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# Socialism and Soldiering;

WITH SOME COMMENTS ON  
THE ARMY ENLISTMENT FRAUD.



By **GEORGE BATEMAN,**

*Late 2nd. 23rd. (Royal Welsh Fusiliers,)*

With an Introduction by **H. H. CHAMPION,**

*Late Royal Artillery.*

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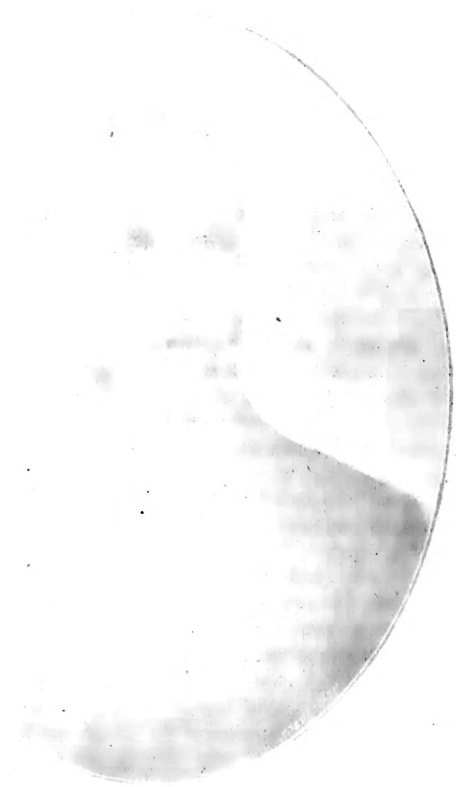
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## PREFACE

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The account, which appears in the following pages, of the circumstances which go so far to make the life of a private soldier unbearable agrees with my experience gained during four years as a commissioned officer in the army. The fault, to my mind, rests chiefly with the system of appointing the superior officers. Choosing the profession of arms because it confers a certain amount of social distinction and necessitates very little work, as a rule they know little or nothing of the men they command, and confer promotion or inflict punishment on the advice of the non-commissioned officers who save them trouble. "Discipline must be maintained," impartial enquiry is tedious and difficult, and it is so much easier to take the word of the sergeant or corporal than to sift the matter to the bottom. Consequently much gross injustice goes on. I know of one instance when in India some hundreds of high caste natives were enlisted, as they sincerely believed, to become cavalry soldiers. They found to their dismay that instead of this they were to act as mule drivers. They protested and finally mutinied when unable to obtain redress, and as many as half-a-dozen a day for days together were flogged for disobeying orders in consequence. When the mule battery, with which they were compelled to serve, on its way to the front reached the district from which these men had been recruited, they deserted in shoals. A similar result is sure to follow whenever men who know they are treated unfairly see an opportunity of revenging themselves on their oppressors.

It is one of the "facts not generally known" that the Reform Bill of 1832 would not have been passed, had not a confidential circular sent to all commanding officers in England been answered to the effect that, if the Bill were refused, and the people then rose as they threatened to do, in that case it would be impossible to count on the soldiers to obey orders in repressing disturbances. The certainty that they would put their duty as citizens before their duty as soldiers saved our country at that time from all the horrors of civil war. Is it not at least as likely that on a definite social, and not merely political issue, the sympathies of the troops with the people may do England as great a service in the future?

It is not possible to reform our military system so as to ensure the comfort and content of the private soldier. Of this I am glad for I feel certain that it can only be rendered useful for honest purposes and impotent for evil, by converting it from a mercenary to a real volunteer system. When we have no standing army, and every citizen who votes for war knows that he will have to take his share of danger and hardship we shall have no more of these piratical expeditions against weaker nations, while England will be infinitely more able to speak to her enemies in the gate, should they ever pick an unjust quarrel with her. Till that day it is better for all that our army which, small though it be, is a standing menace to the liberties of those who exercise no power in the State, should be inefficient, disorganised, and discontented—as it certainly is.

H. H. CHAMPION.

## SOCIALISM AND SOLDIERING.

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**I**N a panic born of cowardice, and consciousness of wrong done to the mass of the people, Sir Charles Warren and those who employ him to protect the property they and their forefathers have wrung from the present and past generations of workers, applied to the military authorities on two recent occasions for troops to "assist in maintaining order" at the Lord Mayor's Show, and the proposed counter demonstration of the unemployed and suffering; and at another meeting called in Trafalgar Square by the Social-Democratic Federation, on November 21st, 1886, for the purpose of demanding from the Tory Government relief works and reduction of the hours of labour, to enable the starving workers to earn sufficient to feed themselves and their families. Although the troops were brought from Windsor and elsewhere on the first occasion, in consequence of a letter sent by the Socialist party exposing the authorities to the jeers of the whole world, it was thought better at the last moment to countermand the order for the attendance of troops on the 21st inst., and although our comrades in red and blue were deprived of their holiday in many instances and strictly forbidden to attend our meeting, they were not exposed a second time to the sneers of the assembled multitude, many of whom, on Lord Mayor's Show day, very foolishly exhibited considerable ill-will towards the men who were but acting under compulsion, and much against their own inclination. But sufficient has been said and done by the robbing classes and their Christian (?) servant, Sir Charles Warren, to show that, if conflict between the workers of Great Britain, and their comrades in the Army and Police, is avoided in the near future, it will not be because the "respectable classes" are loth to use physical force to suppress any attempt on the part of the wealth-producers to come by their own; but because of other influences which are at work, causing both constables and redcoats to ask themselves whether, after all, they have anything to gain by the continuance in power of the useless classes. That these influences *are* at work, and that they are beginning to be felt by our soldiers, is a fact known to many of our comrades, and we propose in the following narrative of the everyday life of a man in the army, to show that from the moment when he joins the Depôt of his regiment, he is a more or less discontented man, and a fit subject for revolutionary propaganda to take hold of.

