

lauded theoretically as the best, was, in reality, the very worst in Europe. There is no other military service in the world in which a man, without any qualifications for command, can purchase the right to exercise it, and sell that right again to another equally disqualified, just as a ship, a house, or a bale of merchandise might pass from hand to hand. Some attempts have been made, under the strong pressure of public opinion, to reduce the military chaos into something like order; but the vicious influences of family interest, court favour, and political patronage, must have remained in force until very recently, otherwise honours, distinctions, and promotion, would never have been showered so lavishly on men, many of whom have done nothing to deserve reward; whilst others ought to have been cashiered for neglect of duty and incapacity.

The Financial Reform Association may fairly claim credit for its share in the attempt made recently to remedy one great abuse in the army, viz., the old Tailor-Colonel system, which gave military officers the temptation and the opportunity to mulct both the soldier and the public, by eking out their regimental pay with profits on clothing, and also with the cost of clothing never purchased, for men borne on the establishment as it was termed, but never embodied. It may be doubted, however, whether the proposed remedy will not prove worse than the disease. An Army Clothing Board has been established, at the head of which has been placed Sir Thomas Troubridge, a distinguished officer no doubt, but profoundly ignorant of the mysteries of cloth buying and tailoring. His colleagues appear but ill-qualified to supply his deficiencies in these respects. They are—Mr. Ramsay, late a third class treasury clerk, but nephew to Lord Panmure, the War Minister; Mr. Howel, Director-General of Contracts, who may know something of such matters, but whose principal recommendation probably was his relationship to Mr. Hayter, the whipper-in; and Mr. Godley, an income-tax collector of two months' standing, who has been appointed Director-General of Stores. But even if the Board were properly constituted, its functions, as officially described, render it little more than a channel of communication between army clothiers and colonels of regiments—the latter having still, as heretofore, to deal directly with the contractors, and still the opportunity of deriving a profit from every contract, besides the additional allowance of £600 per