

Taking "the Queen's Shilling"

They are putting out "the queen's shilling" in Great Britain just now with unusual liberality, and the chances are that its circulation will be still further and wonderfully increased within the next few months. For the British army is greatly in need of recruits to be sent to South Africa, and, according to the British system of enlistment, a "queen's shilling" is paid over to every man who enters the service. The "queen's shilling," by the way, is not a coin of special design. It is exactly like every other coin of the same denomination and it is termed "the queen's" from the fact that its acceptance from a recruiting sergeant makes the receiver a "queen's man," body and soul.

The greatest task of the United States government, when the war with Spain broke out, was to furnish an effective land fighting force on short notice, and our critics in England, friendly and otherwise, had a good deal to say about the shortcomings of our army system, under which only a ridiculously small force of trained soldiers was maintained in time of peace, a force quite insufficient to do our fighting in time of war. In the present juncture the British army system, which includes the recruiting department, of course, may be put to almost as severe a test as was the American system last year. For, although the total military forces of the British empire are enormous in numbers, aggregating considerably over 750,000 all told, the forces immediately available for service against the Boers, in whose subjugation the British navy obviously can take no part, are only a

small fraction of that number. Even the figures representing the active fighting forces—numbering nearly 250,000—are misleading, since they include 125,000, or thereabouts, that must be kept in India. That leaves only about 100,000 effective troops in Great Britain and Ireland to draw upon.

It is true that there are nearly 440,000 others, more or less well trained in military affairs, but only a portion of these can be drawn upon, and a large fraction of them would make as sorry work of fighting in the Transvaal, or anywhere else for the matter of that, as the rawest of American recruits. This force is divided about as follows: Army reserves, 83,000; militia, 15,000; yeomanry, 10,000; volunteers, 232,000. Some of these can not be taken out of the country except for defense, some are trained but little if any better than our National Guard, while others—though they have seen service, are pretty old to do active service in a foreign clime and have long been out of training. And, no matter how many are sent to South Africa, their places must be filled by recruits, somehow, if possible, since it would never do for England, with potent possible enemies separated from her by only a few miles of sea, to allow any material reduction of her forces at home. In these circumstances the present activity of Great Britain's recruiting machinery is a matter of necessity.

Man Who Gives the Shilling.

The British recruiting sergeant, the man who gives the shilling, is a splendid creature. He is tall, erect, broad of shoulders, deep of chest, supple of limb, with the bearing of a conqueror tempered by melting geniality, and with an ideally persuasive tongue. Always in uniform and white gloves, with little cap a-till on his head, with baton twirling airily in his hand and continually in evidence, he plays a most important part in the army system of his country. He generally hunts in couples and his chosen walks are either in the vicinity of some great barracks or in the poorer quarters of the town where he is located. Naturally more men are recruited in London than anywhere else. The favorite stamping grounds of the London recruiting sergeants are in the neighborhood of the Horse Guards and in Trafalgar square, on the side fronted by the National gallery and St. Martin's church.

No one who has been much in London need be told why the recruiting sergeants patrol in the vicinity of the Horse Guards, since there, day after day, a miniature mil-

itary parade—the regular ceremony of guard mount—is held. The detachment of the household cavalry that goes through this evolution is made up unquestionably of the very flower of the British army. The men are stalwart and dashing, with movements that show perfect training; their uniforms are fairly dazzling in their spick and span splendor, and there is always an admiring crowd in the courtyard to view the inspiring spectacle. Judged from it, life in the army is mainly pictorial and it is an unusual day in times of no special excitement, even, on which from twenty to forty young men are not tempted by the guard mount show to take "the queen's shilling" from one of the trim sergeants.

Those who take the shilling in the neighborhood mentioned are initiated to the service of her majesty at the recruiting depot of St. George's barracks, just back of the National gallery. It is the largest in Great Britain and probably one-quarter of all the British recruits are there enrolled. Other large depots are located at Woolwich, Hounslow and elsewhere. In fact, there is a recruiting depot in every sizable town in all Great Britain.

Recruits in General.

