

ENGLAND'S ARMY SYSTEM.

THE INDUCEMENTS TO BECOME A SOLDIER OF THE QUEEN.

Especially Glittering at First Sight. But There are High Places to Which the Common Soldier May Reasonably Aspire.

"The difficulty with recruiting now," said a veteran staff sergeant, who was accosted by a writer in Chamber's Journal, "is that men look at everything so very much from a business point of view. They're not fellows who are broke; they join the ranks because they get so much reliable comfort—food and lodging and time for taking pleasure without being too tired to enjoy it. Still, whenever there is a war-scare on, there's always plenty to come up to the scratch. One thing is, there's no good telling lies to them—no good at all. They know very well indeed what they're doing when they come to me. 'Still they do come. See the smart, well-dressed country candidate, the decent-looking ex-carpenter, the shy-looking sprig of the educated middle class, the callous-looking member of the toiling lower class, all ready,—may eager—to take the Queen's shilling. But lately a baronet's son joined the ranks, and so did the son of a Montreal medical professor in McGill University. Young fellows who have failed at Sandhurst; varsity men who, sickened with the dismal prospect of a curacy at £75 a year, other fellows out of love of adventure and a desire to see the world across the seas; decent mechanics and honest laborers, tired of the monotony of their lives or out of a job through a spree, are all found in the ranks."

AT THE RECRUITING DEPOT.

Let us see what actually are the young soldier's conditions and prospects to-day with the colors. During the past year an addition has been made to the army of 9,980 men, so that in the estimates for 1899-1900 the number of men of all ranks in the total of the regular army, exclusive of India, is returned at 184,853. The establishment of British regiments in India is given as 73,157, the same as last year.

Tommy Atkins when he first dons his uniform has, broadly speaking, the same chances before him that a youth has who quits his father's house to enter an office in a city of about 250,000 inhabitants. To put it in the briefest possible way, a young soldier on joining the British army to-day may be said to receive in pay, rations, lodging, clothing, etc., the equivalent of not less than 15 shillings a week, which sum gradually increases according to his conduct and promotion. After deducting all stoppages, a well-conducted soldier has at his own disposal about 5 shillings a week, most of which he may very easily set aside. For well-conducted soldiers, who are also well educated, there is a prospect of quick promotion, if professionally fit, and the pay of the non-commissioned officer compares favorably with the wages of artisans in civil life. An ordinary sergeant of a line regiment gets 17 shillings and 6 pence a week clear money, a color sergeant 21, 2 shillings and 2 pence, and a quartermaster-sergeant £1, 8 shillings, while a regimental sergeant-major gets £1, 15 shillings, and a superintending clerk £1, 18 shillings and 6 pence. The last two now rank as the warrant officers of a battalion, as also do the master-gunners of the royal artillery.

ALL THESE HONORABLE POSTS

are open to the deserving young soldier, but what is not so generally known is that there are two appointments among the commissioned officers that are filled exclusively by men from the ranks—that of Quartermaster—there are 945 Quartermasters in the Army, with pay at the rate of from 9 shillings and 6 pence to 16 shillings and 6 pence per day—and that of riding-master, with daily pay varying from 16 shillings and 6 pence to 18 shillings and 6 pence. After twenty-one years' service should the soldier get so far—and it is quite possible for him to do so if he wishes, and if there is no physical bar—he is entitled, on discharge, to a pension varying with his rank, as follows: Privates, gunners, etc., receive from 8 pence to 1 shilling and 6 pence per day; non-commissioned officers, from 1 shilling and 3 pence to 3 shillings and 6 pence a day—and let it be noted that there are altogether 14,000 sergeants of every grade in the Army; warrant officers, from 3 shillings to 5 shillings per day—and there are 700 of these prizes. Should a soldier during the first three months of his service desire to leave the Army he may claim his discharge on payment of £10; during the last year 1,649 men claimed their discharge on this footing. After three months' service the sum will be £18, and the permission of the officer commanding is necessary. Discharges by purchase are allowed to the fullest extent, consistent with the requirements of the service; last year 1,574 men were allowed to leave on payment of £18. This is called "discharge by indulgence."

