THE BRITISH ACADEMY

THE RALEIGH LECTURE ON HISTORY

(Founded by Sir Charles C. Wakefield, Bart., on the occasion of the Raleigh Tercentenary, October 29, 1918)

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By

The Hon. John Fortescue, LL.D.

[*From the Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. IX*] 1920

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By the Hon. JOHN FORTESCUE

Read October 27, 1920

No man can address such an audience as this without a certain feeling of trepidation; and that feeling is increased in me by a small personal matter. I am, I think, the first man from Raleigh's county who has been honoured with an invitation to deliver the lecture which is called after his name. We of Devon cherish a peculiar—possibly sometimes an excessive—pride in our county. We flatter ourselves that there is one period of the history of England and of the Empire which can never be wholly dissociated from the name of Devon; and among the few great men produced by Devon at that period none probably was greater than Raleigh. The burden that lies heavy upon me at this moment is the thought that I must acquit myself worthily of my county as well as of my audience.

I have chosen as my subject, not unnaturally, that branch of historical study with which I am best acquainted, and I have therefore taken as the title to this lecture 'The British Soldier and the Empire'. Let me hasten to say, however, that I have no intention of inflicting upon you an endless succession of campaigns, with tedious disquisitions upon armament, organization, strategy, and tactics. Let us go back to Raleigh for a moment. He of course was a soldier. Every gentleman was actually or potentially a soldier in his day, for no profession except that of arms was thought becoming to a gentleman. But we do not think of Raleigh primarily, if at all, as a soldier. We know him better as a seer of great visions, a thinker of great thoughts, and a projector, in actual practice, of great enterprises for the widening of his country's power and influence; as a man of letters who could express in words the reason for the faith in England's greatness that was in him; and as a poet whose thoughts so burned within him that they could only find due expression in the best words ranged in the best order. Here is a soldier of whom surely it can be said that his sound has gone out into all lands and his words unto

the ends of the earth; who still makes himself felt wherever the English language is spoken, and indeed wherever, though there be, perhaps, but one or two Englishmen to hoist it at sunrise and to haul it down at sunset, the British flag is flown. Have there been any soldiers like unto him since his head fell upon Tower Hill on October 29, 1618? That is the subject which I propose to discuss this evening.

First, let me make clear what I mean by a soldier. Till the middle of the seventeenth century, as I have said, the profession of arms alone was thought seemly for a gentleman. But let us plainly understand that it was a profession—that is to say, a means of making a living. Now, making a living is, I imagine, neither more nor less than taking a share of the property of some other person or persons, with or without their consent; and human history, at any rate after a certain stage of civilization has been reached, may be said to be the record of man's struggles to make a living. If the share of another's property be taken with his free consent, the living so made is commonly called an honest living—it should be called a peaceful living; if against his free consent, it is called a dishonest living, but in reality it ought to be called, quite shortly, Living by War. In some degree this fact is realized, for any act of violence, whether for the seizure of property or for what cause soever, is termed a breach of the King's peace. But theft without violence, whether on the smaller scale of shoplifting or blackmail, or on the larger scale of fraudulent companies, though not reckoned technically a breach of the King's peace, is, equally with robbery by violence, an act of war. Hence of course the familiar argument that, if private property were abolished, crime would cease, and, with crime, war. Alas! the root of the matter lies deeper than in the mere division of this world's goods. As long as one man has a greater brain or a stronger arm than another—nay, so long as one woman has a more beautiful head of hair than another—so long will there be envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, and war.

Let us admit, then, quite frankly that the military profession was a means of making a living by taking the property of others. Its peculiarity was that it was the only means to that end that was—I suppose I may say that is—reckoned honourable. The only essential point was that the person whose property was to be taken should be declared, or at any rate considered, to be an enemy. A penniless younger son who stole a sheep in England was liable to be hanged for his pains; but, if he joined in some adventure overseas, or took service in the army of some foreign power, he could steal as many of the enemy's sheep as pleased him. Moreover, he was tolerably sure

of a share of plunder, and he might, if lucky, capture some prisoner of high rank and obtain large ransom for him. He staked, of course, his life, his limbs, and his health, but that he was content to do; and, even if he made little wealth, he learned his business, which, if the times chanced to favour him, might turn out to be very profitable. Though every gentleman was potentially a soldier, and was more or less trained to horsemanship and to the use of certain weapons, those who lived at ease in England were but amateurs, whereas those who had actual experience of fighting in the field were professionals.

