

THE MARCHING QUESTION.

"The marching question," for it was inevitably destined to become a "question," is beginning to be understood in its varying aspects. Primarily the capabilities of the army as a fighting force are beginning to be recognized: secondly, the utterly unserviceable nature of a great portion of the soldier's equipment is being proved; and, thirdly, the "weeding-out" process becomes as certain as the law of gravity, for already the grumbler has been heard, and there are rumors current in Aldershot that no end of men are going to leave at the expiration of their seven years period. Be it so. It is one of the very best of signs. Though numerically less, the army will be really infinitely more efficient for being quit of the weak and lazy, who on a campaign become an intolerable burden, taxing to the utmost the resources and patience of a commander. It is inevitable that a sudden increase in the amount of work demanded of the soldier, morally altering to some extent the conditions of his enlistment, would have some such effect as I here foreshadow, but the fact that by far the great majority at Aldershot, where the marches have been stiffer than at any other station, have quietly settled down to the work and regard it as necessary, shows that the true spirit of soldiering is not to be looked for in vain. Compensation for the extra wear and tear of boots and clothing incidental to the increased work demands, however, urgent and immediate attention to prevent injustice and to reward the spirit of tolerance with which the marching exercises are, on the whole, regarded by the men. In my despatches from the New Forest I alluded to the necessity which existed for this provision, on account of the then extraordinary destruction of clothing, and pointed out that most of the men could never again wear several of their garments. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, in his official report, made a similar suggestion, and, I have no doubt, is prepared to further the reasonable and modest request of all ranks, that something should be done to meet the permanently altered circumstances which have recently come about.—Naval and Military Record.

A recruit was put on sentry the other night at the Barracks at Woolwich, who didn't know the exact ins and outs of the business. A good-natured chum brought him a sandwich from the Canteen, and just as he was about to eat it, up came the Major in mufti. The sentry did not recognize him, so the Major said: "What's that you are eating?" The sentry replied, "A sandwich, have a piece?" "Do you know who I am?" ejaculated the Major. The sentry said, "Perhaps the Major's servant, perhaps his groom." The Major—"Try again, sentry." The sentry—"Perhaps the old chap himself." The Major—"Right this time." The sentry—"Good heavens! hold the sandwich sir, while I present arms."

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