BEST MOUNTED POLICE.

THE NORTHWEST FORCE ARE AT THE HEAD OF THEIR CLASS.

One Patrol of 2.17 Miles Description of the Men Who Maintain Law and Order Over a Vast Territory.

The Northwest Mounted police, many of whom are going to fight for the Empire in Africa, are a distinguished body. Throughout a territory of seven times greater than the whole of France law and order are maintained by a corps of only some eight hundred men, officially known as the Northwest Mounted Police of Canada, but familiarly known as the "Riders of the Plains. The corps combines the features of a military force with those of a constabulary. Its duties are as varied as the country patrolled. Essentially the riders are soldiers, but they act as magistrates, sheriffs, detectives, town constables, customs officers, license inspectors, five wardens, court clerks, Crown timber agents, health officers, hide inspectors, game wardens, relief officers, Crown prosecutors, food inspectors and mail carriers. By their discipline and proficiency, by their valor and impartiality, their hardihood and discretion, and by their soldierly and gentlemanly bearing they have not only won the respect of all the classes they daily come in contact with, but they have acquired abroad the reputation of being one of the finest forces in the world. And they live up to it. Romance and hard work ride side by side in the service. It is the stamping ground of adventurous spirits drawn from many countries, and the passwords are intelligence, stamina and pluck.

FOLLOW THE TRAILS.

They follow the mountain trails. By railroad train or steamboat they go from town to village. They follow the shores of the lakes and river. They penetrate the snow mantled forests, and to make accessible some new found Eldorado they cut their way through an unexplored wilderness. Like the meshes of a gigantic net their patrol trails cover a country that measures a thousand miles from east to west and two thousand miles from north to south. In fact, one patrol alone—that from Fort Saskatchewan, in Alberta, to Fort Resolution, on Great Slave Lake, thence to Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, and return via Lesser Slave Lake—covers a distance of 2,172 miles. The patrolling party runs the greater part of the distance on snowshoes and covers the remainder with canoe and paddle. To give an idea of the tremendous distance travelled by members of the force here is an instance of an officer who, in the course of his regular duties as assistant commissioner during but a single year travelled a total distance of 15,181 miles, 10,461 miles of which were by rail, 900 miles by water, 3,620 miles with horses and 200 miles on snowshoes. By a splendid system of connecting patrols almost every settler in the Northwest Territory is periodically visited by the police.

INVESTIGATE SETTLERS' WOE.

If he has any complaints he makes them in writing, and signs the constable's patrol report, which at the end of the beat is turned over to the non-com. officer in charge of the detachment. It is then forwarded with the non-com's weekly report to the officer in charge of the division. Complaints are promptly investigated. In this way the force keeps constantly in touch with the scattered population, which, in return, readily give every assistance to the police. It is particularly owing to this strong spirit of cordiality existing between settler and trooper that a mere handful of men can enforce law and order in a country three-fourths the size of Russia.

GREAT CHARACTER.

It would be difficult to find in any corps in the world an assemblage of characters more varied than that to be met with in the ranks of the Northwest Mounted Police. On the past and present payrolls may be read the names of novelists, "broncho busters," Lords, "river drivers," artists, bushwhackers, lawyers, dog drivers, hon. orables, packers, bank clerks, sailors, government clerks, fishermen, Oxford and Cambridge graduates, sons of admirals, generals, bi-hops, and statesmen; former officers of the militia and volunteers of Canada and Great Britain, as well as former officers of the armies of England, France, and Germany. About 75 per cent. of the men are gentlemen by birth as well as education. Some of them have a private income in addition to their pay. Fully five per cent. once served in the Imperial army of Great Britain, some having seen service in Egypt, India, Africa, and Afghanistan. The police claim to be the best educated and wealthiest force in the world. The force is armed with Lee-Metford and Winchester repeating carbines and Enfield revolvers. The principal stations are supplied with bronze mortars and 7 and 9 pounder field pieces. In the Yukon district they are provided with Maxim guns.

