

Our Officers

The British Commander as He Actually Is

By SCRUTATOR

THE officer of the British army is all too often misrepresented in the piping times of peace, by malice or by ignorance, as being of the "gilded popinjay" species. An eye-glassed, chinless, lump of affectation, part cad and part fool—that is the grotesque caricature which some of his detractors love to exhibit as his portrait. But perhaps he will get a fuller justice now. The good showing made by the British troops at the front reflects the greatest credit not only on the rank and file, but on the officers also. It is they who have done so much to keep the men in good heart. Letter after letter received from T. Atkins by his friends at home testifies in glowing terms to the splendid stuff of which his officers are made—how they love their regiments, how careful they are for their men, careful for everything, save of their own lives.

The idea that the British army officer's main mission in life is to shine in aristocratic society is strangely wide of the mark to-day, whatever foundation in fact it may have had in other times. It is the case that the patrician families are numerous represented—largely by their cadets—in the commissioned ranks of the army. But there is, surely, nothing strange in that in the case of a nation "old in arms," and, as a matter of fact, it is common knowledge that many of the very best and keenest officers in the army are found among these self-same cadets of ennobled houses. The abolition of the purchase of commissions over forty years ago, however, has had a two-fold result on the personnel of officers. First, it has resulted in opening the doors to very many whose circumstances would previously have debarred them from aspiring to commissioned rank. Secondly, it has ensured a fairly high standard of education among them. Omitting those officers who have risen from the ranks, those who are appointed to commissions by way of the usual channels—the Royal Military College at Sandhurst for cavalry, infantry and army service corps, and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, for artillery and engineers—have, before their entrance into either of the institutions named, to pass a fairly difficult examination in general education, which is competitive in so far as the vacancies are filled by those who pass highest, if physically fit. In addition, candidates for commissions have to pass another examination, at the conclusion of their period of training at either Sandhurst or Woolwich, requiring a fair knowledge of technical matters. The young officer's training is little more than at its beginning when he receives his commission. The most important part of it—consisting partly of more detailed instruction in the subjects he has already studied, partly of the practical application of those subjects, and partly of more advanced instruction with its practical application—comes subsequent to his appointment to a commission and after he has joined his regiment.

SOLDIERING is hereditary to a very large extent. The number of officers who, like Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, are the sons of officers is enormous. I have known several soldiering families where all three or four, or five boys have "followed in father's footsteps," by holding commissions. Many officers, too, emanate from the English rectory or vicarage or from the Scottish manse—the army seems to have a powerful appeal for the son of the cleric. The bulk of the officers who are not sons of noblemen, or squires, or soldiers, or sailors, or parsons, are sons of professional men—lawyers, doctors, and so on—with a sprinkling of tradesmen's sons. The total number of officers in the British army as it now stands is a little over 10,000. More than 1,400 have already fallen in action.

It is sometimes said that "Money goes into the cavalry, brains into the engineers and artillery, and backbone into the infantry." But every officer must have private means or else an allowance from his "people," during his first few years in that capacity. For it is absolutely impossible for the just-joined subaltern to live on his pay. This is but \$1.60 a day in a cavalry regiment and \$1.34 a day in a line regiment—not enough to pay the subaltern's mess bills. Hence the allowance from "home" has to be (at the very lowest) at the rate of \$800 a year for the cavalry subaltern and \$450 a year for the infantry subaltern. And much bigger allowances are requisite to meet all the calls on the subaltern's pocket—calls which are almost unavoidable unless, like Mrs. John Gilpin, he has "a frugal mind." The home allowance generally continues until the soldier son gets his troop or his company, and is duly entitled to write himself down captain, drawing the daily pay of \$3.60 or \$2.78 respectively—a period of eight or nine years or so, as a rule, though promotion comes all too quickly in these days.

This allowance from his family which the young officer must have is a heavy tax on many and many a household. For while there are many wealthy men in the service, and while in a few "swagger" regiments practically all the officers are men of large,

and some of very large, means, yet the great majority of the 1,032 officers in the regular army hail from homes that are very far indeed from anything that can be called wealthy. "Brains go into the engineers and artillery." And the just-joined subaltern in the "sappers" or the "gunners" reaps the reward of his brains in the shape of increased pay, a subaltern in the engineers drawing \$2.30 a day and one in the artillery \$1.82 a day. Thus it is possible for the young "sapper" to live on his pay from the first, and officers in the engineers are noted as being, in the main, of inexpensive tastes.