It was of course those professionals who built up the British Army. Practically every one of our technical military terms is derived from a foreign source, having been brought home by them from Spain, or Italy, or the Low Countries. But before we speak about them, it is worth while to notice how long the traditions of Elizabethan soldiering endured. First and foremost, the claim to plunder, whether or not disguised as prize-money, has never wholly disappeared. It flourished especially in India. After the storming of Seringapatam in 1799 the Army divided £1,300,000. There was bitter disappointment in Burma in 1824–5 because a horrible campaign in that land of gilded pagodas yielded little or no 'loot'. On the other hand, much money was made by private individuals in the Indian Mutiny. In the course of the thankless and inglorious fighting in South Africa in 1899–1902, it was necessary to give a bounty to all ranks in lieu of prize-money; and bounties upon discharge after the late peace of Versailles are really, in principle, a composition for plunder. Take again the system of purchasing commissions, which was only abolished within my own lifetime. This was but a relic of the practice of buying shares in a company of soldier-adventurers. Lastly, glance at the old tradition that arms and armour are the peculiar distinction of a gentleman. Far into the eighteenth century it was still the fashion for generals to be portrayed in armour. Stringer Lawrence, Kingsley of Minden, and Field Marshal Howard, for instance, were all painted in cuirasses which, I suspect, not one of them ever wore. Amherst, the conqueror of Canada, was painted by Reynolds in full armour; and, even later than Amherst, George, Marquis of Townsend, one of Wolfe's brigadiers at Quebec, was handed down to posterity in the like disguise. He was, so far as I know, the last to be so distinguished; but to this day even such peaceful individuals as ourselves may not go to Court nor appear at Ceremonies of State without a sword at our sides.

The day of the amateur soldier may be said to have ceased with our civil war. Then such professionals as Philip Skippon and George

Monk came by their own; but the more important and lasting work was done by an amateur who was greater than any professional. I am not going to say a word of Cromwell's purely military talents, though these were striking enough. I prefer to bring him forward as the man who, so far as in him went, abolished the old traditions of war as a mere matter of money-making, and by strict discipline and lofty aspiration raised the whole calling of the British soldier to a higher plane. Take the phrase in which he describes the kind of recruit whom he sought—'men who make some conscience of what they do'. Take that in which he speaks of the same recruits when turned into soldiers—'men who know what they are fighting for, and love what they know.' Are not these rugged words a possession to our race for ever? Here was a man who, a century before Napoleon was born, had discovered that in war the moral is to the physical as four to one. That was Cromwell's great and permanent gift to the British soldier, and through him to the British Empire—the secret that it is moral force that wins victories. It is wrong to suppose that he trusted wholly or even mainly to fanaticism to inspire that moral force. He did not. He trusted to discipline; and his work still endures to this day. He was in advance of his time in many respects. It is enough to mention that he was the first to summon representatives from all three kingdoms to Westminster, which was not finally accomplished until 1800; the first to establish a regular constabulary in England, an innovation which was not made permanent until 1829; the first to call Colonial troops over the sea for war against a great power, a policy which, though repeated in 1740, fell into abeyance after that year for a century and a half. But these are small things in comparison with the inspiration of moral force. Of all Oliver's letters there is none that clings so closely to my memory as that to Colonel Valentine Walton, wherein, after an outburst of thanksgiving for the victory of Marston Moor, he goes on abruptly: 'Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon-shot. It brake his leg. We were necessitated to have it cut off, whereof he died. Sir, you know my own trials this way, but the Lord supported me. [He also had lost a son in action.] At his fall, his horse being killed by the bullet and, as I am informed, three horses more, I am told he bid them open to the right and left that he might see the rogues run.' Such were Oliver's subalterns, who knew what they were fighting for and loved what they knew.

