

Florence subdued his powerful victim, and led him in triumph through the principal streets of the City; but his own lacerated frame, streaming with blood, and the few articles of dress which he wore, torn to shreds, gave ample proof that the victory had been pretty well earned. A large subscription was collected as the reward of his prowess, on the spot, and, amidst the deafening shouts of thousands, he returned to his barrack with flying colors.

This brave man was destined, not many years after, to shed his blood ingloriously, when deprived of all power to aim a blow in self defence; although if at liberty, he could have thrown triangles, Drum-Major, and all his instruments of torture, over his manly shoulders, and pitched them into the noble stream that rolled murmuringly past the lofty walls of our barracks, as if expressing its horror of the inhuman carnage unnecessarily carried on within.

Various modes were adopted for increasing the severity of those punishments. Cats were often steeped in brine.—The Drum-Major invariably inflicted the first 25 lashes, and seldom failed to leave the marks of his toes in the ground, no matter how hard and solid the earth may be. Drummers were regularly trained to this part of their duty, and exercised two or three times a week in wielding the cat against the trunk of some tree—flogging, in fact, was reduced to a science; and at that time it was considered disgraceful to the service to commit a soldier to the common gaol or to any other public prison.

Such was the service less than 50 years ago. Improvements, suggested by a period of peace, the longest ever known in Europe, and never, I hope, to be disturbed, have been gradually introduced, and the character of the soldier raised above its former level, not only by a better classification and definition of military offences, but by reducing the number of lashes, and discountenancing undue severity in their infliction, by the substitution, in many cases, of less degrading modes of punishment. In addition to these, strict orders have been issued by the Commander-in-Chief, requiring all officers in conveying necessary admonition or reproof, to abstain from the use of harsh and abusive language, calculated only to irritate the soldier and lessen him in his own estimation. The result of this humane regulation, is, that a man now approaches his officer with confidence and respect, whereas formerly he could not look him in the face without feelings of indignation and terror. This single fact, which no old officer or old soldier will attempt to dispute, goes far to prove that humiliating, disgraceful, and torturing punishments are by no means indispensable for maintaining discipline in the English army. Fifty lashes are now deemed sufficient punishment for an offence which, half a century back, would have been visited with one thousand.