public need not concern itself very anxiously in this matter. The greatest reform in the army touches the individual soldier, and this was begun during the South African war. To make every individual officer and every individual soldier resourceful and quick-witted is the beginning of military wisdom. Without this new force at work in the army, all the systems in the world would not suffice to render the soldier an efficient servant of the state. Lord Roberts, more than any man, is the general of the private soldier."

It is good to hear him speak of the private soldier's excellencies. He remembers with pride how nobly they conducted themselves in South Africa—"heroes in the field and gentlemen in the cantonments"—and he tells one, with a ring in his voice, that even the few charges of immorality and violence brought against the troops in South Africa were proved to be unfounded.

"I well remember marching into

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The Days of Auld Lang Syne

Interesting Events of Ye Olden Times Gathered from The Planet's Issues of Half a Century Ago.

From Planet files from December 13, 1859, to December 27, 1859.

William H. Carter is a dealer in lumber.

P. C. Allen manages the Post Office Book Store.

Detroit has a paper called the Detroit Advertiser.

The Cincinnati Gazette is advertised in The Planet.

M. Scott is an issuer of marriage licenses at Morpeth.

There are three hundred nunneries in the United States.

Geo. Winter is a dealer in gentlemen's and ladies' furs.

R. C. McFadden is an auctioneer, doing a good business.

Dr. J. M. Smith, of Morpeth, has his professional card in The Planet.

Thomas Jenner, Clerk of the Township of Raleigh, calls a meeting of his Council.

Isaac Smith opens up the Kent clothing store in Chatham. Clothes made to order.

R. J. Earl offers himself as a candidate to the Town Council from Northwood ward.

The Council take steps to prohibit the sale of liquor to Indians and to prosecute the offenders.

Birth—in Orford, on Monday, Dec. 26, the wife of E. H. Radley, Esq., reeve of Orford, of a daughter.

Jeremiah Beckwith and Chas. A. Jones dissolve partnership as grocery dealers and Mr. Jones assumes charge of the business.

The residents of Dresden are bestirring themselves in order to get their village constituted a port of entry for the receipt of customs.

Birth—At Dresden, County of Kent, C. W., on the 14th inst., the wife of James Miller, Esq., M. D., Coroner for the County of Kent, a son.

The following men were appointed returning officers for the next Municipal elections. For Northwood ward—James Hart; Eberts ward, Duncan McCall; Chrysler ward, Miles Miller.

A movement is being made by a portion of the Methodists of this province for an endowment of twelve thousand dollars per annum for their Denominational College at Coburg.

The Court Journal says the promise made by Her Majesty to the Canadian deputation was to the effect that either the Prince of Wales or Prince Albert should visit the great North American Province next summer.

Owing to the absence of the President, R. S. Woods, in England, Walter McCrea publishes a by-law for the election of directors for the St. Clair, Chatham and Rond Eau Plank Road Company for the year 1860.

Notice is hereby given that a dividend of three per cent. on the half year ending 31st December has been declared by the directors of the Chatham and Camden Plank Road Company. John F. Delmage, Secretary.

Married, at Detroit, by Bishop McCoskey, on Tuesday, the 20th of December, Mr. Henry Northwood, of Chatham, to Miss Catharine Smith, third daughter of the late Charles A. Smith, Esq., of Smith's Park, Sandwich.

One hundred acres of land, well timbered with white oak, and fronting on the Communication Road, Harwich, about five or six miles of Chatham, is advertised for sale by T. C. Livingston.

The Chatham rifle club meets for a practice shoot. The following gentlemen were members, James Baxter, S. Hadley, Thomas Nichol, James Delgarno, Thomas Hadley, W. B. Wells, John Dixon and Hugh McTavish.

The following may be seen on a grave-stone in Derwin (Danbighshire) church yard: "Husband died, aged 103; wife died, aged 98; their son died, aged 97; their daughter died, aged 107; and their grandson died, aged 98; total, 497, average 99 1/2."

Capt. W. N. Smith, of the Essex and Fire Company No. 1, leaves Chatham for London. He is presented with an address and an engraved silver trumpet. After the presentation a dance was held, for which Wilkinson's string band provided the music.

Our Toronto exchanges inform us that the nomination of candidates for the mayoralty of Toronto came off in St. Lawrence Hall. The two can-

didates were Adam Wilson and M. C. Cameron. Upon the show of hands being called for it was declared to be in favor of Mr. Cameron.

The nomination of candidates for the office of Mayor of the Town of Chatham took place in the Town Hall. The first gentleman nominated was Dr. Thomas Cross, proposed by A. P. Salter and Joseph Tilt. John L. Dolson was nominated by Walter McCrea and James Burns. Dr. Askin was nominated by Messrs. Cross and Northwood. Mr. Cross retired, leaving two candidates in the field.

The London Prototype says that His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury has been pleased to confer on Rev. F. W. Sandys, rector at Chatham, the degree of Doctor of Divinity. We have the honor of being acquainted with the reverend gentleman and feel persuaded that so high a distinction granted him by the venerable prelate, who is chief pastor of the church, in England and her colonies, must be satisfactory to his friends in this and the parent country. Dr. Sandys is a popular clergyman and well deserving of such a distinguished mark of esteem.

A FINE BOOK

"The Life of Principal MacVicar" is a book full of interest from the opening sentence to the last page. Written by his son, John MacVicar, it is a beautiful tribute of loving reverence to the memory of a good father. In whatever light we view Principal MacVicar, he must command universal admiration and respect, possessed of the most wonderful self-abnegation; fearlessness and steadfastness of purpose. What must it have been to Father Chiquity to have had on his side such a man as Principal MacVicar. Well might he exclaim, "MacVicar 'ees a lion!" The sketch of his life contains many delightful accounts of his fearlessness in maintaining what he felt to be right in the face of tremendous difficulties, and of his self-abnegation, to his honor be it said, he continued steadfast to the work he had in hand, at a salary of \$7,000, and a second to a church in San Francisco at a salary of \$10,000. His ideas on preaching are too fine not to mention in a review of the life of this truly good and great man. "You are not to preach science, or literature, or crude speculations, much less to amuse and entertain the people, and after the manner of lyceums and theatres. You are sent to preach the Gospel and proclaim the great doctrines of grace, as you find them stated in the Word of God. Called suddenly 'Home' in the midst of an active and useful life, it might be said of him as of Enoch, 'He walked with God, and was not, for God took him.' Tenderly has the last scene been described by the writer of 'The Life of Principal MacVicar.' Long, very long, may it truly be said of him, 'He being dead yet speaketh.'"

THE BETTER VIEW.

If we talk of the good which the world contains,
And try our best to add to it,
The evil will die of neglect by and by;
'Tis the very way to undo it.
We preach too much and we dwell too long
On sin and sorrow and trouble;
We help them to live by the thoughts we give,
Their spite and might we redouble.
For the earth is fair and the people are kind,
If once you look for their kindness;
When the world seems sad and its denizens bad,
It is only our own soul's blindness.
And I say if we search for the good and pure,
And give no thought to the evil,
Our labors are worth far more to the earth
Than when we are chasing the devil.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

BABY ARITHMETIC.

Rosebud dainty and fair to see,
Flower of all the world to me,
Come this way on your pretty feet—
Say, how much do you love me, sweet?
Red little mouth drawn gravely down,
White brow wearing puzzled frown,
Wise little baby Rose is she,
Trying to measure her love for me.
I love you all the day and night,
All the dark and the sunshine bright,
All the candy in the store,
All the dollars, and more and more!
Over the top of the mountains high,
All the world, way up to the sky!
The way to do a great deal of work
Is to be continuously doing a little.