

seem to die away altogether after a greater or less time—are so many, that such disbelief is perfectly natural. We now know that in all such cases, so far as they can be examined, the effect does not really die away, but is destroyed by a counteracting cause; and therefore, the exception is apparent only, not real. But to prove this has required many years of patient thought, labour, and observation on the part of, perhaps, the greatest intellects which the world has yet seen; and to erect a doctrine thus proved into a necessary axiom needing no proof, requires all the rashness of ignorance, and all the arrogance of philosophy.

WALTER R. BROWNE.

Reviews.

Six Months in the Ranks; or, *The Gentleman Private*, pp. 362. Smith, Elder, and Co.

A LEADING feature of this age undoubtedly is to look behind the scenes; to seek the "why and wherefore" of everything. It is a feeling begotten in part of what is laudable, in part—very large—of what is much the contrary. On the one hand a higher order of education leading up to acquisition of truth; on the other, the mere cravings of satiety.

Periodicals teem with minute descriptions of "inner life," which in our early days would have been considered strangely out of place, inappropriate, or worse. Hence, in one phase, an unwarrantable obtrusion into the privacy of people of note, culminating now and then in the Law Courts. In some measure the origin of this evil may, perhaps, be laid at the door of our Transatlantic Cousins, with whom, on several grounds, the procedure admits of palliation. But, in any case, this Athenian characteristic has obtained a foothold with us. Some future Juvenal may find food for his pen when looking back to an age sufficiently illustrative of St. Luke's words.

On the more healthy lines of public curiosity, the Army has furnished subject matter. True we have now no military artist, such as Charles Lever, to throw a glamour over a soldier's life. Whyte-Melville, indeed, well pictured some peace aspects of the scene. But "milk and water" have characterized the abundant ephemeral works of military novelists of recent times. The true romance is to be found only in Napier's thrilling pages of the "Peninsular War," from which Lever borrowed largely.

Prison-life, behind the curtain, has its day; so likewise that of the Army. It is the less remarkable that the latter should be on the tapis, because, in one guise or the other, the soldier crops up continually before Parliament. At one time one hears complaints of the paucity of recruits; now it is his physique; then his immature age for campaigning; again his social status.

The last incident on this latter head, reaches us from Windsor, where a fashionable hotel-keeper comes off indifferently at the hands of a clerical defender of the Life-guardsmen. As we are more and more assimilating the features of continental service with our own, it is cer-

tainly meet that the respect paid to the cloth in France and Germany should not be conspicuous by its absence to a British soldier. We admit, however, that conscription *does* make a difference in the raw material.

We have before us a graphic outline of the home barrack-life of a soldier from the standpoint of a gentleman. The Army absorbs still the waifs and strays of humanity, and the moralist might well muse over the outer man of a group of recruits ere the levelling uniform is donned. The change in appearance effected by military garb is really astounding—quite a transformation scene. The process equalises the “raw material” wonderfully. Thus the tramp, out at elbows and toes, the fustian-clad, hobnail-booted navvy, and the clerk in trim tweed suit, are all metamorphosed into a homogeneous body, distinguishable only by gait, which itself soon disappears under the wand-(stick) of the drill corporal. The writer well says, “Who was the shallow thinker who first said that the tailor does not make the man? Not Bob alone, but all the other recruits underwent transformation when they had donned their uniform, so that Judson and Appledore the ploughboys, and Burne the baker, developed physical perfections which had remained hidden under their sordid civilian attire, and shone forth like rough jewels that had been polished and well set. The uniform is so important a factor in the making of a soldier, that our officers were far more particular about what we wore than what we did.”

Commanding and medical officers both view with disfavour recruits of the “gentleman” element. The latter ordinarily bring with them into the service the minimum of physique or constitution, and maximum of dissipated habits. They corrupt the more well disposed country lads, and are essentially “hard bargains” to the State. Happily a good proportion are rejected for blemishes, and a fair number are afterwards purchased out. A few years back we remember a well or rather “ill” known member of the aristocracy, heir to an earldom, who went the round of enlistment and subsequent medical rejection in the household troops. An old injury from hunting afforded sufficient plea.