The Army which Cromwell made, and which, while he lived, was the terror of Europe, was almost entirely disbanded after his death. A small remnant only was saved and became the foundation

of our present standing Army. But its great traditions could never perish. They inspire the professional soldier to this day. What do I mean by a professional soldier? I mean one who has been thoroughly trained in the school of military discipline. And what is military discipline? In its essence I must repeat that it is the organized abnegation of self, the organized sacrifice of the individual for the corporate welfare. Its object is to make hundreds of thousands act under the guidance of a single will; its leading principle is immediate and unquestioning obedience to superior command. In a way it is hard, for it enjoins that it is better for injustice to be done to the individual than that an order should be disobeyed. In a way it is narrowing, and may undoubtedly be injurious to character; for it treats the formula 'Orders must be obeyed' as a sufficient answer to any reasoning. It may be turned to evil account, for, as the Prayer Book teaches us, 'There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.' On the other hand it may be both strengthening and ennobling; for self-sacrifice is no mean ideal to set before a man; and, if the drill-sergeant cannot always impart self-reverence and self-knowledge, he can at least enforce self-control. And the outstanding mark of a man who has been educated, not merely in intellect but in character, is self-control. I shall confine myself when speaking of soldiers, so far as possible, to men who would not have been what they were had they not been schooled in military discipline.

The man who restored the British Army, after a short period of eclipse, to the renown which it had enjoyed under Cromwell was, of course, Marlborough. Now Marlborough is little more than a name to us. We do not think of him as the man who, two centuries ago, delivered us from just such perils as we have recently, after terrible effort, escaped. We do not even remember that it was he who secured for us the gate of the southern seas of Europe. Whig chroniclers have conspired to belittle him; and there is not yet, though there shortly will be, an adequate account of his work. Not a saying of his has passed into current speech unless it be the not very original 'Patience, which can overcome all things'. His almost divine calm, self-control, and patience are not, as they should be, held up to the emulation of British youth. In a word, his influence upon our race has been of the silent imperceptible kind which is traced to no known source. There are probably only two British soldiers of the period who are really well known to fame; and they—the creation of a soldier's son—bear the names of Captain Tobias Shandy and

Corporal James Butler. There is a third, a belated survival of Elizabethan days rather than a child of his own time, who has a tiny niche of his own in the temple of English letters. In modern anthologies—and few volumes spread so wide or to so unexpected places as anthologies—there are still to be found a dainty lyric or two signed with the name of John, Lord Cutts. By a strange irony Cutts travels the world as a pretty poet of the sentimental kind; but in his time he was famous as the Salamander, the warrior who was never so happy as when under a hot fire, the handsomest, bravest, and vainest man in the British Army.

Are we not living witnesses to something of the same kind at this moment? Is there not a certain taciturn, inarticulate Scot who has held the very highest command and controlled the most tremendous issues, but is still to us little more than a name? To what trials his constancy, his patience, and his courage may have been subjected, no one who does not know can guess, and no one, who has not minutely studied the lives of generals in the field, can even faintly imagine. But he has never said a word about himself, though he has spoken many on behalf of those who served under him. Once, indeed, at a most critical time, he adjured us all, in a homely phrase, to stand with our backs to the wall; and the words may still become classical. A century hence England may begin to know the truth about him; but it is still possible that, two centuries hence, the best-known British soldiers of the great German War may be Privates Dunshie and McSnape; and that the thunder of the great storm may find its latest echo in a few stanzas written by a subaltern of the Royal Dragoons. Yet there will still remain the silent influence of the silent chief.

And now we approach the great days of the British soldier, when he was fairly launched into his great career of conquest—and of conquest, as I am most anxious to impress upon you to-day, not by arms alone. The great names associated with that work in the eighteenth century are, I think, four: William Pitt, Jeffery Amherst, James Wolfe, Robert Clive. Can we say truly that the terrible Cornet of Horse would have been other than he was had he never worn the King's uniform? I do not think so, much though I wish that I could. Amherst, a prosaic but methodical person, need not detain us. Wolfe's name is surrounded by a halo of romance; and, thanks to the admirable work of Francis Parkman, is still a power in Canada. The well-known story which associates Wolfe with Gray's Elegy became very true to me when I first encountered his neat scholarly little handwriting, a kind of oasis in the wilderness of sprawling

