

them. Kitchener never wrote anything finer than the allocution which he addressed to the old B.E.F. when they landed in France. It breathed the very spirit of those Articles of War which Henry V issued to the host on the landing at Harfleur. The men were worthy of it and they lived up to it. During the first eight months of the war, there were only two cases of offences against the inhabitants of the country. The British soldier showed himself to be what he was—a gentleman. The French were prepared to find him that; what they were not prepared to find was that he was gay, witty, tender, and debonair. His playfulness with children delighted them; his tenderness to animals astonished them. British gunners and drivers often show extraordinary devotion to their horses, but after all horsemastership is part of their training and “ill-treating a horse” leaves a black mark on a soldier’s conduct-sheet and has to be expiated by F.P. That, however, does not account for the passion of a battalion for making a pet of a dumb animal, nor does it explain the spectacle, very stupefying to the Italians, of a fox-terrier marching at the head of a rifle battalion and giving himself the airs of a second-in-command.

There is a sort of lyrical temperament in the British soldier; you discover it in the way he sings. The French rarely sing on the march; the British often. It is true the German sings—but he sings to order. Nothing is more characteristic of the difference between the British and the German