"ONE VOLUNTEER IS WORTH TWENTY PRESSED MEN,"

Is a motto that holds good in the case of an army as well as in many other instances, and it is often boasted that ours is a volunteer system of enlistment, and, so far, superior to that of Germany and other neighbouring countries. Like the "freedom of contract" theory, this statement

has one grain of truth to a whole bushel of (to put it mildly) sheer nonsense. How far it is truth may be judged from the fact, that of seven men spoken to when met accidentally in the street, everyone had entered the service because "he was hard up." And so far from men entering the army from any foolish notion of loyalty or patriotism, a great proportion of them would gladly leave the "honourable profession" of a soldier, and take their place among the "degraded" toilers of our civilisation, could they but get discharged by any other means than purchase or "discharge with ignominy," with its accompaniment of 2 years imprisonment. To talk of men as volunteer soldiers when they have been compelled to enlist by the semi-starvation and suffering of civilian life, is as incorrect as speaking of the "gift" made by the traveller in the olden days when met by some half dozen highwaymen armed with pistols, who, with more determination than divine right, insisted on the surrender of his "money or his life." Our soldiers then commence their service not as men who have chosen their professions, but as men forced into an irksome position by their bad circumstances of life—as men who have already been wronged by Society, and thus have a debt to pay.

Having made up his mind to try and get a living as a soldier, our recruit attends before a doctor, after passing through the disgusting preliminary of a bath in the same tank in which some twenty or thirty more have "washed" before him. After being weighed, hopping about on one leg, and going through a very disagreeable examination (which is of such a character as to try a sensitive man exceedingly) he is either passed or rejected. If the former is the case he is sent off in due course to the head recruiting station of the regiment to which he is posted. And now commences the making of a discontented fighting machine. From the moment he arrives at his Depot he finds that he has been

#### ENLISTED BY FRAUD AND WILFUL MISREPRESENTATION,

and that henceforth he is a mere machine, expected to obey any orders which may be given him without questioning, to submit to any amount of degradation and insult, and in fact to sell his manhood with his civilian clothes, and become part of the great army of "Christian England," to assassinate men with whom he has no quarrel, to protect those who are crushing his father and brother, and, should occasion arise, to shoot at a mass of people, among whom is mother, sweetheart, sister or friend.

For such self-sacrifice as this, in return for such complete self-abnegation, there must surely be corresponding rewards or benefits. So thinks the intending soldier, and for the purpose of discovering what these are he commences to study a very attractive looking bill, issued by Her Majesty's ministers, and headed, "Advantages of the Army." Prominent among these advantages is seen the statement that the soldier receives "Free Kit," "Free Rations," and pay to commence with at 1s. 1d. per day, and comparing this regular supply of the necessaries of life with his miserable condition as an unemployed workman, the balance seems in favour of the red coat and the necessaries of life, as against his present light pockets and liberty. But the Will-o-th'-Wisp is no harder to catch than these advantages are to obtain. Arrived at the Depot the recruit receives orders to parade at the Quartermaster's Stores, where he has given to him

#### HIS "FREE KIT,"

consisting of two shirts, three pairs of socks, one pair of serge trousers,

one pair of cloth trousers, one cap or shako, or whatever may be the headgear in use in his regiment, one serge frock, two pairs of boots, a hold-all complete containing small necessaries. Fitting on his new clothing our embryo Commander in Chief finds that all his clothing requires alterations, and he is told to parade at the tailor's shop, where the alterations necessary are noted—and made if the recruit is enough a man of the world to understand the use of "palm oil." This issue of clothing with a further supply of trousers, serges, and boots, at very long intervals, completes the "Free Kit" promised by the "Fly-papers" (so-called because they are spread to catch the unwary by their promises of good things to come) issued by the government. The future, as Charles Bradlaugh used to say when he was an atheist, is left to take care of itself. Thus we find a very considerable outlay necessary before the "Free Kit" is completed. From his own pocket the deluded recruit finds he has got to provide a duplicate hold-all with necessaries, as the one issued to him must be kept clean and spotless for "Kit inspection," as woe betide the unlucky wight whose spoon is not polished like burnished silver, or whose knife and fork show signs of having been used, although the inspection takes place at the meal time when the things are wanted in use. Meals over he starts to work to clean his accoutrements, but finds to his dismay that he wants polishing paste, oxalic acid, pouch blacking, pipeclay, sponge, soap, white and coloured rags, "Cleaning-trap bag," and a thousand other articles of kit which are not included in the "Free" issue.

