

mont. Li's last scheme, the centralisation of the army, was viewed unfavourable by the mandarins, as, backed by the power of the army, he might at once ascend the Dragon Throne.

"The real army of the Empire is mainly composed of natives of China. How far this army may be considered effective, and what may be its numerical strength, are questions which cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. It suits the purposes of the Central Government to have it broken up into a multitude of camps widely distributed over the Empire, each province having probably from 20 000 to 100,000 men during time of war. But the standing Chinese Army is seldom much larger than what is required to act as a sort of constabulary, resident in guard stations and camps in the various departments of the Empire. The number of officers in active service can always be ascertained by reference to the quarterly Army and Navy returns published in Peking, while the actual number of men in the Services can only, like the population of China, be approximately estimated.

"Military roads such as would be available for a thoroughly equipped transport corps can hardly be said to exist in any part of China. The rivers and watercourses to a great extent supply the place of roads, and form a network of intercommunication all over the land. Many of these waterways could be used for the transport of troops and baggage by such appliances as the Chinese themselves possess—boats especially adapted for the navigation of shallow lakes, lagoons, and streams.

"What we understand by a properly equipped transport service accompanying an invading force would prove almost useless in such a country as China, where there are extensive tracts of land subject to annual inundation; where there are few roads other than the footpaths along the banks of irrigated fields; where in fact, a foreign army would require either to make roads or entrust its stores and baggage to a contingent force in the shape of a Chinese transport coolie corps, armed with nothing more formidable than their bamboo carrying poles."

Three Wants of the British Army.

(From Toronto Mail.)

An army chaplain writes to the London *Times*, making forcible statement of three things that in his opinion the British army requires to make it what it should be: They are quiet, money well spent, and a grateful care of old and deserving soldiers. At the present moment the whole army, from the commanding officer of a regiment down to the last recruit, is in a state of unrest. Popular orators and politicians are demanding radical changes in the country's military system, with a zeal and energy too frequently in inverse proportion to their knowledge of actual facts. One prominent army reformer, Mr. Holms, M. P., has for his favourite cry, "Prussia's mighty army for a mere song, England's few soldiers at an enormous cost!" To which the army chaplain has the following rather telling reply:

"That bold assertion takes with the uninformed and does immense harm, because it is, I hold, utterly without foundation. I know Prussia well, and only this last summer I wandered over it from the Rhine to the Baltic. Why, so far from Prussia having a cheap army, it is the most expensive army in the world; while ours, considering what it does and what it secures to us, is the very cheapest. Taking thousands of her able bodied men yearly from their ordinary em-

ployment to become non producers is in itself a vast cost to Prussia. The disturbance of trade and commerce caused by it must be a tremendous sacrifice of money. But that is not all. By far the most serious expense is the loss incurred by the nation through forced emigration. Prussians, the strong men remember, not the feeble, in order to escape the conscription, leave their country by shoals. They are to be found all over Europe, and in America whole towns are German. Has Mr. Holms ever estimated what all this outlay amounts to? If not, let him do so, and he will never again tell of a cheap Prussian army."

While the present disquiet and agitation concerning the army continues, the country's military service will not be chosen by the class of men that it is most desirable to secure. Young men who think of enlisting have no certainty to which they can look forward with satisfaction, that is, in case of their surviving after some time spent in the service. With some saying "do this," with the army, and others saying "do that," the classes from which the rank and file are drawn, and whose information as to parliamentary probabilities is not of the best, are utterly bewildered, and know not what they can depend upon should they become soldiers. Good promise of rest and quiet, and of something permanent that may be depended upon, is absolutely necessary for the contentment of the soldiers we have already, and for the obtaining of more.

