

## Literature.

## THE SOLDIER AND THE SURGEON.

The heroic bargain which the soldier makes with his country is, to die, if his death will further his country's cause. If the cause can be duly furthered in any other manner, and the life can be saved, then it is the country's duty to save it without counting the cost. The soldier may dutifully endure the coming of death brought to him by disease or hardship when he believes it to be inevitable. But that death which has no terrors for him, because his soul pants for it as the crown of soldier's martyrdom, and his nerves are exultingly strung to receive it, is the death in battle, which emphatically proclaims that the life is lost to the gain of the cause, and has not been casually and carelessly dropped by the way.

"To pass, when life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

In some good cause—not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown:

Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When soil'd with noble dust he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears,

Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

(The touching incident of the death of the faithful sepoy in the Residency of Lucknow who, bayoneted by one of Havelock's men, cried out, "welcome friend! tis all for the good cause," and expired—will recur to our readers E. M. G.)

It is but justice to the soldier, that if he is to die, it should, if possible, be thus. Since military glory—the glory of military services in a good cause—is the reward he seeks, let him at least have it in his death. True, though he find himself sinking under the length of an ill-calculated march, or freezing to death because a commissary has neglected his duty, or wasting away under the unwholesome food provided by a knavish contractor, a sense of duty may support him to the end—but should he be left no other support? He goes to his rest, indeed, to suffer no more, and is forgotten with the many thousands of others, as time rolls over their obscure graves; but the depth of injustice is heightened by the survivors, who in their sorrow should have, when it can be justly given, the proud consolation that the husband or the father died like a true soldier, with his back to the field and his face to the foe. Other forms of death in service require explanations—they may be heroic or they may not—but death on the field of battle at once tells its own history to all hearts.

The art of preserving their own health has probably been more or less considered by men since they first began to consider anything, although it must be confessed that they have often made a very bad job of it. The inquiries of some very clever and enthusiastic men have lately developed a sphere of usefulness connected with this end, which, for want of a better name, they have called sanitary science. Some of its teachers have doubtless promulgated whims and fallacies but they have, on the whole, proved, by irresistible facts, that there are operations and adjustments of things which can be counted on for saving lives which would otherwise be lost. The peculiar feature of these new suggestions, when compared with all previous injunction for the preservation of health, may be described thus; Formerly, in all books or other writings upon health and disease, each individual human being was appealed to on the best means of retaining his own health and avoiding disease. The tendency of the exertions of the sanitarians has been to take up the matter at the point where the individual man can do not more to help himself, since he is surrounded by deteriorating conditions over which he has no control. The poor workman who finds that his bread is only to be made in a densely populous quarter of a large town, where there are no drains and no receptacles for impurity—the sailor sleeping in the hold of a ship impregnated with poisonous gases—the

and many others, were incapable, by personal exertion, of bettering their own condition, and required the intervention of general arrangements. However obvious the necessity of considering the position of such persons may seem, yet the world is full of lamentable instances of the neglect which they have met with, and the history of the whole affair illustrates an often repeated view, that general expressions of opinion, however sound, receive very little attention, until earnest and enthusiastic men work them out to practical conclusions, and prove, to the amazement of well-meaning but inactive men, how woefully they have been neglecting their own favourite precepts. Such has been the result of the progress of sanitary labours. They have not opened a new object of human inquiry and thought, to keep their feet dry, eat whole some food, avoid dissipation, and wash and have themselves, before Mr. Chsdwick was born. They have not discovered any new operation of nature, such as the doctrine of chemical equivalents, or the affinities of electricity and magnetism, for people admitted long ago that the gases from decomposing animal and vegetable matter are noxious to life, and that wholesome food is as necessary to health in the railway store or the mess-table as in the private dining-room. But they have so fully illustrated the bearings of general truths on the duties of those who have the condition and treatment of their fellow-beings in their hands, that what was before a disembodied sentiment or opinion, is now reduced to distinct practical precept, illustrated by a crowd of examples. It has been the fate of our army to be among the latest portions of the community to reap the harvest of this valuable knowledge. For instance, when we look at the rules for the dietary of our prisoners, we find the following among them; "A change of good being beneficial to health, it is directed that the dinner, on at least two days in the week, shall be different from the dinner on the other days." And as a commentary on this humane regulation for our thieves and forgers, the Commission of Inquiry on the Sanitary Condition of the Army tells us, that one of the marked peculiarities of the British soldier is, that he is a man who dines every day for twenty consecutive years on boiled beef, unless, of course, when the vicissitudes of a campaign relieve the monotony. Then, again, the Surveyor-General of Convict Prisons was examined on ventilation and means of internal purification. Looking on himself as responsible for the health of his convicts, he described the scientific perfection of all the internal arrangements of his pet prison, Pentonville, of Milbank, not so perfect a specimen, since it had been built in the days of darkness touching sanitary science and was not without difficulty brought within its sphere, of Dartmoor, and of Portland. The chairman of the Commission, almost losing patience at the description of the pedantic perfection of the arrangements for criminals, just after he had been sickened with accounts of the filthy and unwholesomeness of barracks, said to the Surveyor-General, whom he knew to be a military man—"What is your reason; take Portland; you have to look after those men, and keep them in health, to execute certain public works for the Government; other engineers build barracks to keep soldiers in perfect health, to do service for the Government; how is it that in the one case a man sleeps in a fetid atmosphere, and in the other you give him a pure one?" The answer was simple, but sufficiently emphatic: "I do not think that the subject has been sufficiently considered in respect of the barracks; it has been lost sight of." Those edile arrangements for the preservation of life and health, which are deemed so essential that they must be provided even for the residence of the criminal, are "lost sight of" in the residence of the soldier!

