

now, when most mines are healthy and safe. But these little children stood fifteen hours without a stop in the cold, dark mine, opening and shutting trapdoors, or harnessed to heavy trucks, or standing in black slime from five in the morning till six at night, pumping water at the bottom of the shaft."

#### PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE.

THE writer goes on to say that none of the great popular reformers seemed really to care about these terrible conditions enough to change them. There was then no voice of labour that must be respected. In those days it was not possible that a Lloyd George could go and address the miners, asking them in the name of their country to go back to work that the British might win the war through the abundant supply of coal. In fact, English labour in those days was more under the iron hand of government and economic usage than modern labour in Germany is under the bossism of the war lords. Apparently Gladstone did not care, neither John Bright, who declared that the Ten Hour Bill was one of the worst measures passed through Parliament, and proposed an amendment that the hours of labour should be from 5.30 in the morning till 8.30 at night.

"Southey, it is true, wrote that the slave trade was mercy compared with the child trade in the factories; but the first interest of Parliament was aroused, not by shame or sympathy or sorrow, but by fear. The children were dying so fast that there was no room in the churchyards, and an Act was passed limiting the work of children to twelve hours a day."

#### AN ARISTOCRAT REFORMER.

ACCORDING to Mr. Mee, it was an aristocrat that reformed the conditions of child labour in England. Lord Shaftesbury was the man who, in his day, did a work as great as that of Robert Raikes in his foundation of Sunday-schools, or Howard in his prison reforms, or John Wesley in his evangelization work among the masses. This man succeeded in a democratic reform where the great tribunes of the people made little or no effort.

"Lord Shaftesbury," writes Mr. Mee, "was more powerful than John Bright. Parliament rose to the mighty height of forbidding night work for children and limiting their Saturday work to nine hours, and in 1842 little girls were saved from the slavery of the mine and only men of ten years old were allowed to go down. In that year one-third of all the workers in our mines were children; for every two men who went down, one child went with them. The battle is not yet won, for there are still 40,000 little boys toiling in the mines of England when they should be at school, and Parliament will not stop this shameful scandal until we make it.

"But the days when Lord Shaftesbury could plead in Parliament for the child slaves of England, and

have an audience of two, have gone for ever. He saved the children who were being slowly murdered in our mills and factories; he saved the children whose eyes were hardly ever allowed to see the sun. He saved the little chimney-sweeps who were forced up chimneys from three in the morning till ten at night, and allowed to sleep the other five hours on a sack of soot in a cellar.

#### THE SOLDIER'S LOT.

MR. MEE goes on to describe the average British soldier who broke the power of Napoleon at Waterloo; such a man as Wellington himself fourteen years after the Battle of Waterloo, described as "the worst drunkard and probably the worst workman in his town," and less than fifty years ago, the Minister for War told the House of Commons that it had come to be a question whether the British Army should collapse or not. We could not get men.

"After the French wars were over, when huge sums of money were being voted to Wellington and the officers, it was proposed to reward the men, too, and what do you think was to be their reward for Waterloo? It was proposed to reward them by limiting their flogging to a hundred lashes! The flogging of soldiers was so bad that the floggers would take it in shifts, and a doctor would stand by to say how much a man could stand without dying. Well, you may not believe it, but it is true, that Lord Palmerston opposed this concession to the men who beat Napoleon. It was rejected, and the flogging went on; sometimes a man would get a thousand lashes.

"At last, when the Victorian Era was well on its way, a soldier was flogged to death, and Parliament then reduced the flogging to fifty lashes. And when do you think this barbarism was stopped by the Mother of Parliaments? With a woman on the throne such things could hardly last long. Well, I am not forty years old, and I was a boy at school when the British Government proposed to abolish this flogging of soldiers. Through all the years till then the men of our Army were treated like dogs, or worse than the law would allow any man to treat his dog now. Yet, when the end of this cruelty came, Queen Victoria wrote to Mr. Gladstone earnestly begging him not to stop flogging, as it would deprive the officers of the only power they had of keeping young troops in order.

"It is to the everlasting honour of the British Government that it replied to Queen Victoria by abolishing flogging, and the abolition was followed by a rush to the colours.

"Only nine years before, again in the teeth of Queen Victoria and the House of Lords, the Government had deprived rich men of the control of the Army by abolishing the purchase of commissions. 'The Nation,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'must buy back its own army from its own officers.' But for this Sir

John French could never have been the commander of our troops in France.

Similar conditions, or worse, were rife in the Navy. Jails were deprived of criminals that the Navy might be supplied with men. The men that won the Battle of Trafalgar would never be tolerated in the Navy that now serves under Jellicoe in the North Sea. The British Navy has been transformed even more than the Army or the conditions of the workers in England. In the days of Nelson and Wellington it would have been a chimerical dream to imagine any Cabinet Minister or parliamentary orator addressing the workers of England as though they were free men and soldiers upon whom the saving of the nation depended as much as upon the men in the trenches.

#### THE COMING YEARS.

THAT was the world that the fathers of living Britons remembered; almost recent history in the minds of living men. And the great social evolution is still going on.

"Fifty years ago," said Mr. Mee, "the cause of disease was as unknown to men as it was 5,000 years ago; now we are conquering disease by conquering the cause. Plague, which in one year sent half the people of England to their graves, has disappeared; small-pox and leprosy have followed it; diphtheria can be cured wherever it is found in time; and—whatever ignorant people may tell you—a guarantee against typhoid fever is offered to every Allied soldier fighting in France.