To complete his dismay he learns in the course of conversation that any shirts he may require to replace those worn out will have to be purchased out of his own pocket. The same rule applies with regard to socks, towels, braces, caps, small articles, such as razors, knives, etc., etc., so that, as a matter of fact, our young soldier finds that so far from getting his kit free he has continually to apply to the colour-sergeant of his company for "necessaries" for which he has the pleasure of paying. Another evil from which he finds constant inconvenience and expense is the exceedingly slovenly and careless work put into the clothing by those who make them up. The work, thanks partly to the strain in every stitch while the man is doing "extension motions" and "setting-up drill" generally, is continually giving way, and it is not at all unusual to see the men coming from drill of that description (which includes throwing the arms back violently, swinging them round and round, and bending over until the fingers touch the toes, keeping the legs quite straight) with jackets open under the arms, and trousers hardly capable of covering the man's nakedness. Doubtless the new order to the police, which is to the effect that they are to go through these drills, is as embarrassing to them as to their red-coated brothers, and it certainly borders on the ridiculous to see a constable who has not been able to see below the fourth button of his tunic for some years trying his best to "get right down" in order to touch his toes. Another reason, doubtless, for the tendency to give way observed in the sewing of government clothing, is that much of it is done on the sweating system, in which the hands employed get such wretched wages that they cannot possibly put in decent work if they are to live honestly, and are to be able to remain outside the ranks of the 80,000 or 100,000 victims of capitalism who infest our streets and minister to the lusts of our spiritual pastors and masters. In this, as in very many other cases, our present wretched system of society brings its own Nemesis.

But turning from this, our soldier at once comes in contact with

another evidence of the fraud and misrepresentation which have been used to induce him to join the service. One of the first bugle calls which the new recruit learns is the "Grand Charge," or meal bugle, and hearing the call which announces the meal hour, he takes his place with his comrades, and for the first time comes face to face with

#### HIS "FREE RATIONS."

Sitting down to breakfast, he finds provided for him by government nothing whatever but a pound of dry bread (not always of the best) and water *ad lib.* This will hardly be credited by the civilian, but can easily be verified by a few enquiries addressed to any soldier casually met in the street. But says our reader, "I myself have seen the soldier with tea, coffee, or cocoa for his breakfast, and also with some little relish such as fish, corned beef, or at any rate a little butter." Quite true, friend; and had you been by his side a minute after his dismissal from the early parade, you would also have seen him at the canteen buying those little delicacies, or at the barrack room door cheapening fish or some other relish with a native from the town. And had you been present with the orderly man or the cook of the company the day before you would have seen them drawing the material with which to give taste to the warm water which alone is supplied by government for its soldiers to drink. But making the best of the job, he sets to work and very soon demolishes what is set before him, in blissful ignorance of the fact that the bread he has found insufficient to satisfy an appetite of the finest possible quality, even for the time being is supposed by the Government who have been mean enough to trick him, to serve him for breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. Dinner time having arrived, he is introduced to the second portion of the "Free Ration" fraud, inasmuch as government sets before him for his meal nothing whatever but a very meagre portion of some substance, which in life probably had more acquaintance with London cabs than country cowsheds, but which is popularly supposed to be three-quarters of a pound of meat, the bone of which is limited to two ounces. Again appearances (to the looker-on) are in favour of the authorities, as a fair portion of potatoes is placed on top of the meat, and sometimes even a basin of soup placed by the side. But these favourable evidences are somewhat discounted when he learns in answer to his enquiries that not only the potatoes but the soup and even the salt, pepper, and any other seasoning in use are all provided out of a common fund called the "Grocery Book," and are paid for in equal proportions by the whole company. Tea time arriving, our young hero finds that Her Majesty's Government have thought two meals (save the mark) per day sufficient for a healthy growing lad, and have made no provision for satisfying his hunger from 1 p.m. until 7.45 the next day, thus giving the stomach nearly 19 hours in which to digest the abundant feast which has been provided. Thus we find the powers that be, with unexampled meanness taking advantage of the wretched and semi-starving condition of the victims of society to entice them by lying promises and statements which are known full well to be untrue, to enter into an engagement to serve "Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, her heirs, and successors." The "Free Ration" statement is a gross fraud, inasmuch as the total allowance made by the official regulations is one pound of bread and three-quarters of a pound of meat per man per day, not more than enough for the morning meal when it is remembered that the man has been up two hours or more and has done a good sharp hour's exercise in the shape of drill. That the food is