The recruiting sergeants who work in the square and near the Horse Guards have a far easier task to perform, generally than those who do duty elsewhere. Under the splendid stimulus furnished by the crack cavalry's appearance the recruits rarely have to be subjected to much persuasion and often offer themselves unsolicited. Recruits are easily obtained, also, in many places on

produce the desired results. Recruits obtained in slum neighborhoods are youngsters out of work in the main, often without family ties and sometimes quite willing, if well persuaded, to get away from their current surroundings, even if the prospects be fairly favorable for service against half-savage native rebels in India, the still more savage blacks of Africa or the Boers, more dangerous, because of their superior marksmanship, than either Hindus or blacks. A guaranty of the recruit's good moral character is required, ostensibly, but the regulations upon this point are not administered with great rigidity in many instances and the contingency of rejection upon the moral record of the recruit is remote indeed.

Very many of the men recruited in the more crowded sections of the cities go into the militia, which is about as unlike the National Guard here as can easily be imagined, and whose members are regarded with less favor by the middle class population of Great Britain than those of any other branch of the service. It has been commonly supposed, both in and out of England, that the militia could not be ordered to do foreign service, but this is an error. The militia may be sent out of the country if occasion arise, and, furthermore, if its ranks be not filled by "volunteer enlistment," limited conscription may be enforced to that end. This has not been resorted to in thirty years, but the law authorizing it is still on the statute books and would be effective any year in which the customary militia ballot suspension act were not passed by Parliament.

Recruits From the Peasant Class.

In the regular foot regiments recruits from the English peasant class, or, rather, as some one has said, "peasants deteriorated by two generations of life as mill operatives," are much in evidence. The recruit of this class in general is a somewhat undersized, narrow-chested, flaxen-haired lad of what would be termed rather defective education in America and with abnormal appetites so far as ale and tobacco are concerned. The British "crutty" of this type is decidedly inferior in body, mentality and general training to the average American regular army recruit in time of peace or volunteer as accepted while the war with Spain was on, but probably not below the bodily standard maintained during the greatest demand for soldiers in civil war times.

There has been much criticism by the English themselves of the low physical standard of the army recruits and more than one British authority has referred to them as a lot of "half-grown boys." A British officer of high standing, who admits that many immature youngsters find their way into the ranks, says this is a good thing on the whole. His theory is that the recruit who begins his service before attaining full growth will soon "fill out," thus acquiring the proper size and weight. Meanwhile he will receive his training as a soldier at just the time it is most likely to produce a lasting impression upon him in every way. In fact, he continues, many commanding officers have reported that young recruits often develop into more satisfactory soldiers than other men because they received their military training during, and not after, the formative period of their lives. It should be understood that not all British recruits are of inferior physical types. Men from every walk of life enlist in her majesty's service and many of them are splendid chaps bodily. They enter the crack regiments, of course. It is not expected that any of the raw recruits will be sent out at this time. The British aim is always to have the fighting done by seasoned soldiers and should it continue in any instance till they are exhausted the new soldiers will have been pretty well trained meanwhile.

Recruiting sergeants are paid 60 cents for every ordinary recruit; for a recruit suitable to enter the Scots Guards, the cavalry,

the engineers or the artillery, whose qualifications must be of a higher order than those of a recruit for most regiments of foot soldiers, the pay is \$1.25. Much more is often allowed for a man fit to be a Life Guardsman; the equivalent of \$15 is not unprecedented, and there are some other regiments' recruits for which bring fancy pay to the sergeant securing them.

"Tommy Atkins."

The nickname "Tommy Atkins," which outside of the British empire is generally supposed to apply to all British soldiers, in reality applies only to the infantry of the line. To call an artilleryman anything but "gunner" would be to insult him; the enlisted cavalryman, who, like his superior, is a bit of a swell, would snort at any title

save "trooper;" the engineer is a "sapper," and the men of the Grenadier Guards would have fits were they to be spoken of as "Tommys." The origin of the nickname is rather curious. Twenty years ago, when General Lord Wolseley wrote his celebrated "Pocket Book," he used the name "Thomas Atkins" in the forms prescribed for officers' accounts and reports. Somehow, after the diminutive, "Tommy" was substituted for "Thomas," the name stuck and the ordinary British soldier will probably remain "Tommy Atkins" to the end of time.