eighteenth-century calligraphy. Yet Wolfe's best work lay in his incessant effort to train his officers to give care and attention to their men, and so to train the men likewise to self-control and self-respect. He lived at a time when officers thought a few parade-exercises the whole of their duty. Wolfe would have none of this; and he ended his instructions to young officers with these words: 'An officer should never think he does too much. Officers are to attend the looks of their men and, if they are thinner and paler than usual, the reasons of their falling off may be enquired into, and proper means used to restore them to their former vigour.' The language is not inspiring, and has a thin sound in these days, but it meant much in those, when an officer was far more likely to thrash a man for being slow, than to ask whether he were physically capable of being alert. Remember that, though in the making of the British Empire the trader—and often a very rascally trader—has come first, the British soldier has invariably followed him; and that it is the British soldier who is responsible for the impression of the British character which is first left upon a conquered country. If that impression has proved, on the whole, to be good, we owe it in a great measure to the humanity inculcated, though never to the neglect of strict discipline, by James Wolfe.

The name of Clive opens up the field in which above all others the British soldier is seen at his best—India. Of course Clive went to India as a trader and not as a soldier. His first long home-sick letter upon his arrival after an interminable voyage has for me a fascinating interest. It tells, among other mishaps, how he had nearly lost his life and quite lost his best hat—also that his best clothes were all grown too strait for him—laughable matters to us, but very serious to an awkward sensitive lad of eighteen who was about to make his first appearance among strangers in a strange land. But after a short time events turned every clerk into a soldier; and Clive, a soldier by instinct, was most carefully trained in that profession by that excellent old officer, Stringer Lawrence, who was in fact a second father to him. Without that training, I am very confident, Clive would never have been what he was; and most emphatically he can be claimed as one of the greatest ornaments of the British Army as soldier, administrator, and statesman. His life, as truly as Pope's, was one long disease, and hence he was a moody as well as a masterful genius. Isolated acts of his have been misrepresented and misjudged; but the outstanding facts are clear. While Clive is in India there is discipline, order, justice, statesmanship, and moderation. When Clive leaves India there is greed,

rascality, chaos, and excess. To me he seems the greatest British man of action that the eighteenth century produced, the father not only of such soldiers as Caillaud, Knox, and Adams, but of such great rulers as Metcalfe and the brothers Lawrence.

From Clive's time onward the British officer in India began to make his mark, not only in war, nor even in administration, but in historical, antiquarian, geographical, and linguistic research. I am afraid that I have never been a close student of such literature as the journals of the Asiatic Society and kindred publications; though, whenever I have had occasion to consult them, I am always astonished at their vitality and at the number of their military contributors. But there is no occasion to wander into these by-ways. The high-road of the history of the British in India is marked by a succession of stately quartos, records of campaigns, of travels, of explorations, of embassies, and of whole periods of Indian history, the bulk of them produced by military men. I am not denying that civilians showed the way, and I am far from neglecting such names as Sir William Jones, Orme, Grant Duff, and Mountstuart Elphinstone; but I do think that these military writers of India have never received the honour that is their due. Take such a book as the *History of Southern India*, by Colonel Mark Wilks, read his preface, and notice the original authorities which he has sought out and consulted. Remark also the terms in which he refers to his helpers—Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Mackenzie, who, in the leisure snatched from a long course of service, 'had formed, under numerous discouragements, a stupendous collection of all that is necessary to illustrate the antiquities, the civil, military, and religious institutions, and the ancient history of Southern India'; Colonel Barry Close, the friend and colleague of Arthur Wellesley, by the way, 'whose observations give light and strength to whatever they approach'; Colonel Agnew 'of correct judgment and extensive knowledge'. And these are not the mere idle compliments of a mutual admiration society. I have tested the quality of Wilks's work, and I should have been very proud if I could have earned such eulogy as he bestowed upon Barry Close. It will be objected that these men, though bearing military titles, were 'politicals' and knew nothing of military duty. But most of them had served a pretty hard apprenticeship on active service before their industry and ability earned them administrative or diplomatic employment. Take Sir Thomas Munro, who had an intimate knowledge of Persian, Hindustani, Marathi, Kanarese, and heaven knows how many more Indian tongues. He spent his first twelve years in India in almost incessant campaigning, the next twenty-five years in civil administra-

tion, and finally took the field once more as a general of division, doing better in this final military display than might have been expected. Let me add to these names that of another Oriental scholar, the luckless William Macnaghten, and that of a really great genius, who has bequeathed his military talents to a highly distinguished son, but who was known to the whole world in his time as Henry Rawlinson, the Assyriologist.