miserably insufficient is proved by the one fact that nearly every "duty man" (that is men who have no employment as servant, groom, or otherwise) buys at least one pound of bread per day, besides cheese or other food, so long as he has money to do so. For some short period of his service the writer was engaged as kitchen man at the officer's mess, and it may relieve the consciences of those gentlemen whose luxurious dinners he was allowed to assist in preparing to know that during the time in which he was so engaged he found many opportunities of ministering to the temporal wants of his comrades by the assistance of their superfluities. They may be surprised to hear, too, that even the coarse palates and vitiated tastes of their humble companions in arms could appreciate the beauties of codfish and oyster sauce, and that even the raw oysters did just as good a service when consumed by "yours truly" as when put into their sauce. It may also open their eyes and the eyes of civilian readers not a little when we tell them that so insufficient and poor is the food supplied to the "defenders of the country" that when sent on "fatigue" to assist in cleaning at the officers' mess their first duty was invariably to search for any scraps of cold meat or fish, or in fact anything eatable, which might have been rejected by their more dainty officers at dinner overnight. The coffee-pot was always a first object of interest, and there was generally a sharp competition for the honour of cleaning the "ante-room" in which it was possible they might find some half-consumed cigar or forgotten tobacco pouch. "Shocking!" says my middle-class reader. Yes, dear friends, very shocking; and these are the men whose hearts are so full of love and gratitude to you and your class that they are going, at your bidding, to use their cold steel and leaden bullets against the men from whose ranks they are drawn, to whose ranks they must return, and among whom are all those towards whom they feel the love of the son for the mother, the lover for the sweetheart, the man for his mate with whom he went to school, by whose side he toiled, with whom he fought side by side in their common quarrels, and who is to him as a dear brother. *Are you sure*, my wealthy, idle friend, that these men will act as your blind unthinking tools in crushing out the aspirations of *their* comrades, *their* brothers, *their* class? Do you feel *quite* satisfied that they will never *think*, and that, if they think, they will not act on their convictions?

Sufficient has been already said to show that the soldier's life is not so bright as it might be, but the greater part has yet to be told. The tale of the petty tyranny, the crushing degrading insults, and the heart-breaking impossibility of doing right, and giving satisfaction. And besides all this we have yet to examine the next count in the indictment, the deceiving promise of

#### ONE SHILLING AND A PENNY PER DAY

as his pay. Reading the announcement of the rate of pay, coupled as it is with the statement that he shall have "Free Rations" and "Free Kit," it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the pay becomes pocket money to be expended in the purchase of any little comfort or luxury which may conduce to the happiness of our friend Tommy Atkins. Looking at the announcement as it stands one naturally supposes that the man can go to the pay table at the end of the week, and draw seven shillings and sevenpence as his pay. Any such notion is soon knocked out of his head, and he finds that in point number three those who are responsible for the issue of the "Fly papers" have made false statements to him, and have deceived him, and he is made still more morose, discontented, and unlikely to make a good soldier. The first two



deductions made are 3d. per day for "messaging" and a halfpenny per day for washing. Now what is this messaging? Simply a compulsory payment by the soldier which goes to buy potatoes, coffee, flour, pepper, salt, etc., in fact to provide him with a large portion of what should be provided free in fulfilment of the promise that he should have free rations. Another deduction is for "barrack damages," which varies from 4d. to 6d. per month per man, and which goes (in whole or in part) to repair damages and replace losses (real and imaginary) which may have taken place during the month. Again we have a stoppage of the subscription to the Library and another for haircutting; add to this the replacing of worn out clothing, the repairing of the same, and repairing of boots; the purchase of various materials for cleaning accoutrements, etc.; the repairing of any accidental injury to arms, and a hundred and one other matters, and it will readily be seen that the statement that a soldier *gets* one shilling and a penny a day is a deliberate misstatement made in order to get the men to join. In closing this part of my subject I may say that referring to my account book I find three months in which I "signed accounts" in debt, instead of having money to come.

But now I come to matters which, as affecting the general contentment and happiness of our soldiers, are of still greater importance. And first among these I shall place the system of

#### PETTY TYRANNY ON THE PART OF NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

What this means to the men will be seen in the number of habitual bad characters, the number of men "discharged with ignominy," and the extraordinary number of desertions in a year. The promotion of men from the ranks seems to be arranged on the principle most likely to cause discontent, and least likely to ensure the good conduct, efficiency, and soldier-like behaviour of the men. And the bad effects of the present injudicious promotions of extremely young and unqualified men, to the rank of Non-Commissioned Officer, will readily be seen by my readers, when they hear that a man who has only joined the service three months, and has received his first step in promotion—being appointed lance-corporal—is absolutely and completely the master of every man who is still a private, and has it in his power to make a man's life most miserable, or, on the contrary, very happy, in proportion as he himself may be in a good or bad temper. By "Queen's Regulations" it takes a man two years of absolutely irreproachable service to get his good conduct stripes, for which he gets one penny per day extra; it takes him four years more (or six years altogether) to get his second stripe, for which he gets another penny per day; twelve years to get three stripes; eighteen years to get four stripes; and twenty-one years of absolutely perfect soldiering to get five stripes—the highest possible. Now suppose a man to have served without a single regimental entry for eighteen years, and by so doing to have won the four good conduct stripes. On a certain occasion a young jack-in-office, who has just got his lance stripe, comes into the barrack room, and full of his new authority warns our old soldier for a certain "fatigue" duty. Knowing that he is not first on the duty "roster" for fatigue our friend with the good conduct stripes ventures to expostulate with him, and to refer him to the "roster." The pride of our eighteen-year-old three-month's-service youngster is in arms directly, and without taking the trouble to ascertain whether the man is right or not, he puts him between a file of men, and confines him to the guard room, with the charge against him of refusing to obey the orders of the Acting Orderly Sergeant. On going to the orderly-room in the morning the veteran's explanation is met with the parrot-cry "no-excuse," and