A reasonable grievance, well known and indefensible, is noticed. It relates to the so-called free kit held out among the inducements for young men to enlist, and printed in the advertisements. “Stoppages” are made from a recruit’s pay for no fault of his own. Thus his ready-made uniform, of course, needs alteration, and for this he is, unreasonably, mulcted. “Government contracts to give a free kit, by which is obviously understood a kit of things fit to wear, but the clothes served out from stores can seldom be worn without alteration and padding. My clothes were taken back to the tailors’-shop four or five times, and I had to pay a few shillings for alterations.” A good suggestion of the author—who contrasts, very advantageously, the German clothes equipment to our own—is the issue of a slop suit at the outset, for fatigue duties. If we go abroad, we see this system in use. As it is, Government prefers mulcting the recruit and leaving him to lessen such onus by buying at his own cost the cast uniforms of men leaving, until such time as he, by the issue of new clothing, may retain the old as a slop set.

A yet greater evil—to which, however, the author makes no reference—is but partially redressed. It relates to the stoppage of pay in hospital when a man is sick. It will scarcely be credited that until very recently, the well-conducted, married soldier who contracted illness, say on guard, was mulcted in nearly all his daily pay, and precisely to the same amount as the drunkard and vicious who came there with self-induced disease!¹

¹ We had the satisfaction of bringing this subject before the late General Sir Henry Storks when in authority at the War Office, and the further gratification

Meanwhile the wife and children of the former might be half starved. And, naturally, under such circumstances, the Benedict kept from reporting himself sick as long as possible, and not unfrequently deferred doing so until his life paid the penalty of a system radically unjust.

As matters stand, so much latitude is allowed to surgeons and commanding officers, so much depends on their interpretation of official regulation, that too often the bad soldier gets off on the same terms as the good. The author speaks with fitting condemnation of falsity and drunkenness underlying the procedure of enlistment. He says :

I am not likely to recover the astonishment that was produced in me by the queer things I witnessed—the drinking, trickery, evasion of the law, and dishonesty; and I have not ceased to ask myself whether the process of enlistment could not be rendered a little more reputable than it is. Perhaps I have an idea that the touting for recruits in public-houses and highways is not the best or the cheapest way for getting a first-rate Army.

Very true; but even probably when the lines were being penned, these evils were in process of reparation by Government. It is by a fair, honest representation of facts in the form of placards and advertisements, rather than through the portals of the public-house that the authorities seek to feed the Army at the present time. In fact, such latter agency is now officially prohibited. And it must be borne in mind that, in a country where conscription does not obtain, some amount of solicitation, open and honest, may be needful, perhaps indispensable.

The writer is well posted up in details of barrack-life, and sets forth in entertaining form its daily routine. The hero enters that excellent branch of the service, the Royal Artillery. With him the motives were common-place enough—dissipation and debt. The recruiting-sergeant is the best sketch. Such combination of personal neatness, of ingrained habit become second nature, with “boosing,” is a feature which distinguishes him from his fellow-tippler in civil life. The material, too, of a batch of recruits is well portrayed, especially the married artizan with shrewish wife. Very wisely and paternally it is ordained that the recruit on joining should undergo, for his good, further education. This proceeding may at no remote date be rendered short and easy, if not wholly superfluous, by the operation of the School Board System. The following glimpse of the routine is well put and faithfully :

Imagine the large schoolroom filled with about a hundred soldiers, divided into six classes. Here were forms for beginners, who could neither read nor write—fearful dolts, some of them, who bleated through their spelling most ruefully; further on, some recruits were tracing potbooks and hangers with clumsy fingers. Then came a class which contained several middle-aged corporals who had got third class certificates, but were trying to qualify for sergeant-ships, by getting second classes. Some of these unfortunates, who were splendid soldiers, fairly sweated over the difficulties of compound interest and the rule of three. The big drops stood on their foreheads, and there was a dazed frown between their eyes, as they tried to comprehend the patient demonstrations of their teacher expounding to them that one-half and six-twelfths meant the same thing. Those of them who were married men, and looked to promotion for securing an increase of pay, with better quarters and more comforts for their wives and children, were heroic in their plodding application, too often, alas! to be ill-rewarded on examination day. There was one grizzled corporal in this lot, who could not be made to reduce his money fractions to less than a farthing. When he was told to put down one-sixteenth of a penny, he used to shout angrily, “But I tell you there a’int no coin of that vallier. There’s nothing below a farthin’. Don’t come ‘oaxin’ me.”

of witnessing an amelioration, subsequently, of a gross injustice by that able administrator.