These names, purposely taken from somewhat remote times, are typical of many. India was, in fact, the first place which gave the British officer his chance; and no one can deny that he seized it. From a military point of view, the system of taking the most intelligent officers away from their regiments worked ill, and produced great mischief. The generals of the old Company's army are not, as a rule, men whom I should recommend young officers to take as models. The best military work in India was done almost exclusively by officers trained in Europe, Stringer Lawrence, Forde, Coote, Arthur Wellesley, Lake, Moira, Harry Smith. But, in spite of this, the old system brought out some very remarkable men, produced some very noteworthy results, and founded some great traditions. In the first place India was the first training-ground for the British officer in the raising and disciplining of native troops; and, in spite of mutinies and other troubles, we have abundant evidence of the intense devotion which British officers have inspired, and continue to inspire, into their men. There have, of course, been plenty of bad and worthless officers; but none the less the general standard is high. And now—or at any rate up to 1914—it is no longer the political officers only who busy themselves with local history. Regimental officers also spend their leave in the exploration of unknown valleys, seeking out unfamiliar tribes, and gathering information, topographical, linguistic, and ethnological, which, if they cannot use perfectly themselves, they may at any rate impart to others who can.

Until the end of the eighteenth century there were practically no native troops except in India; but in 1795 we began to form regiments of African negroes—slaves—in the West Indies, and the British officer made himself felt at once. His first step was to tell his recruits that, as wearers of the King's uniform, they were better than other black men. The recruits responded at once; and the West India Regiments contributed not a little to forward the work of Clarkson, Zachary Macaulay, and Wilberforce. Next, native levies were formed at the Cape; and towards the end of the nineteenth century they were in process of formation in all parts of Africa. Then the British subaltern and the British junior captain showed of

what stuff they were made. Young fellows, who professed to be bored with regimental duty at home, went cheerfully to the wilds of East Africa, and found perfect happiness and contentment in turning a rabble of natives into, say, East African Rifles, and using them for the purpose of preserving order. Incidentally of course they often found themselves, like their peers in other parts of the world, entrusted with wide administrative duties. I have known a simple captain of a West India Regiment governing a country as large as France. And of course it is the rule that the first administration of conquered territory shall be in the hands of military men. Arthur Wellesley gained administrative experience in India which was of priceless value to him in Portugal. But he was a general, and I am talking of captains, such captains as Herbert Edwardes and John Nicholson, who reduced the Punjab to order after the defeat of the Sikhs. I know no more curious story than that of John Nicholson, charged to put an end to anarchy yet shrinking from taking human life, and training himself to the severity which was his duty, by sitting under the dangling corpse of one condemned criminal while trying the case of others. Herbert Edwardes and John Nicholson had their counterparts in the young captains whom Lord Kitchener placed in charge of the conquered districts of the Soudan. I had the privilege of meeting some of them in the Soudan in 1911, and I have never been more profoundly impressed by any group of men.

And here, while we are on the subject of Egypt, I am going to recall to your recollection two Majors of Artillery. The first is William Martin Leake. There is at least one member of this Society who, upon hearing this name, will recall the author of *Numismata Hellenica*; and beyond doubt Leake is remembered through his published works of travel, of topographical and of other research within what was then the Turkish Empire, through his gift of Greek marbles to the British Museum, and through his collection of vases, gems, and coins, which was bought by the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. Yet he first entered the Turkish Empire as a simple gunner, charged to teach gunnery to the Turks; and later his principal mission was to survey that Empire from a strategical point of view, particularly Egypt and Greece. Incidentally he did a little active campaigning in Egypt in 1801; and in 1807 he was sent to Ali Pasha of Yanina with artillery and stores, and succeeded in winning that remarkable man over to the British side. Without going into the details of the military situation in the Mediterranean at that moment, I may say that herein he wrought a very signal service

to his country. But indeed Leake never undertook any professional mission as a soldier and a gunner which he did not carry to a brilliantly successful issue; and most emphatically he hammered, by himself, at least one nail into the coffin of Napoleon's Empire. All this is forgotten; and, being the most modest of men, he would doubtless be content that his military career should be passed over, and that he should live, though still always as *Colonel* Leake, as one of our great authorities upon classical antiquities and as a positive genius in the matter of topographical research.

