

CONSECRATED.

Among the fargrey mountains,
There lies a lonely grave;
In rain and sunshine ever,
Unkept the grasses wave.

'Twas there the shepherds buried
The little shepherd lad,
With rude hands fond and tender
With voices hush'd and sad.

No sound was heard of organ,
No note of funeral psalm,
But only sobb of brother hearts
To bless the mountain calm.

No priestly voice has hallowed
The shepherd's place of rest;
No priestly hands have blessed it,
And yet—it has been blessed.

For there the little shepherd's flock
Beats thankfully to God;
And grateful songs the sweet birds sing
Above his grassy sod.

THE EXPEDIENCY OF SHORT SERVICE.

A certain degree of boldness is required in order at present to advocate, in certain military circles, the expediency of short service. When one ventures to hint at such a thing old soldiers are apt to wax indignant, and indicate that those who hold such views are incapable of dealing with the great Army question of the day—how to obtain recruits. Nevertheless, the stubborn fact remains that, as was recently stated in these columns,* "without a combination of short service and discharge to a long reserve, it will be clearly impossible for us to place in the field, at a short notice, the few hundred thousand men which we must in the future be able to command." So many crude ideas are, however, prevalent on this subject, that it may not be amiss to glance briefly, in a general way, at the whole question of military service, and endeavour to show from fundamental principles the truth of the proposition implied in our title—a proposition which is to some a stumbling-block and to others foolishness.

In the first place, then, before dealing with a question which affects the method of obtaining recruits for our Army, it may be well to decide whether England requires a large Army or not; and by a large Army we mean one which bears some proportion to the fighting strength of the nation. Now certain persons are at present disposed to answer this question in the negative, and they and those who sympathise with them may perhaps feel inclined to cite a recent utterance of Count Von Moltke in support of their views. "A powerful Germany in the centre of Europe," said the Field Marshal the other day to the German Reichstag, "is the best guarantee for the peace of Europe. If, however, we are to blind others over to keep the peace, we must have a strong Army ready for war"—to wit, my friends, 401,000 men, besides our Landwehr and Landsturm! Well, then, it may be argued, if Germany is going to constitute herself the guardian of the peace of Europe, what need is there for us in England to trouble our heads about the matter? More power to her! the more the better! Let us sit down and smoke the calumet of peace, and proceed to beat our swords into plough shares and our spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more. Now, strange though it may appear, we believe that there is in certain quarters a vague feeling of this kind—a feeling which finds expression in those statements we sometimes hear to the effect that of course we must not nowadays

think of maintaining troops sufficient to cope with the vast hosts of the Continent; that all we require is a small Army, sufficient to enforce the efforts of our apostles of commerce and civilization among those nations of the earth who still sit in darkness and are but imperfectly acquainted with the blessings of rum and missionaries. But a moment's reflection will show that to leave to Germany—or any other power—the entire task of maintaining the peace of Europe, is at once practically to make her sole international arbiter, and therefore to concede that the principle of international arbitration irrespective of individual national power for which Count Von Moltke himself believes the world is not yet ripe. Surely, then, if determined in an outspoken manner, not to put too fine a point upon it, the German Field Marshal would say unto us this proverb,—"What is sauce for the goose is like wise sauce for the gander—*Mutuo nomine, de te fabula narratur*—you, too, in England must have a standing Army proportionate to international contingencies, if you desire to maintain your place among the Great Powers of Europe."

From these considerations, it will appear that our Army at present is neither one thing nor the other. It is either too large or too small—too large if we are to abandon all idea of its ever being employed in European warfare; too small if we are to contemplate the possibility of a collision with any of the great Continental Powers—and that the possibility of such a collision at some future epoch is still taken into consideration by the nation it is impossible to deny. Well, then, how are we to get a large army—one numbering a respectable fraction of a million, for it is unnecessary at present to particularise to a few score thousand? There are only three ways of doing it—(1) We must go into the labour market, and hire as many men as we want and pay what is necessary in order to get them; (2) We must adopt compulsory military service; (3) We must introduce short service and large reserves. Now, the first plan is obviously out of the question. It is impossible to say off hand the figure by which our present Army Estimates would have to be multiplied in order to provide the necessary funds, but the amount of money required would evidently be a sum which the nation would not stand. As to compulsory military service, it would be well if statesmen could realize the truth that the country is disposed to receive that doctrine in a modified form. The duty of every man to carry arms in defence of the State has been one unfortunately too much ignored in recent times, when we have heard more of the rights of man and womankind than of their duties—more of the conflicting claims of capital and labor than of those obligations which bind both alike to the maintenance and furtherance of the common weal: but there are, fortunately, at present signs of returning wisdom, and compulsory service, at least in the form of a Militia ballot, is not only possible, but would be welcome to many. However, until this reaction in public opinion is boldly taken advantage of, there is but one alternative left in the question now before us, and that is short service and large reserves—a system which, it may be observed, when coupled with compulsory service, as in the case of Germany, develops the fighting strength of a nation to the utmost possible amount. As we in England have chosen hitherto to pass annually an Act of Parliament suspending that compulsory service in the Militia which is thus only a dead

letter, the only course left is to make what we can out of voluntary enlistment, short service, and long reserves. That short service is at present unpopular, we do not attempt to deny: that recruits do not as yet come in so fast under it as under the old long service system, we are quite willing to believe: but what we maintain is wanted, is simply—to use the words of Dr. Leith Adams in his recent lecture at the Royal United Service Institution—that the bargain made by the State with a man for "six years' active service, followed by a return to civil life, should be made on better terms." Short service, in a word, must be commended to the feelings of the nation in such a manner as to attract a constant and plentiful supply of recruits, and in trying to effect this end competition with the labour market must not be shirked. This is the great army problem of the day. How is it to be done, which of the many schemes proposed for the purpose is the best, we cannot now afford space to discuss. We simply leave the question for the present, in the hope that we have done something towards vindicating the expediency of short service.

BLACK BOOK OF THE ADMIRALTY.

Somewhat more than a year ago, our readers will recollect, we called attention to the first volume of a work bearing the above title, edited by Sir Travers Twiss, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, and we pointed out the great historical value of this collection of ancient manuscripts, and the admirable manner in which the editor had contrived to invest what, at first sight, appears to be a number of dry old Norman French and mediæval Latin records, with a considerable degree of popular interest. It will be remembered that the first volume contained the whole of what is believed to be the long lost "Black Book of the Admiralty," and, in addition, an appendix comprising several ordinances, bearing more or less directly upon the subject of the administration of the Admiralty and the jurisdiction of admirals in times of war and peace. The second volume of the "Black Book" has recently appeared, under the same editorship, and contains a second part of the appendix to the first volume. Before, however, discussing at any length the contents of this further appendix, it may be convenient to recall briefly the history and content of the "Black Book" itself.

Although the original Black Book of the Admiralty is known to have been lost, or rather to have disappeared from the registry of the Admiralty Court, since at the latest, the year 1803, there are ample accounts of its contents and its various collections of manuscripts, enough copies of different portions of it to enable the editor to construct what is no doubt a complete text of the missing volume. The one MS., however, which serves as a test of the completeness of the work accomplished by Sir Travers Twiss is contained in the Lansdowne collection in the British Museum, and belonged formerly to Mr. Powles, sometime Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of the Rolls. It comprises the text of the first portion of the Black Book and an accurate account of the entire contents of the remainder, the text of which is supplied by various other MSS. The great value of the Black Book of the Admiralty consists in the fact that it is the earliest record of English and international maritime law, the ordinances of which it sets forth bearing internal

* "The Recruiting Question," *Broad Arrow*, Feb. 14, 1874.