The female characters are exaggerated, put in probably in the way of "padding." And towards the latter end of the book, the melo-dramatic element crops up largely. The interest, indeed, centres on two points, the recruiting system, and barrack-life at home.

There is a somewhat pronounced radicalism in some of the pages.

The national proclivities of the soldier are amusingly illustrated. The Irish element throughout is in disfavour with the writer. There is, however, truth in the following remark :

The aversion—for it is little else—in which the British soldier is held by a respectable section of the public, comes undoubtedly from the infamous conduct of some men who wear the Queen's uniform ; and I must say that, so far as my experience goes, of all the degraded, ruffianly soldiers who disgrace the service, the wild Irish are the worst. The Scotch are generally very good soldiers ; among the English soldiers those who are blackguards are usually amenable to reason ; but the Irish when bad are amenable to nothing. There is little good in them when sober, for even then they have a hand in every scrape, and when they have taken a drop of drink they are like raging beasts. The fact that they fight well in war cannot be taken as a set-off against the mischief they do in the service, for after all they fight no better than the English and Scotch. And they brag ten times more.

Temperament and religion have much to do with this outcome, just as the converse in the Scotchman shows to his advantage. However, some of the hardest drinkers, perfect sponges in the absorption of alcohol, come from the North. Yet we have known them, when disease did not intervene, pass creditably through a military career. They drank judiciously, carried caution with their cups. Such men are often found in possession of the maximum number of good-conduct badges. Their habits are to lerably well known, but—lâches cannot be brought home.

In our colonies—although it is well known how praiseworthily Irishmen turn over a new leaf when taken from priestly influences—it is seldom that he obtains the same social eminence as either of the other nationalities. Ordinarily it will be the Scotchman who tops the tree. There is an "Irish town" quarter, and in and from it Paddy will be found pursuing the same avocations as in the Fatherland, under improved conditions.

The author goes in openly for "modified conscription," *i.e.* the establishment of a fund made up of exemption fines from the wealthy by which a humbler class of soldiers is to benefit on discharge. He would thus improve the tone of the army in civil estimation. Doubtless this latter consequence would be a natural outcome of conscription, and, as in Germany, elevate the whole body. Whether the time may not arrive when this procedure, in some form or other, may be forced upon the nation by sheer necessity, is quite open to speculation even now. Words that may, without straining, be interpreted in the affirmative have dropped already from one or two of our leading generals. Before the conclusion of the Crimean war the raw material was becoming inferior and not abundant.

We see that a more lengthened service, a *via media* between the hopeless duration of former days and the irrational brevity of present service in the ranks, is very properly advocated. There can scarcely be two opinions in the matter, and the authorities themselves are quietly working back in this direction.

One of the great blots of our army system is touched on, and a remedy not novel, perhaps, but well worth trial, is suggested. We allude to desertion. Through the excessively humanitarian spirit of the age, any mark, even that of re-vaccination in a particular limb, is prohibited, and the consequence is enormous pecuniary loss to the nation. Desertion

and fraudulent enlistment is a systematic trade. The writer would establish central dépôts for recruits in the three countries. Undoubtedly this would tend materially to lessen the evil. The "little game" would be much interfered with. At present the rogue may shift from town to town, and thus avoid early recognition.

A man who is an epileptic, for instance, may profit by his infirmity and live for an indefinite period at public expense. True, he might, as in former days, be marked at a very trifling cost of pain, which would be well deserved for his falsity of statement previously. But—"il est defendu."

Let it not be forgotten that deserters damage the Army in three ways—by polluting it while they are in the ranks, by setting a bad example when they go, and by carrying false stories about its hardship among the working classes when they have gone.

