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OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

DEATH OF THE KING OF ITALY.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—The most startling event of the past fortnight has been the unexpected death of Victor Emmanuel, the brave and patriotic King of Italy. He sank after a comparatively brief illness, and his death was a sad surprise, and a most sorrowful event throughout his dominion. His career has been a remarkable one, he has suffered much, fought bravely, and secured enduring fame. He struggled for years against unpropitious circumstances, and at times it appeared that his hopes and aspirations on behalf of Italy were never to be realized. Yet one great change after another began to turn events in his favour, until at length the unity of the Italian kingdom was established, and the intolerable yoke of the Pope's temporal dominion was broken, and Rome became the capital. He has encountered determined opposition from the Papacy, and lived for years an excommunicated man, and under all kinds of ecclesiastical disabilities. His courage never failed, but he kept true to his own great purpose of making his beloved Italy free and great; a power among the nations, and in this he saw to a very large extent, the grand desire of his heart. His death will not interrupt the work to which his life was sedulously devoted. It is believed that his successor, his eldest son, Prince Humbert, will be true to his father's principles, and maintain Italian liberties. There are indications of plots at the Vatican, and the revival of hopes among the advocates of the temporal dominion of the Papacy. To the surprise of all the aged Pope has again rallied, and exhibits renewed life and vigor. He might be supposed to have obtained

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE.

while the strong man, unbroken by the rush of numerous years, is unexpectedly laid low in death.

ROME

has given a splendid funeral to her distinguished ruler, and claimed to be his burying place. High honors have been paid to his memory, and representatives from all the Great Powers were present at his interment.

EVENTS AT HOME

must claim our attention. The excitement that was felt when Parliament was first summoned continued up to the very day of its assembling. The feeling became intense, and the secret was tolerably well kept, for until the Queen's speech was printed, it was generally believed that a great declaration was to be made, and a vote of many millions would be requested for warlike purposes. All these anticipations are wrong, for at present the Government only tell the public that negotiations of great importance are proceeding in which it is imperative that the English Government shall have a voice, before they become final. England is to adhere to its present policy of neutrality while English interests are not touched, and Parliament and everybody else is to wait until the contending Powers shall arrange for an armistice, and discuss the conditions of peace. It is still difficult to explain why Parliament is called nearly a month before its usual time, but it is not unlikely that our Government felt that its dignity required some movement at a time when Russia was carrying all before her victorious arms; and unable or dreading to initiate a war policy, they fell back upon the safe and constitutional plan of seeking the assistance and the advice of the Imperial Parliament.

A FEELING OF SAFETY

is now apparent for no important step can be taken without notice and discussion, and as there are wise and loyal men in the ranks of the Opposition as

well as on the benches of the Government, there is more probability of united action and careful deliberation than during a Parliamentary recess. Yet it is a grave crisis, and a time of much apprehension. The President of our Conference has thoughtfully and wisely urged the Connexion to fervent prayer at this juncture of affairs, and it is still believed that we shall be saved from the terrible necessity of engaging in war.

THE HEAVY TOIL

of Presidential duty has begun to tell upon Mr. Pote, and although he has not been laid aside, he has felt the necessity of caution and of withholding from some of the duties which are crowding in upon them.

IN METHODISM

it has been and must be right up to Conference, a time of much work. Preparations have to be made the inauguration of the new scheme of Lay Representatives. Large and influential committees, are frequently sitting upon questions of vital importance such as the Education of Ministers' Children, the extension of the Theological Institution, the division of our Liturgical services, and other matters of pressing necessity. Our leading men are full-handed, and the rank and file of the ministry in England have abundance of employment, and the work seems to multiply and grow upon us.

THE EXTREME DEPRESSION

the trade still continues, and the numbers of unemployed men is rapidly increasing. "B."
Jan. 21, 1878.

OUR PROFESSIONS.

THE ARMY.

(BY AN OFFICER IN HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.)

Considering the numerous opportunities at command, it is not surprising that the army, standing as it does, in the fore-front of the professions, is so little understood and sought after. I fear it is not appreciated by the young men of the provinces. The writing about it becomes all the more difficult, when we consider the prejudices that are entertained against it by those who are not in a position to arrive at any accurate opinion as to its advantages, and from whose ranks the army should be mainly recruited. As it is much easier to form a wrong opinion than a right one, so it is much easier to receive than eradicate a false impression. This rule applies especially to the army, for, while we meet with whole classes of young men who entertain a decided antipathy to the army as a profession, they are utterly unable to account satisfactorily for its existence. They say they admire the soldier, and will acknowledge that the soldier's life, with its variety and change, and perfect immunity from care, is, to use their own words, "after all, the best;" but, if you ask, "Why, then, do you not seek for admission into the army?" or even suggest the idea of their joining its ranks, the reply, most generally given, is, "Well, I don't know, but I guess I don't care for it." They have objections to it as a means of livelihood (or fancy they have), but to explain those objections in a satisfactory manner, either to themselves or others, is, in nine cases out of ten, an utter failure; and if their objection, supposing they could explain them, were placed beside the plain facts of military life, they would vanish in considerably less time than it took to form them.