It would be true to say of the average British officer of to-day that he finds his pleasure in his work. The number of those who are inclined to view their work rather as a mere adjunct to their pleasure has for long been on the decrease. Fond of all manly sport the British officer is—and it is well that he should be. But in the great majority of regiments there has been a very noticeable tendency, of recent years, to discountenance such sports as necessitate an exorbitant expenditure. Messes are less extravagant. The presence of the teetotaler in the mess-room is far from infrequent, whereas less than half a century ago it would have excited more astonishment than would that of a polar bear. Officers study their men more. There is no "hail fellow well met" air about the former in their intercourse with the latter—that would not be in consonance with the general system of discipline favoured by the British in all walks of life. But the men know that their officers are solicitous for their welfare and that they are loyal to the core to their regiments.

Iron Von Kluk

Kaiser's Main Hope in the West

GO over the whole list of the Kaiser's generals, as you find them recorded now and then in the newspapers, and there is none that means so much to the average reader as the lean and tireless Von Kluk, who is said by a celebrated Dutch military critic to be the Kaiser's only hope in the west. It is some while now since this stubborn person of war turned from the grand march upon Paris to take charge of the retreating right wing of the German army. That right wing has been the hard rock of German offense and defense now these many weeks. It has been badly mauled by the British, nagged at by the Belgians and hammered by the French. But somehow no matter what happens in some other part of the line, Von Kluk always manages to get men and guns enough on that wing to keep the Allies' left extremely busy.

When you admit that Kluk is a man of iron who has elevated the German right wing into a chapter of world history, you have admitted most that is of great merit among the German general staff in that region. Most of the other head officers are effete grand dukes and blustering crown princes of sovereign states. Kluk is the eternal battering-ram. He has found out by now that "French's contemptible little army," as the Kaiser called it, is the most

terrific and uncomprehensible force that he ever expected to encounter.

Kluk is not a nobleman. He got to the nobility by hard work. Like Hindenburg, he is a veteran of both the Austrian war in 1866 and the Franco-Prussian war. He remained plain Kluk till he became a colonel. Then the Kaiser dubbed him "Von." He is said to look like a Roman; he has a toothbrush moustache and is highly popular with his men, whom he does not pitilessly sacrifice to the machine like the grand dukes and crown princes do.

Much, however, as we may be compelled to admire Kluk, we shall consider him a greater benefactor to the world at large when his right wing has become a broken pinion.

Neutral Nations

Lord Bryce Expresses His Views

VISCOUNT BRYCE, who has several times been in Canada, both before he became British Ambassador at Washington and afterwards, has given his views to the press concerning neutral nations and the war. As Lord Bryce has just quit representing England at the Capital of the greatest neutral nation in the world, his views are of particular interest. Writing in the London Daily Chronicle, after surveying the whole ground of England's relations to Germany and other nations in this war, he says:

"History declares that no nation, however great, is entitled to try to impose its type of civilization on others. No race, not even the Teutonic or the Anglo-Saxon, is entitled to claim the leadership of humanity. Each people has in its time contributed something that was distinctively its own, and the world is far richer thereby than if any one race, however gifted, had established a permanent ascendancy.

"We of the Anglo-Saxon race do not claim for ourselves, any more than we admit in others, any right to dominate by force or to impose our own type of civilization on less powerful races. Perhaps we have not that assured conviction of its superiority which the school of General Bernhardi expresses for the Teutons of North Germany. We know how much we owe, even within our own islands, to the Celtic race. And though we must admit that peoples of Anglo-Saxon stock have, like others, made some mistakes and sometimes abused their strength, let it be remembered what have been the latest acts they have done abroad.

"The United States have twice withdrawn their troops from Cuba, which they could easily have retained. They have resisted all temptations to annex any part of the territories of Mexico, in which the lives and property of their citizens were for three years in constant danger. So Britain also, six years ago, restored the amplest self-government to the two South African Republics (having already agreed to the maintenance on equal terms of the Dutch language), and the citizens of those Republics, which were in arms against her thirteen years ago, have now spontaneously come forward to support her by arms, under the gallant leader who then commanded the Boers."

A STRANGE LOAD FOR A TRAWLER



Folkestone Harbour has seen many a Belgian trawler like this crowded with refugees from Ostend. England is the kind old mother of Europe.