probably finds himself with enough punishment against him to take off his arm the *whole* of the stripes it has cost him eighteen years good soldiering to obtain. And thus a good soldier is turned into a discontented, disheartened man, who will sit and brood over the hardship of his case, until fresh provocation being offered, he strikes the man who has degraded him, and finds himself sentenced to two years imprisonment and to be discharged with ignominy. In this case the Government would save a pension (and thus help to show a good budget), and would turn loose to prey upon society a man whose every particle of self-respect has been crushed out of him merely by the tyranny of some boyish non-commissioned officer, who had been promoted before he knew his duty. "But this is an extreme case!" says the reader. Granted; but it may be the case of every man who enters the service—it is a possibility which may occur to each. And although this may be an infrequent case, it is not so with the continual bullying, the degrading and insulting language, and the monotonous punishment drill which is the lot of nearly every man in the service. I am under the difficulty in explaining this that I cannot put on paper the filthy expressions which are not uncommonly used by the drill instructors to the men in their squads. But anyone who may desire to know the truth of these statements has only to go to a place like the Citadel barracks at Plymouth, and there from the ramparts watch the recruits at drill between the hours of two and three in the afternoon. On one occasion in those very barracks, I was one of a squad under a man named Harvey. The drill was between seven and eight one morning, and because the squad could not please this man, (whose principal qualifications were his power to yell, and his unlimited capacity for swearing and bullying) he gave the word to fix bayonets, charge bayonets, and then to double, and he kept the men so long at this very distressing drill, that several of the squad dropped their rifles from sheer inability to hold them any longer, while others fell out unable to keep it up. "But why not appeal?" Simply because it would be no good, and would only bring down the wrath of every Non-Commissioned officer in the regiment on the head of "the fellow who lagged." The non-commissioned officer's best chance of getting on is to show his smartness, and regimentalism, which is best done by "wheeling" men before the officers for frivolous crimes, and not allowing those under him a moment's rest, or time for recreation. It is an old saying that if a man goes in for promotion "he must be ready to 'shop' (or make prisoner) his own brother."

But the curse of authority, unfortunately, is not confined to the Non-Commissioned Officers. It is often said that our army is not what it used to be, and that were we to be engaged in an European war, we should not find the same dogged never-know-when-they're-beaten sort of pluck which characterised our men in the past. If that be so, the blame for such a lamentable state of affairs would be found to lie very much with

#### BAD COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

As I write my mind goes back to the year 1881, and I see again a regiment which has been complimented by General Napier at Gibraltar on its smart soldier-like behaviour. Stationed at Plymouth the "Goats" were mounting the main guard. The smartest and best men had been picked for this guard by the Orderly Sergeants (as was the invariable rule) because it was one on which they came under the notice of the General commanding the whole of the Western Division (at that time Major General Pakenham). Formed up for inspection by the Adjutant, "clean, smart, and fit for anything," instead of being sent off to their

duty with a cheering word of advice, that worthy spent some twenty minutes in fault-finding, then told the men they were "beastly dirty," and finished up by declaring that if they did not turn out smarter he would "make their lives a burden to them!" On another occasion (I think in August 1881) the regiment was on Commanding Officer's parade in full marching order, which means something like 60 pounds weight to be carried. So extremely hot had been the season that all parades were ordered to be stopped at Aldershot between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Notwithstanding this intense heat the men were kept in marching order, and drilled from 10-30 a.m. until 1-15 p.m., the morning's drill including skirmishing, and doubling. Although this drill was not finished until after 1 p.m. some of the men who had made mistakes had to parade again at 2, thus allowing only three quarters of an hour to clean their accoutrements and have dinner. So bad did the treatment become at this time that the discontent of the men found vent in a long letter by the author of this pamphlet, and another by a Corporal who afterwards deserted, both of which the Editor of the *Western Morning News*, an influential Plymouth daily, inserted in his columns, although by so doing he ran considerable risk. It may be objected that these cases concern only one regiment, but I reply that the broad facts contained in this pamphlet are in a greater or less degree (according to the officers) descriptions of the soldier's every-day life all through the service. True it is that all officers, or all non-commissioned officers are not bad; and I would here bear testimony to the exceedingly good character borne by one officer especially, Mr. C. A. Boughton Knight, among the men of his company. But in his particular regiment he was an exception. When he exchanged into the Scots Guards, there was hardly a dry eye in the company as they said good-bye to the man who had treated them as fellow men and thus won their respect and (laugh if you will) their heartfelt love. Such men as he are the salt of the service who keep the men just below the point of insubordination.