The only reason I can fairly assign for this fancied antipathy against the army, is, that people look at military life from a false stand-point. They are ignorant of the manner of life they profess to despise. And yet you will see a mixture of pleasure and satisfaction insensibly overspread their countenances as the gallant red-coat passes, smart, clean and comfortable, looking

what he is, the very embodiment of happiness, with his jaunty air of independence and freedom from care; and they do acknowledge, reluctantly though in some cases it may be, a greater sense of security by the presence of those brave defenders of our hearths and homes. They are magnanimous enough to allow that gentle, affable, kind and unpretending though he be in time of peace, they use no misnomer when they justly style him "The protector of his Queen and country."

Where, I ask, is there a more honourable profession, or one which demands from its members more of those fine principles of firm and steady perseverance and uprightness which characterize the true man? Surely the hearts of even ordinary readers, as they peruse the glowing accounts of patriotism and devotion performed by our soldiers, must throb and palpitate with a desire to emulate the noble defenders of our country. Show me the man who calls Victoria Queen, and dear old England Home, whose heart and soul do not swell, and in whose bosom there is not that palpitation of honest English patriotism, as the deeds of our brave soldiers are recounted, or any of our military histories are read, and I will show you the man who is dead to all old England's sons hold dear, and in whose breast love of country meets with very little, if any, response. And still they treasure up these fancied objections. They do not say so, certainly, yet they fancy there is a certain stigma attaching to the life of a soldier; but it is not a very difficult matter to challenge them to show where the stigma exists, and if those who object to it as a profession for the above named reason, will only take the trouble of adding up the long list of illustrious names who have considered it (and rightly, too) an honor, yea a glory, to serve among their country's defenders, I am of opinion they will be only too glad to relinquish their objection.

However, as it is not my intention to sing the praises of the army, or extol our military brethren more than they deserve, but rather to set before our young men its advantages as an opening in life, I must be careful, as I find there is a danger of falling into one or two extremes. It is possible to give too much color to a military life and thereby impart to it a certain romantic or fanciful tinge, which certainly does not belong to it (for, after all, there is enough of the real work of life, and laudable striving after advancement connected with it, to effectually banish all romance). Or a writer may give so little coloring as to detract from its charms, and thereby become partly untruthful, or at any rate deceiving, and by this misrepresenting it, play into the hands of those whose antipathies are so much against it. I prefer, therefore, to take the only safe course, and lay before my readers those things only that have come under my personal observation. In writing of the army, I must necessarily be both brief and superficial, for though its advantages are many and varied, to take other than a cursory sketch of them would lead us so deeply into the interior economy, or Red Tapeism, of the army, as I fear, would render the subject rather confusing than otherwise to our young men, who have much to their own disadvantage, given the subject so little of their thought.

It may be asserted as an argument against adopting the army as a profession, that there are many of what some people are pleased to call "black sheep" among them. I do not attempt to deny that there are a number of our soldiers who seem regardless of their own good fame, or of the good will of

others; but let not my reader condemn the many for the comparative few. At the same time allow me to ask, are there none who merit this same designation in the other professions; are all our Divines, Statesmen, Lawyers, Doctors, Merchants, &c., &c., so untainted, so spotless in character as to render it an impossibility for any one to cast the first stone? I throw not; and why, pray, should there not be some of defective character in the ranks of the army? If you take a fair average of the men who compose the rank and file of the army, and a similar number from all the other professions, and place them side by side, the army would not have much, if any, cause to blush. Not that I have aught to say against the character of any class or body of men; I merely defend the soldier.