The raw recruit is a "Tommy" in every sense of the word, from the moment he takes the shilling, and is liable to punishment for desertion should he fail to report at the recruiting depot very soon after his acceptance of the coin. But should he repent, he may be bought off within a certain definite period, and British mothers, who hate the recruiting sergeants intensely, frequently secure their sons' release in this way. In time of war the duties of the British soldier are like the duties of all soldiers engaged in actual fighting; in time of peace they are far more arduous than those of the American soldier, a much greater degree of attention being bestowed upon the condition of arms and accoutrements, trimness of uniform, etc., than here. On the whole the cavalryman has more work in peaceful times than the foot soldier, for the cavalryman has his horse as well as himself to keep in constant condition.

Arms and Uniforms.

The uniforms furnished to the British soldier are well made and comfortable as a rule. Some of them are gorgeous and there is great variation in the outfit of different regiments of the same branch of the service. The normal pay is a shilling a day, or 24

cents, while the normal daily ration, varied sometimes to suit conditions, is a pound of bread and three-quarters of a pound of meat. Of course, the actual fare of the British soldier has more variety than this would indicate, but he has to pay for the additions out of his scanty stipend. His clothes cost him nothing, but he has to pay for his washing. It is claimed by the authorities that his "net" is larger than the average artisan class in England. It is of record that more than one British regiment has mutinied because of poor maintenance, but complaints of insufficient and bad food have been rare of late years. The pay of soldiers serving in India and the colonies is generally supplemented—sometimes doubled. Much more respect has been paid to the

volunteer service in Great Britain than formerly. It appears to have much in common with our own state national guard, especially as membership in a volunteer organization is counted a sort of social distinction and the prime object of the volunteers is home defense and not outside fighting. The Lee-Metford rifle, the standard arm of the British army, has been dealt out to the volunteers only lately, however, and they are almost as unfamiliar with it as our volunteers were with the so-called Krag-Jorgensen when the Spanish war broke out. The Lee-Metford is considered inferior to the Mauser by some authorities, especially for use against a civilized enemy. The often-expressed fear that the British soldier will prove defective in marksmanship, particularly if pitted against the Boers, is based on admittedly insufficient rifle practice.

Transportation of troops to South Africa in numbers sufficient to carry on a war with the Transvaal, of necessity, calls for an increase of the British transport service, and this has already augmented the demand for suitable ships, and there is great danger of a worse mix-up than attended our sending of troops to the West Indies and the Philippines in the early stages of the game. British troops unused to service away from home will undoubtedly find much to learn about the proper care of themselves in South Africa, but every regiment will probably contain enough experienced soldiers to reduce the complications from a change of climate, etc., to a minimum.

Lieutenant General Sir Redvers Henry Buller, recently adjutant general of the forces as successor to Sir William Buller, is just the man to command the forces against the Boers. He is said to have an old grudge against them. He served in South Africa in 1878-9, when the British arms virtually wiped out the Zulus, the Boer's greatest enemy. Sir Redvers is 60. He has been in the service since he was 19, and has served in China, North America and Egypt, winning many honors and distinctions for extreme gallantry.



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A Confident Youth

Washington Star: "So, sir," exclaimed the father, impressively, "you wish to marry my daughter?"

"I do," answered the youth resolutely. "Do you think you can support her in the luxury to which she has been accustomed?"

"I do. When she makes her home with me she won't have the gas turned down at 10:30 from the meter as a hint that it is time for company to go home, and she won't have any complaints about the amount of coal burned in order to heat the parlor for visitors. I kind of think, maybe, the dear girl will be pleased with the change, in time."

Price

Detroit Journal: The robber baron was much moved when told the price that had been set upon his head.

"Ten thousand piastres!" he exclaimed. "Well, well! And yet I cannot wonder! For twenty years, now, I haven't done a thing but make myself scarce when wanted, and if I am scarce, I am statistically strong, I suppose! Yes, indeed!"

The knightly retainers knew nothing of economics, presumably; it was an intuition, doubtless, which prompted them to laugh violently and raise a loud acclaim.