But bad as is the treatment of soldiers at home it is sometimes even worse when on foreign or active service, and if a soldier is treated in such a way at home as to make him disgusted and discontented, he sees such sights and receives such examples of neglect while abroad that at times it is hard to keep his indignation within bounds. Not only does he find that he is ordered to risk his life in such brutal struggles and butchery as those of Ashantee, Zululand, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Burmah, but he soon understands that even while doing his duty there are some around him whose sole employment consists of

#### ROBBING THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

One instance, vouched for by one who saw the exposure, will suffice to show to what an abominable extent this sort of thing is carried. Charitable ladies and gentlemen in England, who interested themselves in our soldiers in Egypt, sent out for the use of the sick and wounded several cases of oranges and other "medical comforts." Oranges were a very great luxury in that hot climate, and the civilian storekeepers who supplied such things from tents to those who could afford to purchase, used to retail them at about fourpence each. One old Maltese especially did a very good business, and on one occasion some of our navvies who were engaged in building the railway determined to see if they could not steal some of the old gentleman's stock. The oranges were kept in boxes which were stacked at the back of the tent, and for their purpose the navvies attacked the back, and having loosened the tent they began to raise the canvas for the purpose of extracting some of

the coveted fruit. What was their surprise and disgust on discovering marked on every one of the boxes the following words: "For the sick and wounded in Egypt"! Whose was the fault I know not, but there is the fact. The oranges sent for the sick had been disposed of to the Maltese who was selling them at fourpence each, while our brave fellows were in hospital with parched tongues and throats.

We also know, though in very small part, of the sufferings of our men who are away fighting the Burmese in order to open fresh markets for the shoddy goods of the manufacturing community of which John Bright is a member. News has just come to hand that

#### IN BURMAH MEN ARE DYING LIKE ROTTEN SHEEP,

the totals so far ascertained showing fatalities 372, only 23 of which are from wounds in action, the remaining 349 being from disease. Besides this we have invalided home 575 of all ranks, a very large proportion of whom are probably cases which will always leave the seeds of disease behind, which will sooner or later carry off other victims to the mad effort to obtain new markets. If ever the real history of our wars of conquest and aggrandizement is written by a competent pen, it will form a record of crime and suffering which will have no equal in modern times.

Another section of our forces is engaged in a still more disgraceful work. The men who enlisted to protect this country against her foes are to-day found

#### EXECUTING "SENTENCES OF DEATH" IN IRELAND;

English workmen fighting their Irish brothers, and thus assisting in collecting the rents of men who rob the English and Irish democracies, and who use the money thus stolen to debauch the wives and prostitute the daughters of their victims. But in the fraternising of the Marines at Skye with the Crofters whom they were sent to coerce, and in the rumbling of discontent which was recently heard among the troops engaged in Ireland, the watchful ear recognises the commencement of the strike of our troops against the degrading work to which they are being put; and one begins again to hope that our men will shortly realise that though they may wear red coats, the battle of the Irish peasants is their battle, and that they will refuse to prostitute their strength in the effort to crush a people "rightly struggling to be free." The men who are now fighting under the same flags which cheered on those who fought for the relief of the oppressed, will, looking on those flags, remember that their duty is to be ever found on the side of right. "Obedience is the first duty of a soldier," is the motto in the soldier's book: yes, obedience to the call of right, obedience to the call of justice; obedience when appealed to on behalf of the suffering and oppressed; but not obedience to the call of peers who evict women in the pangs of labour, and who spend the money wrung from the suffering Irish in debauchery in the brothels of Chelsea and Pimlico. Soldiers, do your duty; but first be sure what your duty is.

The above are but a few of the incidents which make a soldier's life unhappy, and make the men discontented, miserable, and fit subjects for the truths of Socialism to make an impression upon. But the tale of petty spite and tyranny, of injustice and fraud, of drill never-ending and punishment undeserved might be prolonged until it would fill a book of several hundred pages. But why go on? Enough has been said to answer my purpose,—to show to those who oppress the soldiers as they oppress the workers how weak is the force they threaten to use to

prevent the class to which *our* soldiers belong from making an attempt to free themselves from their slavery. Think a moment, my middle-class readers, do you not think the men whom you call your army will some day refuse to prostitute their strength to fight against father or brother, mother or sister. Do you imagine that at your bidding these men will fire into the ranks of men and women with whom they have eaten and drunk? Will they not remember that among those men, are their brothers; that the people on whom they are told to charge are the people among whom they will take their place when they leave the army, only a few years or may be months hence? Are you not a little rash in supposing that these men whom your government has defrauded, whom the officers drawn from your class have embittered against themselves and you, will never remember that if they refuse to fight for you (and instead of doing so go and join their brothers who are struggling for freedom for soldiers as well as civilians, police as well as citizens, sailors as well as all others drawn from the working classes) you are absolutely powerless and at the mercy of those against whom you fight. Your short service system is filling the ranks of the army with thinking men, men who have already heard the truths of Socialism, and by discharging the men at the end of three or seven years you are giving us trained and discontented men, and are hastening the time when

#### SOCIALISTS AND SOLDIERS WILL SHAKE HANDS

and unite in bringing about by their unity in peace or war (as you of the middle and upper classes shall decide) the happier and better time when all shall labour usefully, and not too long, and when each shall have the full value of his toil.

