

POOR COPY

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THE TRAINING AND TREATMENT OF ARMIES

What Horatio Bottomley Says in Article "If I Were Kitchener"

(By Horatio Bottomley, Editor of "John Bull.")

Once upon a time, when a very young man I thought I could play billiards, and after witnessing a professional match in the saloon of the old Westminster Aquarium I remember asking one of the players to whom I spoke during the adjournment of the game to give me a short lesson. He placed the balls in various positions, and before I made each stroke—or missed it, as the case may be—I was questioned as to the position in which I proposed to leave them for the next and the succeeding shot. I gave my answers glibly and went about my work; and at the end of a quarter of an hour was highly flattered when the professional assured me that he did not think "there was much he could teach me," adding: "You know the game almost as well as I do." I need not say what pride I listened to this compliment, and I resolved to repeat it verbatim to the young man with whom I had an appointment for "100 up" later in the evening. Imagine my chagrin, however, when the expert of the cue immediately added: "The only difference is that you can't play it." Therefore, let it be clearly understood that if I now talk about what I would do if I were Kitchener, I mean what I think I ought to do—being perfectly confident that I couldn't do it.

With which preamble I approach the subject of my discourse.

To begin with, I should reflect that at the outbreak of the war, just as I was about to embark for Egypt, I was pulled back by the coat-tails and entrusted with the terrible responsibility of creating a new British Army—that is to say, of obtaining under our voluntary system, the necessary number of recruits—training them, equipping them, and providing them with the necessary munitions and accessories incidental to a foreign and protracted field campaign.

And when I should sit quietly down and look upon my handiwork. Ten became more than two million British soldiers—a million of whom are ready to take the field, or as ready as they can be under our present system of training and equipment, and another million of whom are preparing to back them up. And I should reflect with joy and pride upon the fact that pending the preparation of the first million the more than half I sent out in August last—France's "contemptible little Army"—had been instrumental in frustrating the march of the Germans upon Paris, and of giving them a foretaste of the revival of the martial spirit of our race. And then I think I should say to myself, "What is my next duty?"—and this is how I fancy I should answer the question.

First, I should endeavour to realize that all the old methods of training are obsolete, and that practically every book upon military strategy written prior to August last, is useless. I should admit freely to myself that the million splendid fellows now at, or en route to the front, have been trained upon the wrong basis; just as I would not disguise from myself the fact that all original calculations as to the quantity and character of munitions required had been more or less falsified by the devilish ingenuity of the Germans. I should make up my mind that the second million men should go out trained and equipped in such a manner as to place them upon equal terms in every respect with the enemy. And that being my determination, I should make a formal demand upon the government for at least twice as much in the way of munitions as General French asked for, and then for facilities for training the second million men in the light of the lessons already taught by the war.

I should take them down to low-lying parts of the country, where they would be taught trench work and trench life in all their reality—including draining, lighting, drilling and everything else. They should be made familiar with the use of dummy hand-grenades, machine guns, fortifying houses, and indeed with everything else likely to be required of them at the front. And all the young officers

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I should be put in touch with experienced sergeants, who should subsequently remain attached to them throughout the whole of the campaign.

I am not unmindful of the traditional prejudice which exists against the rank and file, but the new Army is a very exceptional thing, and I think I should put some of the forces under the command of existing non-commissioned and warrant officers of experience, giving the men so promoted a special rate of pay, sufficient to maintain them in their positions, with an adequate separation allowance for their dependents. Then I should promote experienced men from the Territorials to act as N.C.O.'s and form a Non-commissioned Officers' Training Corps, which would be open to the raw men now looking for commissions.

I would see that everything was done to make my new men contented, loyal and willing, and to prevent any of them from declaring—as many now do—that they are "fed up" before they leave England. To this end, I would annul the present stringent rule forbidding correspondence between regiment and War Office. I would invite one weekly letter from all men of each unit who had legitimate grievances to ventilate, and such complaints would be carefully considered and adjusted.

I would impress upon my Commanding and Company officers that they should study military law, and that they should not impose arbitrary, harsh and unconscionable sentences for trivial offences.

I would abolish the trussing of men and the chaining of them to trees or wagons or gun wheels when they are sentenced to field punishment. The degrading sight does not make for recruiting.

I would at any cost see that the dependents of my soldiers obtained their allowances promptly and fully, one day a week at the War Office. And I would not spend more than one day a week at the War Office—devoting the rest of my time to personally supervising training operations at the various camps.

Finally, I would take the second million men out myself and back up French and Joffre in one mighty onslaught upon the German trenches—using every fiendish device known to chemistry to give the enemy a taste of their own medicine, and stopping at nothing short of outrage upon the civilian population.