There might be three of these dépôts for the whole Kingdom, Edinburgh, Dublin, and Woolwich, though a single one for England and Scotland might do better still. The saving effected by this measure would be great, and it would have some results still more important in ameliorating the tone and discipline of the Army. It would render fraudulent re-enlistments almost impossible, for a man who had spent three months at a dépôt would pretty surely be recognised by some one or other of the permanent staff of the place if he came there again; or at all events, the fear of being so recognized would be enough to keep him away. At present a man who deserts from Sheerness may take himself off to any other garrison town and enlist in a new corps. There are men who have served in half-a-dozen different regiments, remaining but a few months in each, and making away with the articles of their kits when they absconded. These desertions cost the country heavy sums in money directly, and they have a most demoralizing effect in propagating the notion that an offence which is so frequent is a venial one. A deserter who is apprehended gets only a hundred and sixty-eight days' imprisonment (six lunar months) for a first offence. Since flogging and branding have been abolished, the deterrent penalty is not enough, and that is reason more why preventive measures should be taken.

One potent incentive to the obtaining of better recruits, and thereby adding to the prestige of the army, the writer might well have brought forward. It is that of Government employment in civil capacity after honourable service in the ranks.

The book ends abruptly, and through the hackneyed expedient of a fortune falling to the hero. Plot there is none. The incidents are all illustrative of some feature of the army system and wholly with reference to peace service. We rather infer from its pages that the writer had no practical acquaintance with warfare, and indeed it would be quite feasible for a clever, experienced litterateur "posted up" by an intelligent soldier, to produce these entertaining pictures of barrack life. As a contribution to the army question of the day, somewhat highly-coloured, but in the main truthful, the work merits perusal.

But scant justice is done to two important aspects of army life—temperance and religion. So much of the book bears upon drunkenness and its natural outcome, crime—to which, indeed, might well have been added, disease—that the evil of intemperance and undue facilities for its indulgence might well have met with more pronounced reprobation. The author limits his strictures on drink in connection with recruiting to the act of enlistment, a procedure, as we have already said, virtually now prohibited by the authorities. A man shown to have enlisted while drunk, would be entitled to discharge. Formerly it was the rule rather than the exception.

We can recall a curious incident of former days when serving in a distinguished Highland corps. The colonel was well known as a martinet; the discipline was strict; a continual round of field-days and drill. He

himself was a very temperate man ; and to do him justice he had the welfare of his regiment thoroughly at heart. Yet, on one night of the year, the reins were relaxed to a marvellous degree, and on such occasion, a perfect orgie was the result. About midnight the spectacle might have been witnessed of a confused *melée* of commissioned and non-commissioned officers in a barrack square, all more or less under the influence of drink, pledging each other in Scotch fashion, shouting, singing, or dancing. The anniversary, any Scotch reader will readily surmise, was that of the patron saint, St. Andrew. We speak of this demoralizing event because the "Gentleman Private" notices a very similar circumstance in relation to the fearful abuse of Christmas Day, and a heavy retribution in punishment of outrages then committed under the influence of drink.

Again, the writer dismisses in a few sentences of qualified commendation the subject of religion in the army. Compelled to admit that the pious man, the soldier who lives consistently with his professed creed, is "among" the best in all military requisites, the only incident mentioned—and that at some length—is calculated to leave an unfavourable impression. No reference at all is made to Soldiers' Homes which have been long doing their good work. A temperance meeting is described in the more ludicrous aspect which the subject sometimes presents, but without any recognition of the immense value of abstention alike to the individual and to the nation.

When doubt is expressed as to God-fearing men being subjected to mischievous interruption when praying at the bedside, the author is in error. The tracts referred to by him convey what is true. Any prolonged persecution, however, after the trial had been consistently borne, would have been at variance with that respect for true religion which lies at the hearts of men, themselves radically bad.

We can corroborate the noteworthy fact mentioned, that in barrack and hospital-libraries Sir Walter Scott's works are in greatest demand.

The Hebrew Psalter, or Book of Praises, commonly called the Psalms of David. A new metrical translation. By WILLIAM DIGBY SEYMOUR, Q.C., LL.D., Recorder of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. New Edition. London : Longmans, Green and Co. 1883.