"And of course we are going to stop alcohol, the enemy of every land and every man within it. We are going to stop drinking it and make it drive our engines; we shall make it build up instead of pulling down. Perhaps the greatest moral service that science has rendered the world in these last ten years has been to prove that the teetotallers have always been right. There is no doubt about it at all, and only ignorance and interest can now defend this social use of a poison which consumes the strength of men and women, robs children of their birthright, and strikes through the normal life of a people as the German army strikes through Belgium. "And poverty will go. Our children will be ashamed of it. Parliament is beginning to put on the Statute Book the old-fashioned gospel that the labourer is worthy of his hire.

"This shame is passing away. We are all agreed that the smallest wages must be high enough to keep human beings in comfort. The principle has passed beyond controversy, and only the details have to be arranged. Already every miner in this country has a legal minimum wage, as every factory worker in Australia has; and four other trades in England have wages fixed by Government, which can fix all wages when it considers it necessary."

# TO THE SOLDIERS OF FRANCE

The following eloquent article by M. Anatole France celebrating the festival of the 14th of July appeared in the "Petit-Parisien," and is here reprinted from the London Daily Chronicle:

ONE hundred and twenty-six years ago to-day the people of Paris, armed with pikes and guns, to the beating of drums and the ringing of the tocsin, pressed in a long line down the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, attacked the Bastille, and, after five hours' conflict beneath deadly fire, took possession of the hated fortress. A symbolical victory won over tyranny and despotism, a victory by which the French people inaugurated a new regime.

The sovereignty of law! Therein lies the significance of the Bastille, taken by the people and razed to its foundations. The coming of justice! For that reason patriots wearing the tricolour cockade in their hats, and citizenesses in frocks striped with the nation's colours, danced all night long to the accompaniment of violins, in the gay brilliance of the illuminations, on the levelled site of the Bastille.

Hour of confidence in human goodness, of faith in a future of concord and of peace! Then did France reveal her true place among men; then did she show with what hopes the Revolution swelled the hearts of Europe. The fall of the Bastille resounded throughout the whole world.

To Russia the good tidings came like the bright flame of a bonfire on some day of public rejoicing. In the proud city of Peter and of Catherine nobles and serfs, with tears and cries of gladness, embraced one another on the public squares. The French Ambassador at the Court of the Empress bears witness to this rapture: "It is impossible," he writes, "to describe the enthusiasm excited among tradesmen, merchants, citizens, and the young men of the upper classes by this fall of a State prison, and this first triumph of tempestuous liberty—French, Russians, Danes, Germans, Dutchmen were all congratulating and embracing one another in the streets as if they had been liberated from some onerous bondage."

In England, working men, the middle-classes and

By ANATOLE FRANCE

Translated by Winifred Stephens. Editor of "The Book of France"

the generous minded among the aristocracy all rejoiced over the victory of right won by the people of Paris. Neither did their enthusiasm flag despite all the efforts of a Government strenuously hostile to the new principles of France. In 1790, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille was celebrated in London by an immense banquet, presided over by Lord Stanhope, one of the wisest statesmen of the United Kingdom.

These are the memories we recall and the events we celebrate to-day.

#### THE RIGHT TO SPEAK.

DEAR soldiers, dear fellow-citizens, I address you on this grave festival because I love you and honour you and think of you unceasingly.

I am entitled to speak to you heart to heart because I have a right to speak for France, being one of those who have ever sought, in freedom of judgment and uprightness of conscience, the best means of making their country strong. I am entitled to speak to you because, not having desired war, but being compelled to suffer it, I, like you, like all Frenchmen, am resolved to wage it till the end, until justice shall have conquered iniquity, civilization barbarism, and the nations are delivered from the monstrous menace of an oppressive militarism. I have a right to speak to you because I am one of the few who have never deceived you, and who have never believed that you needed lies for the maintenance of your courage; one of the few who, rejecting as unworthy of you deceptive fictions and misleading silence, have told you the truth.

I told you in December last year: "This war will be cruel and long." I tell you now: You have done much, but all is not over. The end of your labours approaches, but is not yet. You are fighting against an enemy fortified by long preparation and immense material. Your foe is unscrupulous. He has learned from his leaders that inhumanity is the soldier's first virtue. Arming himself in a manner undreamed of hitherto by the most formidable of conquerors, he

causes rivers of blood to flow and breathes forth vapours charged with torpor and with death. Endure, preserve, dare. Remain what you are and none shall prevail against you.

#### PRO PATRIA.

YOU are fighting for your native land, that laughing, fertile land, the most beautiful in the world; for your fields and your meadows. For the august mother, who, crowned with vine-leaves and with ears of corn, waits to welcome you and to feed you with all the inexhaustible treasures of her breast. You are fighting for your village belfry, your roofs of slate or tile, with wreaths of smoke curling up into the serene sky. For your fathers' graves, your children's cradles.

You are fighting for our august cities, on the banks of whose rivers rise the monuments of generations—romanesque churches, cathedrals, minsters, abbeys, palaces, triumphal arches, columns of bronze, theatres, museums, town halls, hospitals, statues of sages and of heroes—whose walls, whether modest or magnificent, shelter alike commerce, industry, science and the arts, all that constitutes the beauty of life.

You are fighting for our moral heritage, our manners, our uses, our laws, our customs, our beliefs, our traditions. For the works of our sculptors, our architects, our painters, our engravers, our goldsmiths, our enamellers, our glass-cutters, our weavers. For the songs of our musicians. For our mother tongue which, with ineffable sweetness, for eight centuries has flowed from the lips of our poets, our orators, our historians, our philosophers. For the knowledge of man and of nature. For that encyclopaedic learning which attained among us the high-water mark of precision and lucidity. You are fighting for the genius of France, which enlightened the world and gave freedom to the nations. By this noble spirit bastilles are overthrown. And lastly, you are fighting for the homes of Belgians, English, Russians, Italians, Serbians, not for France merely, but for Europe, ceaselessly disturbed and furiously threatened by Germany's devouring ambition.