So much for what I would do, from the military standpoint. But I would not stop there.

I would call upon the First Sea Lord—never mind the civilian Lord—and ask him to sign with me a protest to the Government against any kind of political interference with the conduct of the war. I should point out that from now until the Germans are driven back to Berlin, and have admitted themselves beaten, it is a soldiers' and sailors' job, and that any discussion in Parliament, before the terms of peace come to be considered is mischievous and embarrassing. And I would respectfully suggest that until peace is declared the whole function of the Government, consists of providing the men, the money and the munitions called for by the Navy and the Army, of protecting the food supplies, and the property and the lives of the civil population. And I should demand that every German-born person in this country be either put under control or deported, and that every person who did anything calculated to encourage the enemy or to dissuade the British in this war, should be conducted forthwith to the Tower, tried by court-martial, and, if condemned, shot without ceremony.

TOBACCO IS MUCH NEEDED AT THE FRONT

Lt. Col. Morrison Views With Alarm Resolution to Stop Sending Tobacco

(Ottawa Free Press.)

Some of the gentlemen of the Toronto Methodist Conference who are so fearful that "the pure lips" of the Canadian soldier boys at the front will be sullied by smoking, might gain valuable information on the subject under their consideration if they paid a visit to the trenches. If they are afraid of contamination from such a vest they might at least seek information from those who are there. We should like to see them drop an inquiry to the army officers, asking for information as to the evil of smoking and the wisdom of placing an embargo on tobacco for the front.

The latest letter of Lieut. Colonel Morrison, D.S.O., while it might shock the sensibilities of conference members since it tells of chaplains smoking, should be read by them. Colonel Morrison has not found smoking injurious to the soldiers and neither have the brave chaplains who are doing soldiers' work where the bullets are thickest. The colonel "views with alarm" the resolution of the Conference advocating that tobacco should not be sent to the soldiers. Apparently he has not been informed of the reception that resolution received among the sensible people of Canada.

Some of Col. Morrison's references to the subject of soldiers' smoking are very enlightening. Speaking of the chaplains as "a fine lot of men" he says:

"They risk their lives in battle . . . and nearly all of them smoke. Tell it not to the Methodist Conference; but those who don't smoke carry cigarettes in their pockets for they know that in most cases when they come upon a wounded man gasping on a blood-dripping stretcher and that sallow grey tint on his face that comes from physical exhaustion, shock, and loss of blood, his first whisper will be: 'Oh, Chaplain, could y' shove a fag in muth face?'"

The moral reformer who would take away the soldier's comfort very probably has experienced neither physical exhaustion such as Col. Morrison speaks about, nor the relief and solace to such exhaustion that such "a smoke" will bring. He is busying himself about something he knows nothing of. The ministers who have gone to the front as chaplains are among the most worthy of their profession, and they have seen the necessity to the soldier of smoking. Some of them have found it necessary to smoke themselves. And by doing so they have neither degenerated morally nor sold their "pure lips."

Fortunately Col. Morrison need not worry. The people of Canada will not heed the request from the boys at the front, not the fears of the moral reforming busybodies. Incidentally Col. Morrison has seen that anything that affords relief from the exhaustion and shock of the trenches is of value, for he deprecates the thoughtless decision of the War Office in removing the dram of rum from the soldier's rations. The soldiers, he says, are suffering from the effect of the base accusation of drunkenness in many income months ago against British workmen.

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Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Astles and two daughters Lilian and Ruby, paid a visiting visit to Port Daniel on Saturday.

Why do I indulge in these random reveries? Because I believe they express the inspired voice of the Man in the Street, who has somehow or other got it into his head that Lord Kitchener is not having a free hand to finish this ghastly job in his own way. I believe the man—and he is a man—has been overworked and overwrought in welding together out of a huge mass of raw material, and without conscription, an army twice as big as any which ever fought in the Franco-Prussian war, and eight times as big as the force employed in either the Crimea or at Waterloo. It is a stupendous accomplishment, the grandeur of which is intensified by the almost unbroken silence of the wizard who has achieved it. But in my ignorance I do not think we shall ever get, or require to get, more than our present two million men to the front, for which opinion I may be permitted upon another occasion to give my reasons.

At the same time, we will go on recruiting, as one never knows what may happen in an upheaval of this kind—and in any case we shall want a large body of occupation in Berlin, and Vienna and at all the German and Austrian garrison towns and ports; pending the payment of the indemnity which the devilish Kaiser and the deplorable Emperor will have to pay as the price of retaining such remnants of their empire as may be left to them by the Terms of Peace.

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