The reason why the food and ventilation for the criminal must be looked to so carefully by others is, because he cannot get out to choose for himself. But in truth, thought, from causes as honourable as those which place the thief in custody are disgraceful, the soldier is scarcely more helpless and more dependent on other people for the sanitary conditions of the food he eats, the clothing he wears, and the house he lives in. Whether it is to be deemed a wholesome feature or not, one of the tendencies of our very active age is to aggregate human beings together in large masses, where they

require to sink individual action in general organisation, and are more or less at the mercy of those who have the working out of the organisation. It is enough to refer to the large manufactories and mines, the public works often rapidly carried out in remote places, which become instantaneously peopled by thousands of persons—to our great system of locomotion by railway and steamboat. It is only where the law is both very strong and very ductile, that civil liberty and individual rights can be preserved in these great ganglions of human beings. In the feudal ages, all would have been subjects as serfs to the authority of some despotic lord, like the workers in the old German and Italian mines; and, to speak fairly of feudality, it is not easy to see how order could have been preserved among large bodies of human beings, during the earlier centuries of European history, through any other arrangement but that of lord and serf. But even in our own days there is a constant tendency in those who, in a proprietary or official shape, are at the head of such aggregate collections of human beings, to abuse their power and exhibit, in however small a shape, the attributes of the despot. Hence all who come in contact with these new forms of power, have had to use much vigilance and pertinacity for their own protection, and sometimes have found it a duty to hold out the protecting hand to those too weak to protect themselves. So, it has been found necessary to protect children working in manufactories, and women and children working in mines. And there is still, if we mistake not, a conflict going on between a combination of great manufacturing capitalists and the inspectors of factories; the former assuming the humble title of "The Millowners' Protection Society," complaining that they are cruelly and despotically entreated, and are denied the rights of British subjects, because it is required of them at some expense—amounting, it is said, sometimes to £30 or £40 for a large mill—to fence machinery which occasionally, in its unprotected state, wheels some poor fellow round and dashes out his brains, or, catching a pucker in a careless girl's sleeve, sucks in her arm, and tears it from the socket. Passing from such instances to a matter in which we are all concerned, there are every day some hundreds of thousands of people, within the British Isle at the mercy of railway companies, for personal comfort, for punctuality in travelling, and for their safety from mutilation or death. We all know how tough a contest is continually kept up by the public for common justice in such matters against these lords of the road, although the greatest people in the land are on the same side of the poorest. It is law of nature that bodies of people, who are put at the mercy of others for the supply of anything important to their well being, will be oppressed or pillaged by those who serve them, unless they can protect themselves, or are protected by others.

What has all this to do with the soldier? Armies were embodied, fed, encamped, and went forth to battle thousands of years before the invention of the railway and spinning jenny. True enough—but it is equally true that late times have seen as great a change in the domestic position—strictly the domestic position—of the soldier, as the factory system has created on the position of the spinner and weaver, or the railway system on that of the traveller. There is, in fact, no one more helplessly dependent on the conduct and the misconduct of others than the soldier—no one for whom, in his domestic position, external protection is more necessary.