What inducements or advantages are there for young men joining the army? I answer, they are many. I will enumerate a few, not altogether the greatest or most conspicuous, but rather those that present themselves in the order of succession. There are food, clothing, shelter, pay, education, promotion, means of making a provision for the future, pension, distinguished rewards, the possibility of reaching the higher ranks, and a host of ecceteras. On his admission into the army, the first fact that meets the soldier is, that he is not required to provide himself with anything in the shape of funds, clothing, &c., &c. These, it is well known, are provided at the public expense; nevertheless, these items are not to be passed over lightly. Let us for a moment look at them (they will bear inspection) and I think we shall be strongly inclined to call this advantage No. 1. Take then first *Clothing*: The soldier is provided the day he passes into the service with two suits of clothing, of no flimsy material, strong, good and serviceable, viz., two coats, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of boots, and two head dresses. These are renewed periodically,—his coat and trousers annually, his boots every six months, and head dress at longer intervals. In addition he receives what is called a soldier's kit; and it does not cost him one farthing. This kit comprises—two good warm flannel shirts, three pairs of woolen socks, two towels, knife and fork, spoon, comb, razor, gloves, account book, shoe, cloth, and shaving brushes, and sundry other articles which I need not recapitulate, but which are required by the soldier. The necessary piece of soap, even, is not omitted, which will show that every want of the soldier has been thoroughly considered and enquired into. There is also a great-coat and cape issued to him for use in cold or wet weather, and in addition to all this, he has given him, in America, clothing suitable for the climate, such as long boots, fur cap and gloves, flannel drawers, and a warm wrapper for the throat, and is allowed in addition to his pay a certain sum per annum to keep them in repair, or replace them, as needs be. In what profession, let me ask (other than the army), are all these things provided at the outset? None. Surely then we are not wrong in calling this advantage No. 1. We have our man clothed, but clothing will neither fill the stomach nor the pocket, and both these contingencies have to be provided for. How about food? Let us see. What baker will he patronize? What lucky butcher is to supply his table with choice rounds of beef, legs of mutton, &c.? In fact, both butcher and baker must solicit in vain, for (happy man) the soldier has all these gratis and not even the trouble of ordering them. Yes, generous England leaves not her servants to starve. But I fancy I hear some one say, "Ah, but they don't get much of that sort of

the best." Just go and see how they live, and you will find they have enough and to spare; yes, and a spare plate and a hearty welcome for you too, my reader. For my part I have often been astonished at the apparent waste (tho' I cannot fairly call it waste, because others reap the benefit of it). I may more justly call it the surplus, that leaves the soldier's table.

Let us look in upon the soldier. He is, say, at breakfast. He has his bowl of coffee, not good water spoiled, either, because he has a say, after all, in the providing of all his groceries, vegetables, puddings, &c., &c., has also his bread and butter, or his toast, without any stint, and I pity the poor man who cannot sit down and make a good hearty breakfast off these. Still our man is not confined to this, for we must remember that if he is any way fanciful there is invariably the wherewithal in his pockets to satisfy his fancies for other little niceties. For instance, a nice slice of ham from the canteen; or the cook will do him up a couple of eggs and a slice or two of bacon, and you must confess, if not the best, they are far from being the worst kind of things of which to make a breakfast. As to dinner. About one o'clock you may observe him trying the edge of his knife with his thumb; and now we betide that joint that comes in smoking hot. He will do it justice, as well as those nice baked or boiled potatoes, and bit of cabbage or other vegetable. He has already disposed of his soup, the first act in the proceedings, so don't imagine that he has not more than one course for his dinner. But what does this mean? Why, here is an officer and his orderly going into each room and asking the men if they have any complaint to make, and this is done too after each meal! What? complaint at having soup, roast, baked, or boiled meat, potatoes, &c., for dinner, and perhaps, as is very often the case, a little pudding to end with? Surely this is absurd, nevertheless it is so, and if the soldier is not satisfied with the quality of his breakfast or dinner, and quantity too, in a very respectful manner he tells the officer so; and if anything is inferior in quality, no time is lost before it is rectified, so there is very little opportunity for imposing on the soldier by inferior articles, simply because he does not purchase them personally. And now about supper. At about 4 o'clock he has a repetition of breakfast, except that instead of coffee he has tea. These three meals constitute a soldier's ration, but if he wants more at a later hour, say a lunch between 8 and 9 p.m., there is no cold meat left from dinner, or bread from breakfast or supper, (and it is seldom the shelves where these are kept are entirely empty), he can go to the canteen and purchase whatever he requires. Thus, considering what little trouble or anxiety on this score the soldier is put to I think we may call this matter of food an advantage also.

With regard to the manner in which the soldier is housed, I need say nothing. Take a look at a barrack-room and see for yourselves. You will find that he is surrounded with everything absolutely necessary to his comfort: bed and bedding, crockeryware, cutlery, utensils of every description in abundance, as clean and bright as a new pin.

(Conclusion in our next.)

At an Indian wedding, recently, the choir sung, "Come, ye disconsolate." The officiating clergyman, feeling awkward about it, attempted to mend matters by giving out a hymn, but unluckily struck into the one beginning, "Mistaken souls, that dream of heaven"

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