

Lady Castlereagh's Army of English Women



SQUAD OF RECRUITS IN THE NEW BRITISH WOMEN'S REGIMENT DRILLING AT BLACKHEATH, NEAR LONDON.

English Countrywomen Being Instructed in the Use of the Rifle

Interesting Details About the New Force Who Will Use Weapons If Necessary to Defend Their Homes and Avoid the Fate That Befell Belgian Women

THE much-discussed plan of arming women to fight has at last become a serious reality in England.

If the Germans ever land an army in Great Britain they will undoubtedly find women in arms.

Four companies of women soldiers have now been formed. Their colonel is the Viscountess Castlereagh, daughter-in-law of the Marquis of Londonderry and daughter of the Right Honorable Henry Chaplin, M. P., one of the leaders of the Conservative party. The father of the new colonel presided at a meeting at the Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, to promote the new organization of women soldiers.

The Lord Mayor defined the project as having the purpose of "providing a trained and highly efficient body of women whose services can be offered to the state if required."

He said that women reservists could be trained for signalling, dispatch riding, telegraphing, motoring and camp cooking, and thus, in time of necessity, could relieve the men assigned to such tasks and bring about an appreciable reinforcement of the actual fighting ranks.

Colonel Viscountess Castlereagh's father said that the corps only would be brought into action in the event of the invasion of England "by hordes of German barbarians."

He said that the War Department would never think of ordering armed women into any aggressive action, but declared that the object was worthy of enthusiastic support; "that it armed them for their own defense in the last extremity." Such a movement, he declared, was entirely justifiable.

The Viscountess Castlereagh is a very handsome and dashing young woman, who is a splendid horse-woman and interested in many sports. She is the owner of many prize dogs, among them being Jock, a \$2,500 bloodhound with a pedigree going back 150 years. She visited the United States with her husband in 1905 to shoot big game. She is an expert shot, and killed three bears in the Canadian wilds.

The appearance of the Viscountess should inspire enthusiasm in her followers, and especially in the men soldiers with whom she may be associated.

This is to be the beginning of a series of regiments in which it is hoped to enroll all the able-bodied women of England, including the suffragettes.

It should be noted that the women soldiers are to be armed, although they are intended primarily for auxiliary and defensive purposes. This means that they will fight if necessary. The English women who are organizing this force intend to avoid the catastrophe that overtook Belgium. Many Belgian women and girls, roused to fury by the invasion and destruction of their homes, attacked the German soldiers. When these women were caught they were executed as spies, or as non-combatants taking part in war contrary to the rules.

The English women intend that there shall be no such excuse for executing them. They will be regularly enrolled by the Government and wear a soldier's uniform, so that there will be no ground for alleging

that they are not regular soldiers as defined in military codes.

The jeers which have been made on all sides, and particularly in Germany, about the fighting qualities of the English suffragettes will cease to be funny. There is no doubt that the suffragettes will enlist freely in the new regiments, and that the



Lady Castlereagh in Her New Colonel's Uniform

courage and tenacity they have shown in fighting the police and enduring forced feeding will be turned against the Germans.

Several attempts had been made before this, with considerable success, to organize auxiliary forces of women to aid the British army. Lady Ernestine Hunt, who is a leading figure in English country life, organized the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps, to assist the yeomanry, as the English volunteer cavalry are called. These organizations had weakened or ceased to exist before the present war broke out, but now they will be placed on a stronger basis than before.

The enrolment of women soldiers is an indication of the far more cruel and ruthless phase which the war will enter upon unless peace is declared shortly. When women have taken part in war in the past it has always meant that the last extreme of desperation had been reached.



The Handsome Viscountess Castlereagh, Colonel of the New British Regiment of Women

Many reports have been received that women were entering into the present conflict, in addition to their accidental share in it in Belgium. A considerable number of French women have been discovered serving in the ranks in men's clothing. In Serbia, a wild and half-developed country, the women have been serving in large numbers and fighting very fiercely.

Dr. Hans Huldriksen, the distinguished Swedish psychologist, has already pointed out that the appearance of women in the present war is an ominous sign—and why this is so.

"Women are not natural combatants," he writes. "They do not rush into war for war's sake. They are without the blood lust that makes fighting a joy for fighting's sake. They will fight only in desperate straits, and then only for their honor, their children or the existence of their country. Standing at one of these last ditches, however, they fight with the ferocity of tigers. They do battle without rule or reason and to the death."

"A soldier of experience said that he would rather fight a company of male soldiers than one woman soldier. He explained that woman is too resourceful in the matter of weapons. War transforms woman for the time into a beast. Kipling pointed out that the female of the species is more deadly than the male—referring to her, without doubt, in her fighting phase. In moments of

the wildest excitement, induced by war, she has surpassed any of the atrocities ever committed in the name of war by men. There is for the horror of nations the incident of that campaign in the Netherlands by the Spanish army, when the Dutch women cut out the hearts of captured Spaniards and flung them across the walls of the cities in the face of the approaching army."

It has been amply proved that although women are in many ways unfitted for fighting they are the most ferocious opponents when they do engage in it. The Amazons of the King of Dahomey are among the noted of all modern examples of women fighters, although many observers do not doubt that civilized European women when aroused will prove even more terrible than these dusky African fighters.

Sir Richard Burton, the famous traveller and Arabian scholar, has left many interesting details about the Dahomeyan Amazons. The King of Dahomey discovered accidentally that women made better soldiers than men. His army having been greatly reduced by war, he armed a great number of women, and with these, in 1723, he attacked the combined hosts of the Whydahs and Popos, and defeated them terribly.

