

obligation for a money payment, must necessarily involve a corresponding relaxation of the sense of individual responsibility. So rich a country is this of ours, that the provision of the requisite money is hardly felt. Among the wealthier classes, it is not felt at all. And so it is, that the very means which enable us to avoid what might be a disagreeable duty, does at the same time kill that individual sense of obligation and of responsibility, which alone can certainly and permanently ensure the duty being adequately performed by any one whatever. Responsibility was transferred to the Army itself; and, with its transference, arose that singular and ugly attitude of the civilian towards the common soldier, which he was not slow to perceive and to resent. At bottom, perhaps, the feeling of the civilian was due to the operation of the mysterious law which ordains that he who wrongs another shall also dislike him. For, the civilian was paying another to do his duty for him. If such a form of words appears to state the case too strongly, it none the less conveys a truth. The soldier did in consequence undoubtedly occupy the superior position. Human nature demanded redress. It attempted to obtain it by the nearest way—a resort to an assumed superiority. The common soldier learned his lesson. His was the real superiority, and he dimly knew it. But he had his duty to do, and he did it.

Let us track the clue of transferred responsibility a little higher. Being a commercial nation, we do not pay more than we can help. We buy in the cheapest market. We underpay the private, and we also underpay the officer. Since there were plenty of wealthy men who had a taste for soldiering—the number is now diminishing—the nation allowed them to gratify their desire at their own expense. The officer was, therefore, in the position of doing the nation a favour. Therefore, if there were ever cases in which the British officer regarded his duties lightly, it was not for the nation to take him to task. The transference of responsibility was accomplished, it is true—but, on what terms? It was transferred as