In the Preface to this version of the Psalms, mention is made of the "Oxford Psalter" (Keble's, 1839), the "Cleveland Psalter" (the Archdeacon of Cleveland's, 1854), and of the volumes of Mr. Burton (1871), and Mr. Benthall (1879). Mr. Seymour refers also to the very interesting book by the Marquis of Lorne, issued some five years ago ; and he touches on Watts's "Psalms of David imitated in the language of the New Testament," a work which left little room for any follower in the paraphrastic treatment of the Psalter. Of the "Oxford Psalter," Archdeacon Churton's opinion (the point and soundness of which is indisputable) is quoted in the Preface. Mr. Keble's "reverential regard to the Hebrew verity," wrote the Archdeacon of Cleveland, induced him "to sacrifice his own poetical liberty and powers of diction in a rigid adherence to the ancient and foreign idioms of the original." Archdeacon Churton's own translation, he explained, was not to be so diluted as that of Tate and Brady, nor so rigidly literal as that of Rous in the Scotch, or Sternhold and Hopkins in the English Church. He meant to be as true to the Hebrew as Keble, but not withal to sacrifice harmony to mere fidelity : his book should be a metaphrase rather than a paraphrase. Since the "Cleveland Psalter" was published, nearly thirty years have elapsed ; but of its refined and scholarly renderings, how many have become known ?

The version of Sternhold, an officer in the Court of Henry VIII., is nowadays scarcely known. A zealous Reformer, Sternhold set about his translation in a right good spirit, and his work, supplemented by Hopkins, a Suffolk clergyman, and others, has a special interest for the student. To Hopkins, we may remark, has often been ascribed "All people that on earth do dwell," but the author of that fine rendering of Psalm c., probably, was Kethe, who was an exile with Knox in Geneva. The author of the "authorized" Scottish Psalter was Rous, an English member of Parliament. His work was approved by the Westminster Assembly (1649), and accepted, with alterations, by the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. Tate and Brady's work is well known, being still printed in some editions of the Prayer Book. This very "dry" Psalter,¹ the "New Version," by "Nicholas Brady, D.D., Chaplain-in-Ordinary, and Nahum Tate, Esq., Poet-Laureate, to his Majesty" (1696), was commended by the Bishop of London as a work of "great judgment and ingenuity." Few of its renderings have found place in Hymn Books for either public or private use. Its thirty-fifth Psalm has generally been quoted :

"Through all the changing scenes of life."

Mr. Digby Seymour's version combines the two qualities of FIDELITY and HARMONY. The accomplished author has studied the original with loving labour, while he has also consulted the chief critical and devotional Commentaries ; he has—it is obvious—the poetic gifts requisite for the task to which he devoted his leisure hours, and he has kept before him, in translating many Psalms, the definition of a *good hymn* given by Lord Selborne in the "Book of Praise." The version before us, therefore, is one of singular interest and value. Mr. Seymour's renderings are really readable, and to many readers they will prove, from their deeply devotional tone, helpful and edifying. They are also lyrical. A musical critic, judging without prejudice their flow, structure, and rhythm, will say that these verses largely satisfy the demands of harmony. Mr. Seymour has given the Churches, as we have said, several excellent hymns.

With the rendering of the Old Version, "All people that on earth do dwell," and that of the New, "With one consent let all the earth," and that of Watts "Before Jehovah's awful throne," may be compared Mr. Seymour's, of Psalm c., as follows :

"Loud let your shouts to God ascend !
 All earth the strain prolong ;
 Let gladness with His service blend ;
 Before Him come with song !

"Know ye that He who made our frames,
 The Lord, is God indeed ;
 And His are we—the flock He claims,
 The sheep His pastures feed.

"Oh ! enter then with thanks His gates,
 His courts approach with praise ;
 To His dread Name whose mercy waits
 Your grateful anthems raise.

"For God our Lord alone is good,
 His love alone is sure ;
 His truth, that hath for ages stood,
 For ages shall endure !"

¹ Bishop Wilberforce was in conversation one day with Miss Burdett-Coutts about the various City companies. "I dare say, Bishop," said Miss Coutts, "you don't know the meaning of a Dry Salter." "Oh yes," he said, "I do—Tate and Brady."

The eighty-fourth Psalm, known to every devout Presbyterian as opening—

“How lovely is Thy dwelling-place,
O Lord of hosts, to me !”

is pleasingly and very faithfully rendered by Mr. Seymour. The first verse is as follows :

“How lovely, Lord of Hosts, the tents¹
Thy presence deigns to bless!
To gain Thy courts my soul grew faint
With longing to excess ;
Now heart and flesh with joy prepare
The living God to worship there.”