The barrack is an institution comparatively late among ourselves, and comparatively unknown to the rest of the world. The fortresses of the most extensively fortified countries in Europe seldom contain a large proportion of their armies—the bulk of the troops must be dispersed among the civilian community. The fortresses in this country have always been a trifle—the largest of them, so far as we understand, stands upon a small tongue of land stretching into the Moray Firth, a few miles from Inverness. Under the old commissions of array, the country gentry had to find the troops of their own county in clothing, provisions, and quarters, and there were certain reciprocal privileges of quartering when they passed into other counties, fruitful in disputes, which were generally settled, so far as the immediate parties were concerned, by the soldier taking what he found and wanted,

and leaving the ultimate incidence of the cost to be settled by any other powers—higher or lower. Unfortunately the person who suffered under the quartering was generally an enemy, or esteemed to be so, and thus there was no necessity for any adjustment of accounts. It was in civil war only that embodied troops were kept at home by our ancestors. For the defence of the country they trusted to a sudden levy, and when an army was raised for foreign conflict, it went immediately abroad, and was disbanded when it returned. The obligation of quartering the few soldiers kept at home was a matter of loud and continuous complaint from time to time. Doubtless, under such a fortuitous arrangement, the trooper or the pikeman was often ill enough off; but on other occasions, and especially in unsettled times, the extent to which he helped himself, when there was ought to be helped from, partook of the character of pillage. So inveterate had the practice of appropriation become, that in the '45 we find old Hawley, a thoroughly trained soldier, who was not likely, to have done anything far astray from the military ideas of his age, accused by an old lady of Aberdeen, loyal to the Government, of carrying off all her china and books, her bedding and table-linen, her repeating-clock, "which stood by the bed in which he lay every night," along with "twelve tea spoons, strainer, and tongs and the jappaned board on which the chocolate and coffee cups stood."

When a standing army, embodied under the annual Mutiny Act, came to be a rational institution, the quartering system would never have been tolerated, and the barrack system was a necessary substitute. Of the old arrangement, we have just a faint memorial in a trilling billeting tax, which excites great wrath wherever it happens accidentally to rest. It is a pecuniary alternative for the actual billeting, which all discreet persons pay; but instances are on record where a negligent householder has been appalled by the vision of three red coats descending the area stairs in a business-like fashion, as if they were going home—though we have generally heard the conclusion of such an incident to be that, "the fellows behaved very well indeed," and for a reasonable sum took themselves off to the tavern at the corner. We question if there is any other well-armed country in Europe where the billeting system is not in full force. In France at the present day, in the remotest country-house or hamlet, at any hour, by day or night, the soldier on duty may appear, and demand admission—a dreaded but from necessity, an ostensibly welcomed guest. Wherever this old practice is continued, is the citizen lives, so does the soldier—perhaps the latter fares rather above the average of the householder at large. The conscription system has its influence in making the thing work easily—it is your destiny to carry arms and to live with me to-day—it may be mine to carry arms and live with you to-morrow; the quartered soldier is but one and of a large and rather miscellaneous circle of persons, connected in link which causes them from time to time fortuitously to throw themselves on each other's hospitality. The condition of the whole community where this practice holds may be a very low one, but it is clear that in it we shall not find the ordinary citizen—convict included—well housed and well fed, with occasional wholesome variations of diet, while the soldier lives in quarters destitute of any means of purification, breathes foul air, and eats the same dinner for twenty successive years. The case, therefore, of the billeted soldier, among a community practically acquainted with the system of quartering, does not call forth that amount of sedulous care and attention—of expense, as it may be—necessary for the barracked soldier's protection.

The whole question is, in fact, in a great measure, a matter of money—made so by None of the stains of war are to touch us. A wave thousands of miles must roll the tide of battle; neither the appalling rear of the conflict itself, nor the confused din of misre and agony that follows it, must disturb the dignified serenity of our island retreat. Relations and dear friends perhaps feel the heart throb when fresh telegraphic news are announced, or suffer the sickening agony of hope deferred, in vain expectations; the nation exults in a victory, or is maddened if there is anything like a check in the onward career of our victorious troops. Some