AVERAGE OF FORCE.

The present average of the force is:—Height, 5 feet 10 1/2 inches; weight, 167 pounds; chest measurement, 38 1/2 inches; age, 31 years. The saddle horses used by the police are western bred, being a cross between Indian cayuse mares and thoroughbred English sires. They average 15 1/2 hands in height. They have immense powers of endurance and are extremely hardy. The record of the corps was made by Sergeant Major Spicer while carrying despatches during the last Riel rebellion. He rode a pony—a little over 14 1/2 hands in height—from Fort Macleod to Calgary and return, a distance of 224 miles, in two days, and strange to say, on the morning of the third day both horse and rider went on duty. The police horses are equipped with Mexican stock saddles and head stalls, with Whitman bits, which require only a single rein. The carbines are carried balanced across the saddle and strapped to its horn.

BATTLE PRECAUTIONS.

How Killed and Wounded British Soldiers Are Identified.

The names of the British killed and wounded after a battle are ascertained by means of the identification cards which all our soldiers carry sewn up in the left-hand corner of their khaki tunics. On the card is written the soldier's name, rank, regimental number, together with the name and address of his next of kin. The latter is added so that the authorities may know where to forward the effects of any soldier who gets killed.

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After an engagement the roll is called as soon as the regiments get back to their camp. Every man who does not answer is "ticked off" as missing, and search is made for him on the field. As the search parties come across the dead and wounded men they rip open the tunic at the left hand corner and take out the identification card. The cards thus collected are carried back to camp and handed over to the clerk of the general in command, who therefrom compile the casualty lists. After all the cards have been collected the roll is checked again, and a note made of those men of whom no trace has been discovered. These are usually presumed to have been taken prisoners, but it does not always follow that the assumption is correct. In the corner of this tunic, opposite the identification card, every soldier carries a small pad of bandages, etc., for dressing a wound. This "field dressing," as it is called, is added to "Tommy's" equipment in order that he may be his own surgeon until medical assistance arrives, or may have the wherewithal on him to bind up the wounds of a chum. You will probably be surprised to learn that one of the last things "Tommy" does when ordered to the front is to make his will, although every regiment contains a percentage of happy-go-lucky fellows who do not worry themselves about what will become of their property when they no longer require it.

FEAR BASED ON NOTHING.

The cause that implants the spirit of fear in the bosom of the gentle sex is a subject that may well puzzle the most devout student of human nature. The mouse is considered one of the most harmless of creatures, and yet it has been responsible for more cases of hysteria than any animal many times its size. One woman, who all her life has carefully searched beneath her bed before retiring, at one time found herself in possession of a folding monstrosity, the intricacies of which she had first to solve before taking her well earned rest. But such is the force of habit. After pulling down the bed she would carefully look beneath it, for no other reason than that she had done so ever since she was a child. A favorite illusion is that of having one's legs seized, either from behind in going upstairs, or on getting into bed. Women have been seen scuttling upstairs in the dark, setting at defiance all the laws of locomotion in a ludicrous attempt to keep their legs some distance ahead of them and beyond the reach of a mysterious clutch. Girls will also make flying leaps into bed to eliminate the same improbability. Many women search diligently in closets, bureau drawers and all sorts of impossible places before resigning themselves to sleep. An old house-keeper, whose table silver, in two baskets, was always placed in her bedroom after the evening meal, was one night awakened by what she considered suspicious sounds from the lower regions. Cautiously leaving her room laden with the silver, she pitched both baskets into the hall below, calling out as she did so, "Take it all and please go," then fled precipitately and barricaded herself in her room. Needless to add, she found both baskets and scattered contents the following morning, a little the worse for the rough handling she had given them.

CHANGEABLE ROSES.

The horticultural world is exercised by the mysterious transformation in color which the Japanese are able to effect in roses. By some unknown but natural process the flower changes from red in the sunlight to white in the shade or in darkness.

HEARTILY AGREED WITH HIM.

Pa—My son we must never put off till to-morrow what we can do to-day. Willie—Well, then, Pa, let's finish up that mince pie.

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