Soldiers and policemen, sailors and marines, all classes are beginning to understand that Social-Democrats are fighting a just battle. That our cause is a strong one because based upon the eternal foundation of truth and justice. That our cause is their cause because we are struggling on behalf of their dear ones, and are doing our honest best to make it possible for all men to live decent happy lives as the return for their useful labour. You of the class who live without labour, on the labour of others, you are the only people who will not shortly be convinced of the justice of our cause. Your army, your police have but to announce their determination not to use their strength against us, and you cannot by any possibility force them to do so. Why should they? They soon will be found in the ranks of the unemployed—we are to-day fighting the battle on behalf of those who have no work. Every man in army or police has suffered from the system which makes one man to live in luxury at the expense of the misery of the many,—against that system we alone are battling. Pause while there is time; think is it not the cause of humanity, justice and right which we are struggling for? Is there any other hope of ridding society of the jails full of what might have been the brightest manhood of our country? Is there any other means by which you can bring back to their place as honest citizens the 80,000 women of this great London, who have found it impossible to live by honest toil? Is there any other way by which you can give comfort to the children of the unemployed workmen of to-day? If this be the only way—whether you be wealthy or poor, soldiers, police, or what not—if you be *men*, take your place, and accept your share of the necessary burden, in the struggle for that cause which will bring in peace, happiness, and comfort, and which will build up a new society which shall be based upon the universal brotherhood of man, and whose motto shall be “Each for all, and all for each.”

And, after all, what is this great mass of evil against which we are told the forces of the army and police are to be used? What is this terrible thing Social-Democracy? How many know, how many have sought to know the truth as between Socialism and Capitalism? It is so easy to condemn a thing—a man—a system as criminal, but it is so wearisome to argue out fairly and honestly a somewhat difficult problem, especially when it is quite possible the real solution when found may tell against oneself, one's own pet theories, one's own comfort, one's own idle luxurious life.

#### WHO ARE THE MEN

whom we see branded as mischievous agitators, stirrers up of class hatred, and disturbers of the "harmonious relations between labour and capital?" Simply, in the majority of cases, men who have lived and suffered among the "masses," who have felt the terrible grinding of the heel of capitalism as it crushes out of their lives all that makes life bright, and happy, and worth living. Simply men who have stood, without the power to shed the tears which would have given relief, by the side of the little plain coffin containing all that is left of the little one who used to make home happy, even when stomachs were empty and the body shivered for want of the clothes which had been parted with for food, and who have cursed with bitterest curses the cruel selfishness of the system which has slowly and surely murdered the darling of their life. Who are they? Men who have seen the infant sucking the empty breast while the mother's eyes have appealed to them for the food they could not give. Who have seen their sisters damned in this world, and—if we are to believe those who call themselves our spiritual pastors and masters—damned in the world to come. Who are they? The brothers of the men forced into the criminal classes, the fathers of sons compelled to thieve to live! These are the men against whom you who are not with us are fighting. Are they dangerous? It is you—whether workman or idler—who are propping up the system which causes suffering and degradation, it is you who make them so. Are they madmen? It is you, middle-class man, aristocrat, it is you who have made them mad by the hellish cruelty of your oppression, by the degradation of their womanhood, and it is against you—if they be mad, their madness will turn and avenge itself. But they are not mad. They are those who, taught by men *from* your class but not *of* it, have determined that come what may, whether by peace or war, through weal or through woe, they are going on with the struggle for liberty, for life, for happiness. These are the men against whom you must fight, or with whom you must unite in the struggle. Fanatics if you will; violent if you like; but fanatics in their confidence in the justice of their cause, and violent only in their hatred of seeing what they believe to be truth crushed down by your blind folly.

#### WHAT ARE THEY STRIVING FOR?

Do they seek fame? No, or they would sell their voice or pen to a party as the Broadhursts, the Howells, and the Cremers have done in the past! Do they seek riches? No, for every one of them in a greater or lesser degree is giving of his small earnings to help in his cause! For what then are they spending their lives? For the hope of better things in the future; for the hope of gaining for themselves and those who suffer with them some of the glorious possibilities of life; for the hope of lighting up with joy the thousands of lives which to-day are full of dark dangerous despair. For this hope they strive; for this hope they

fight on ; for this hope they will be found struggling though all the powers of earth are fighting against them ; for this hope they will sacrifice all that makes life happy ; and by their striving, their fighting, their struggling, and their sacrifice they will assuredly conquer.