The following verses are also felicitous:

“And blest are they, the pilgrim band,
Who come to worship here,
And mark each spot upon the road
To pious travellers dear,
Who tread with joy the sandy vale
Where weeping balms their scent exhale !

“To them the hot and arid waste
Becomes a place of springs,
Enriched with all the verdure fresh
The rain of autumn brings.
From strength to strength they journey till
They meet their God on Zion's hill.

“Jehovah ! God of Hosts ! my prayer
Oh let Thy mercy hear,
And Thou, O God of Jacob, lend
To me Thy listening ear.
O God, our Strength, upon the face
Of Thine anointed look with grace !”

Mr. Seymour's rendering of Psalm xix. strikes us as exceedingly good. It opens thus :

“The Heavens tell God's glory,
The Firmament His skill ;
Creation's wondrous story
Is written on them still.

“Day unto day repeateth
The wisdom of His plan ;
Night after night completeth
The theme that morn began.

“No voice the silence breaking,
In solemn pomp they roll ;
No sound—yet they are speaking
A language to the soul !”

One turns to a new rendering of Psalm xxiii. with a sort of feeling that one is sure to be disappointed ; but Mr. Seymour's verses are by no means poor, or commonplace. For instance, the last verse runs thus :

¹ We are not sure that we approve of *tents*. Watts gives “Thy dwellings ;” Kennedy (Bickersteth also) “Thine abode.” Lyte contrasts the “courts above” and the “courts below.” But many of the translators have given Christian hymns based upon the Psalms of David : their verses are scarcely translations. Some years ago Professor Birks sent to the present writer a Psalter (published by Messrs. Seeley); it contains several excellent hymn-Psalms. Mr. Birks himself contributed some renderings.

"Love and grace my steps attending,
 Calm my life shall here be pass'd,
 Till to Thee my soul ascending
 Finds in heaven its home at last !"

Psalm cxxxix., that beautiful hymn in which is treated first, the greatest mystery, the being of God; and second, the mystery which is highest to it, the being of man, has been carefully and closely, and—as a hymn—not unsuccessfully rendered. We quote the first verse, as follows:

"Lord, Thou hast searched me through and through,
 My inmost life unroll'd ;
 I rest, I rise ; but all I do,
 Thy watchful eyes behold."

In verse 18, "When I awake I am still with Thee" is thus rendered :

"Yet when I wake fresh thoughts arise,
 And I am still with Thee !"

In translating Psalm cxlviii., Creation's Hallelujah, Mr. Seymour has given some spirited strains :

"Angels, ye who serve Him most,
 Praise Him, praise Him, all His host !
 Praise Him sun, the orb of day,
 Praise Him moon, with softer ray,
 And ye twinkling gems of light,
 Praise Him all ye stars of night,
 Praise Him, heavenly vault on high—
 Waters banked above the sky !"

Psalm lvi., the three notes of which are, Perils, Presence, and Praise, has been suggestively and sweetly set by Mr. Seymour. The comma in verse 3, however, brings in a strange and unwarranted thought.

"But in the day, when I'm afraid,
 I turn to God for hope and aid ;
 In Him I wait His promise blest,
 On Him alone my faith I rest."

In so precise and polished a translation, we feel sure, the comma after "day," here, is an oversight. As he gave "night and day" in verse 2, for the word "day" in verse 3 might be substituted "time" or "hour." The rendering of this Psalm by Hopkins, we may add, is well worth reading. Verse 4 opens thus :

"God's promise I do mind and praise ;
 O Lord, I stick to Thee."

Psalm cxxvii., verse 2 is not easy to render, giving due heed to both fidelity and harmony ; our author's rendering is this :

"Vain else to rise with morn's first ray,
 Vain else to work till close of day ;
 The selfsame bread your labours reap,
 The Lord provides His saints in sleep."

"So he giveth His beloved sleep" (Authorized Version) is, not seldom, we fear, painfully and perplexingly expounded.

Other passages our pencil had marked ; but our limits are overpassed.

We are much pleased with this book, and strongly recommend it. The present edition—tastefully printed and bound—is very cheap.