"Money well spent" is the next requisite. The British nation is wealthy beyond any other in the world. It must have an army and a navy to guard its wealth, and for these means of national safety it must pay the price. A commission of leading military officers, backed by the judgment of medical men, has declared that the three quarters of a pound of meat per day now given to the British soldier is insufficient. The Commander in Chief would gladly add another quarter of a pound of meat to the daily ration, but that for the whole army would cost £250,000. Parliament will not vote the money, and the Minister of War, who knows this, fears to ask for it. The regulation of "lights out" at nine o'clock, when the soldier would fain be allowed to sit up till ten, gives him a sense of oppression, and makes him sigh for the liberty of the civilian. Again, he is frequently given clothing partly worn out by somebody before him, just as if he were a criminal or a pauper, and he is not conciliated by this disregard of his feelings. If the objection be made that it is wrong to tax the working classes to keep up a too well fed and too much pampered army, the ready reply is—"ask the workingmen to leave their trades and become soldiers, and try whether you can induce them to make the change."

"Grateful care of good old soldiers" is the third and last of the true army reforms on which the army chaplain insists. Though he does not mention it, the fate of the Crimean hero, Fitzpatrick, left by an ungrateful country to die of starvation and neglect, will occur to many readers of the papers. The soldier, he says, is a civilian improved—in other words, a civilian trained to arms, order, and obedience. Only added to that intelligence and sobriety, and we have in the trained soldier a candidate possessing the highest qualifications for public employment in subordinate position. But for discharged soldiers scarcely any such opening is now available. The most powerful means of rewarding the faithful soldier and encouraging recruiting is to do justice to the heroes of whom we, as a nation, profess to be proud. When the soldier is made contented, and

when he can see before him such a future as an honest, well doing man may be satisfied with, there will be little more need of the recruiting sergeant.

Of course when Europe ceases to be a camp of armed nations and when the millions of soldiers now maintained are disbanded, the keeping of a comparatively small army need give England very little trouble. But as that time has not yet arrived; as indeed all the Powers are increasing instead of reducing their military strength, it is clear that England cannot run the tremendous risk of allowing hers to go down and become inefficient. This being the case, the counsel given by the army chaplain in the columns of the *Times* appears wise and judicious.

The Suez Canal and the Khedive.

The *Al Fawâib* (a Constantinople paper), commenting on the sale of his Suez Canal shares by the Khedive, regards the transaction as reflecting the highest credit on his administrative sagacity and foresight. The Khedive, it says, perceived that the question of the canal as it had hitherto stood was most unsatisfactory to Egyptian interests. As an instance in point, it will be remembered that as recently as last year he was obliged to send vessels of war to seize the canal, and that if the company had not then recognised his rights over it, or if the French had still exercised their former influence in the East, the company would have taken possession of a large extent of territory bordering on the canal. This difficulty, which might have recurred at any moment, originated in the privileges accorded to the company by the late Said Pasha, to the prospective injury of Egyptian interests. When the present Viceroy succeeded to the Government, one of his first cares was to settle the canal question, and to secure a modification of the privileges which had been granted to the company; and, notwithstanding the fact that France at that period still exerted a preponderating influence in the East, he succeeded, at the cost of five millions sterling, in effecting his object. This circumstances alone of his having preferred to burden the resources of his country rather than allow any of its territory to remain within the grasp of foreigners entitles the Khedive (*Al Fawâib* says) to the gratitude of his people. And now, being persuaded that the time had come for settling the question, and for preventing the canal in future from being appropriated by any one Government or nation to the exclusion of others, his highness decided that all should participate in it alike; for the copartnership of England in the canal involves no danger whatever to Egypt. On the contrary, it will serve to prevent the exorbitant demands of foreigners and their claims to ascendancy in that direction.

The reason why the sun never sets upon the Queen's dominions has been discerned for the first time by the American officers at the Delhi Camp. "God Almighty knows better," they have pointed out, "than to trust Britishers in the dark." The joke, at all events, is put down to the Americans by a correspondent. Yankee humour seems to flourish under the Indian sun. On an evening lately, when a good many tumblers had been emptied by a party breaking up in the hills, an American of the number looked gravely at his empty glass for a few moments, and then flung it contemptuously into the fire. "Darned thing," he explained, "looks at the top."