

Major-General J. L. Vaughan has read an interesting paper at the Royal United Service Institution on the Roman Conquest and Occupation of Britain. The lecturer said it was worth notice, as a fact of great importance and interest to Englishmen—the possessors, like Rome, of a vast colonial empire—that the legions, the 2d, 6th, and 20th, which conquered Britain remained for the most part as its permanent garrison during the whole period of the subsequent occupation. The Romans seemed to recognize no necessity for those constant changes of quarters which formed so serious an item in the English Army estimates. Was there any reason why a British regiment should suffer more from permanent service in India than the Roman legion recruited in Italy did from permanent service in Britain? If Roman discipline and efficiency could be maintained for centuries in Britain, might not British discipline and efficiency be equally maintained under the conditions of permanent service in India? The Roman ble they should be in view of the expense soldier, was probably, except when on parade or in battle, a very squalid and unheroic-looking object. When not drilling or fighting he was occupied in the laborious duty of constructing camps, fortifications, or roads, and whilst so engaged he was habitually treated by his officers with great harshness and brutality. The officers were rapacious and greedy, and unblushingly made inroads upon the scanty pay of their men in various ways. The Britons adopted readily the civilization of the Romans, and Britain was extensively colonized by crowds of emigrants from Italy. The women of Britain were even then celebrated for their large blue eyes, dazzling complexion, and golden hair, and were eagerly sought in marriage by the colonists and the soldiers. The aboriginal Britons in time became identified with their conquerors, and what martial spirit remained to the nation, was diverted from native warfare into other channels. The bold and enterprising entered the ranks of the legions, and were soon drafted from the island to other scenes and climates. Whilst those changes were coming over the character and social habits of the Britons the Romans were perfecting their military hold of the country by a system of roads which to this day excite our admiration, and proved how thoroughly they understood not only the requirements of a military occupation, but those of trade and general convenience. Ecclesiastical and monkish legend to the contrary notwithstanding, there was every reason to believe that humble and unlettered Roman soldiers, were the real pioneers and apostles of Christianity in England.

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