Gezo, a nineteenth century Dahomeyan King, greatly increased the female force, and his son, Gelele, still further developed it.

Gelele caused every girl to be brought to him before marriage, and if she pleased him he kept her. Some became his wives and the others his finest soldiers.

The Amazons are nominally wives of the kings. They cannot be touched by a subject on pain of death. They never leave their quarters unless preceded by a bell to drive men from the road. They meet men only on the march and in war.

At parades they are separated from the male soldiers by a bamboo fence. When captured in war the Amazons will never consent to become the wives of the victors, and are usually killed for their heroic obstinacy.

The Pantl company of Amazons takes the centre of the army and forms the King's bodyguard. They wear around the hair narrow white filets with red crocodiles of blue cloth sewn on the band. The right wing is commanded by the Migan, or she general, and the left wing by the Meu, or she lieutenant-general.

The King often pays distinguished strangers the compliment of placing them in command of his bodyguard, but this does not even entitle them to the privilege of inspecting the corps.

The three corps are divided into five arms. First come the Agbarys, or blunderbuss women. They are the biggest and strongest of the force, and each is accompanied by an attendant carrying ammunition. With them rank the Zo-hu-nun, or carbineers; the Gannunian, sure-to-kill company, and the Actli, or bayonetiers.

The second arm consists of the elephant huntresses, who are held to be the bravest. Then there are Nyekplo-hen-to, or razor women, a very light force. The infantry, or line women, form the bulk of the force and are armed with old muskets.

The fifth arm consists of Go-hen-to, or archeresses, who in King Gezo's time were young girls, the pick of the army and very fine dancers. They are armed with a peculiar Dahomeyan bow, a quiver of poisoned light cane shafts and a small knife lashed with a lanyard to the wrist. They are distinguished by scanty attire, by a tattoo extending to the knee and by an ivory bracelet on the left arm. Burton gives a long and interest-



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The English Women Soldiers Undergoing Training in Camp

ing account of the state ceremony in which the Amazons played a leading part.

"First came the five great officers of the empire—the Ajvaho, the Migan, the Meu, the Yevogan and the Adanejan," he says. "The Migan had a billhook in her left hand as executioneress of the inside; the others used staves or sticks, and all carried swords at their left side."

"These five were habited in long Hausa robes of red silk, the upper garb light and the skirt heavy, and two worn tin crowns over red calico. They were followed by the lesser dignitaries in blue striped togas of similar cut, as some had their heads bound with white calico, like the male singers and fetishers."

"Then came the captainesses, forty-two in number, corresponding with the men. First stalked two 'silver half heads,' with pouches on their right sides, cartridge boxes round their waists and billhooks whose handles were swathed in cloth."

"A pair of bayonet women followed with silver sharks on their red liberty caps. Number nine was a very bulky figure in the cook's bonnet of the Minan, or madcap company, described as Kana. She is one of the captainesses of the right, or Migan's side."

"Some had shaggy skull caps, like peppercorn hair, stained a deep indigo, and others had applied the dye to their locks, which contrasted well

with their silver ornaments. Others had big foolscaps of stuffs striped white, blue and red hanging over their shoulders. All wore sashes with the ends depending in front, and carried, at half cock, muskets or blunderbusses with the muzzle cap off.

"Some were decorated with a human skull or with a lower jaw fixed to a thin brass plate dangling from the waist. At the end of the performance they formed in line before the King, saluted, first with the right hand, secondly with presented guns and knives, and then disappeared within the harem."

This concluding tribute to the Dahomeyan Amazons is paid by Burton: "They are savage as wounded gorillas; more cruel, far, than their brethren in arms."

The erudite Burton recalls many female fighters of the past. The native princes of India, especially those of Hyderabad, maintained for centuries a female guard whose courage and devotion were remarkable.

There was Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons; Judith and Candace, the wife of Aban Ibn Saib; Joan of Arc, Margaret of Anjou, Black Agnes, Jeanne Hachette and Begum Sombre.

"Many a fair form was found stark on the field of Waterloo," says Burton. "During the late Indian mutiny the Ranis were, as a rule, more manly than the Rajahs."

Why Dressing Up On Sunday Makes Us Better People

By Dr. Charles Waterson

IT is much easier to feel pious in good clothes than it is when one is shabby. The chap who is quite ready to use cuss words when in his working clothes is quite likely to be painfully correct when he gets into a frock-coat and a silk hat. And I defy any woman to feel "peace on earth and good will to men" when she knows that she is the poorest-dressed woman in the church.

There are other reasons for dressing up on Sunday besides that of religion, for only a small proportion of Americans go to church regularly, while nearly all have a different get-up on that day from the clothes they wear during the rest of the week.

The principal reason seems to be that it is a sign that we don't have to work on that day. Since being able to live without working is regarded as evidence of the fact that a man is rich enough to live without it, and since wealth is the best evidence of success, and since pride is a universal character, dressing up on

Sunday is a satisfaction to our pride. Or with the overalls and apron, on with the shiny collar or the pretty frock!

Besides this, we all love to "dress up." Men and women are but boys and girls grown up, and no one who knows children or who remembers childhood can forget the joy of pretending. Jerome K. Jerome points out that if you put a boy in a chair and tell him to sit still you are punishing him, but if you put a red cap on his head and a stick in his hand and tell him he is a sentry he will sit on that chair for hours.

There's one more reason for wanting to look nice on Sunday, and perhaps it is the one that counts most after all. It is the only day that many of us have a chance to go out with the family. A wife likes to look pretty for her husband and she likes to have the children at their best on the day their father is home; and the wise husband and father wants to feel that he fits in with the family in general appearance.