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SOLDIERS AND SAILORS OF TO-DAY.

We talk of our army and navy with admiration now, but look back not many years. None of us would have taken into our homes the average soldier at Waterloo. Fourteen years after Waterloo the Duke of Wellington said of the man who enlisted in the British Army that he was probably the worst drunkard and probably the worst workman in his town, and less than fifty years ago the Minister for War told the House of Commons that it had come to be a question whether the British Army should collapse or not. We could not get men. We never could get enough men for our last war in Europe. Why? Let us see.

After the French wars were over, when huge sums of money were being voted to Wellington and the officers, it was proposed to reward the men too, and what do you think was to be their reward for Waterloo? It was proposed to reward them by limiting their flogging to a hundred lashes! The flogging of soldiers for all sorts of offences was so bad that the floggers would take it in shifts, and a doctor stood by to say how much a man could stand without dying. Well, you may not believe it, but it is true that Lord Palmerston opposed this concession to the men who beat Napoleon. It was rejected, and the flogging went on; sometimes a man would get a thousand lashes.

At last, when the Victorian Era was well on its way, a soldier was flogged to death, and Parliament then reduced the flogging to fifty lashes. And when do you think the barbarism was stopped by the Mother of Parliaments? With a woman on the throne such things could hardly last long. Well, I am not forty years old, and I was a boy, at school, when the British Government proposed to abolish this flogging of soldiers.

Through all the years till then the men of our Army were treated like dogs, or worse than the law would allow any man to treat his dog now. Yet, when the end of this cruelty came, Queen Victoria wrote to Mr. Gladstone, earnestly begging him not to stop flogging, as it would deprive the officers of the only power they had of keeping young troops in order.

It is to the everlasting honor of the British Government that it replied to Queen Victoria by abolishing flogging, and the abolition was followed by a rush to the colors. The army had at last a character and men were not ashamed to belong to it. A soldier was a man, and no longer a cowering creature under a lash.

Only nine years before, again in the teeth of Queen Victoria and the House of Lords, the Government had deprived rich men of the control of the Army, by abolishing the purchase of commissions. The nation

said Mr. Gladstone 'must buy back its own Army from its own officers.' But for this Sir John French could never have been the commander of our troops in France. Queen Victoria was not allowed to flog our soldiers or to sell commissions, and to this, more than to any other single thing, we owe the Army which has changed the meaning of the word 'contemptible' in the Kaiser's dictionary.

Two out of three men ran away from the Navy in Nelson's wars. Most captains flogged the men continually with cat-o-nine-tails, and his mates would generally make a man drunk before the flogging—as the doctor makes a man unconscious before an operation.—Arthur Mee, in My Magazine.

Even before the war, says Madame N. Jarintzeff, in the Contemporary, the Russian peasant, with new-born aspirations, and clearly recognising his worst enemy, was demanding the suppression of the drink-shop and the organisation of centres of culture—schools, hospitals, libraries, peoples theatres, public readings. The war, with the disappearance of the drink-shops, has marvelously intensified the craving for education and moral uplifting. Letters are quoted from village teachers, and Zemstvo workers with such statements as these: The spiritual upheaval is simply incredible. All personality seems to have melted into the spirit of society—of the State.

There is no quarrelling, no hoodliganism, and hardly any begging. The village life is sustained with one serious thought—how to help the war even when remaining far away at home. The growth of mental interests is notable in everything. The schools are overfilled; even grown-ups, those who did not know reading and writing before, have joined. To the evening readings on agriculture and engineering they flock in such numbers that they have to sit on the floor.

How truly Mr. Lloyd George spoke when he said that Germany, unwittingly, was knocking the shackles off the Russian giant! And how hopeless it is for Germany, when that giant has his limbs thoroughly free, and arms in his hands, to attempt to defeat him!

"Give me a fulcrum and a level long enough and strong enough," said an old philosopher, "and I can move the world." The level which moves the world to-day is coal, and the demand therefor shows it.