#### IS THE BATTLE WORTH FIGHTING ?

To you of the classes who never labour, but who are living upon the labour of others, what will a victory mean? Think just a moment! You can but gain a continuance of your present aimless existence, your life of hypocrisy, hollowness, rottenness, of which, even now, when you are honest enough to think seriously, you are sometimes ashamed ; especially when you remember how mean, how contemptible, is your life if you are living—not on your own labour, for you do none—but on the labour of your fellow men and women. And what does a continuance of this throat-cutting system mean to the great mass of the men and women of the world. It means continuous toil, continuous misery and suffering, continuous degradation, for you cannot point to a remedy, or even to anything like a sufficient palliative, outside of that proposed by the Socialists whom you despise. It means to the "people" lives of dull grinding poverty, without education, without pleasure, and, worst of all, *without hope!* Do you who read this belong to the middle class, the wealthy class? I ask you are you prepared to use your energies, your strength, your skill to gain a victory, to support a system, which will condemn your fellow men and women to such a life as this. Men of your class in other countries have sacrificed everything for this cause, and men like Peter Krapotkine, men like Stepniak, appeal to you to give up your mean despicable existence and take your share in the fight, success in which means happiness for so many. Nor is your own country without noble examples for you ; think then whether you can resist the appeal of thousands of blighted lives, thousands of weak voiced children, who cry to you to help them to live as decent men and women a life of happiness and peace.

Is it such a crime to ask that men should enjoy the fruits of their own toil? Is it so great a wrong to forbid a man, a class, to take that which belongs to another without returning him a full equivalent. If a member of a family will not work, what is the result? That family turns the lazy one into the streets to starve—until he works. And if labour applied to nature is alone the source of wealth how comes it that the idle classes, who do no *useful* work, are found in possession of the wealth produced by industrious toilers? How comes it that those who produce so much enjoy so little? Answer truly, and the confession must come, that it is because labour is robbed of that which it produces ; because those who toil not steal from those who labour. Call it profit, call it interest, call it rent, and it remains, notwithstanding all your arguments, robbery, because no equivalent is returned to those from whom it is taken and to whom it belongs.

#### WE SEEK BUT JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY.

We ask not for that which is another's, but simply the right to labour usefully, and to enjoy the fruits of our labour. How can this be secured? A man wishes to apply his labour to nature—in order to be able to live he must do so, but he finds himself prevented because the implements of production, and even the gifts of nature, are controlled by someone else, who refuses him access to them unless he will allow him a large share of the produce of his labour. What then? Since it is absolutely necessary that labour and nature should come together, the barrier between them

—private ownership—must be removed, and the people—the State—must assume the position of its own trustee. Surely our position is reasonable. If the welfare of the great mass of the people demands self-sacrifice on the part of the few, the sacrifice must be made. If the life of ease, and luxury, and idleness of the wealthy classes can only be maintained at the expense of the unhappiness and robbery of the poor, then they must give up their luxury and ease, and raise themselves to the position of honest useful toilers, taking their part in the battle of life, and cheered by the knowledge that they are helping to give better, brighter, and happier lives, to those who have suffered so much in the past. Do any want an ideal for which to strive? we put before you the highest possible ideal—the greatest possible happiness and culture of the human race. Does anyone want to spend his life in practical efforts to raise up his down-trodden fellows? We show you a certain path to success. Search it, try it, examine it honestly; forget that it is called Socialism, and see only if it be right, if it be just, if it be good. And if so, if you see no other way out of the difficulty, take your place—whether you be workman or middle-class, aristocrat or beggar, in the forefront of the battle; and with perfect freedom as your motto, with hearts filled with hope, with hand clasped in hand and shoulder to shoulder, fight with all your strength—not the battle of the bondholders, not the fight of the usurers—but the battle of the workers of all nations, the battle of Social-Democracy, and you will thus be hastening the time when the peoples of the world will stand side by side, without strife, without quarrelling, happy, contented, FREE.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.—Since the first edition was issued, an appeal has been made to various sections of the community for funds with which to erect the "Imperial Institute," in commemoration of Her Majesty's fifty years' reign. Among others, the men of the Army and Navy, and even the inmates of Chelsea Hospital have had issued to them what is tantamount to an order to contribute of their small means to this object. Refuse they dare not, and thus they are to be robbed still further. Why not appeal to the widows and children of men killed in action, and to the young women who have been forced on the streets because their fathers have "died for their country?" It is to be hoped that men in all the services will resolutely refuse to contribute to such an object as this, while their fellows, their women-folk, and their children perish for want of bread.

Many letters from Non-Commissioned Officers and privates have been received, corroborating the statements contained in this pamphlet, and the author will be glad to correspond (in confidence) with any who can further expose the frauds, deceptions, and tyranny practised upon the rank and file either of the Army or Navy. All communications should be addressed to George Bateman, care of the Publishers.

*[Those who wish to know more about Socialism should send to the Modern Press for a list of pamphlets on the subject. On receipt of One Shilling a dozen different pamphlets will be sent post-free.]*