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### THE SCHOOLMASTER IN THE ARMY.

Among the inducements to enlistment in the British Army enumerated in the recent debate in the Commons on recruiting, besides good food, good clothing, and good treatment, was "good education." A small Blue-book, just issued, enables us to supply information as to how far the educational system of the army answers its ends. It is the second report of the Council of Military Education on army schools, libraries, and recreation-rooms. The first report was issued in December 1861; so that the present is a record of the progress of three years, and it is, on the whole, a very satisfactory record.

The conditions of military service imperatively require that the educational machinery should adapt itself to their peculiarities. The school must accommodate its hours to the demands of drill, parade, sentry, and all the other multifarious duties required of the soldier in barracks. The recruit must master his military work in the first place: reading, writing, and arithmetic, if they have not come to him by nature, must be postponed till he has been made a competent shooting-machine. The army schoolmaster is thus placed at a considerable disadvantage, even in comparison with other teachers of adult pupils; and his work must be estimated with allowance for these drawbacks. These disadvantages he does not, of course, experience in regard to the children of the regiment, who are pretty nearly as much at his command as ordinary school children. It is to his work with adults, therefore, that interest mainly attaches; though the education of soldiers' children is also, of course, in itself important enough. Nearly forty-two thousand men and

sixteen thousand children were, by the latest returns, receiving education at our army schools. It serves to show, were other evidence wanting, how largely the army is recruited from the lowest ranks of the population, that within a fraction of 19 per cent. of our soldiers can neither read nor write, nearly 20 per cent. can read only, 54 per cent. can both read and write, and only 7½ per cent. have a superior degree of education—in short, every second man who enters the ranks may be said to be totally uneducated. It is satisfactory to know that it will be his own fault if he continue so deplorably ignorant; for the army schools not only afford him an opportunity of acquiring the elements of ordinary education, but, by arrangements for special classes, supply to men showing zeal and aptitude the chance of so far advancing in instruction as to fit themselves for superior duties. For example, in an inspector's report of the schools of the 32nd Light Infantry, it is stated that nearly all the men who entered a special class organised in May 1863 were, within twelve months, "raised above their original station, the majority having become non-commissioned officers."

It is, we have said, the soldier's own fault if he does not, soon after enlisting, make himself able to read and write. But the responsibility rests with himself. Formerly, it was the practice to compel all recruits to attend the schools, but since 1861 this compulsory system has, rightly or wrongly, been discontinued. The result of its discontinuance has not been at all satisfactory. A table of attendance of adults at the schools given in this report shows, as compared with a similar table in their first report, a falling-off in the average number of pupils of 16 per cent.; and in the average number daily attending, a falling-off of 18 per cent. No explanation is given why recruits are not now, as formerly, compelled to take advantage of the educational opportunities provided for them. It may have been thought that voluntary attendance is morally more desirable and satisfactory; and so, no doubt, it is; but in everything the soldier is so much the creature of control, depending so much for the discharge of all his duties on the orders of his superiors, that command becomes to him almost a necessary moral support. And his will being, in everything that presents itself in the shape of regimental duty, almost as subject to rule as the movements of his limbs are to the call of the drill-sergeant, he would probably receive orders to learn his letters with as little reluctance as he goes to learn the goose-step, and would be equally attentive in either case. The temptation to return to the compulsory system is certainly great when we