My second Major is a still more remarkable man, whose career in the service of the Empire was, so far as I know, absolutely unique. The late Lord Cromer, when he first forsook military for administrative work, was plain Major Evelyn Baring of the Artillery. This, of course, is a highly scientific branch of the Army, and Baring had not only thoroughly mastered his business as a gunner, but had made still deeper study of his profession at the Staff College. In fact his first publication was a little volume entitled *Staff College Essays*. What may be the verdict of posterity I know not, but I venture to think that he will be reckoned one of the very greatest statesmen and administrators of our time. Yet he began—and it is this which makes him unique among English statesmen—with a thorough military training. Still, notwithstanding this beginning, never was there an administrator less disposed to take the short way, which is supposed to commend itself to the military mind, of settling difficult matters by force. He had in a supreme degree the gift which Pitt declared to be the most valuable to a statesman—patience—patience which, as Marlborough said and proved, 'can overcome all things'. As an ordinary man the characteristic which strikes me most in him is that, so to speak, he never stopped growing. He made himself, for instance, a Greek scholar and an enthusiast for the Greek classics when he was of full middle age. But, as I can testify, he never to the end lost his interest in military matters; and he honoured me from time to time with questions upon points of military policy and military history which showed intimate knowledge of the subject. He gave me, in fact, an example from his own experience of a practice which I had ventured to condemn in ministers of instructing a general to take his troops somewhere and do something—that is to say, of shifting the responsibility for military policy from their own shoulders to the general's. Finally, he killed himself by his work upon the Dardanelles Commission, hoping that the report might prevent the like blundering in future wars. I only trust, though not I fear with any great confidence, that his dying effort may not have been spent in vain.

I can hardly quit Egypt and the Soudan without mention of the strange fanatical sapper—a born fighting man, if ever there was one—who thirty years ago was the idol of this nation. His fame is on the wane; but his name is perpetuated by the Gordon Boys' Home; and he was at least one of those rare men who honestly and sincerely treated glory, honour, rank, and wealth as dirt under his feet.

I have wandered far away to the East; and it is time to look at the British officer nearer home. Of the military names which recall the great struggle against revolutionary France there will probably occur to you at once three at the very least—Wellington, Moore, and the Napiers. I shall add to them three more, William Cobbett, Charles Stuart, and Henry Bunbury. Let us take Charles Stuart first, a younger son of the house of Bute, and a very remarkable personality. The military service with which his name is connected is the captures of Corsica and of Minorca; but that by which he deserves to be numbered is his occupation of Sicily in 1799, in response to a hint from Nelson. The story is really an extraordinary one. Stuart began by leading two battalions to Palermo, and seeking permission from the wretched King and Queen of Naples to occupy Messina and take military command of Sicily. In five hours by sheer force of character he had obtained it, and, proceeding to Messina, within forty-eight hours had the whole population at his feet. He then rode through the island, took every soul captive in a few days, drew up a scheme for its defence, and formulated a plan for fighting the Peninsular War in Italy instead of in Spain, which, if adopted, would have shortened the struggle by years. He could in fact handle men, Portuguese, French, Spanish, Sicilians, or British, as no Briton since Marlborough had handled them, and, if he had lived, might have done great things. As it is, there remains nothing permanent of his influence except that which he imparted to another officer, John Moore.

But for the accidental immortality conferred upon Moore by the one first-rate work of a second-rate poet, I have little doubt but that his name would at this time be hardly known. Yet no single man has ever done as much for the British Army, through the Army for the nation, and through the nation for the Empire. Better educated than either Marlborough or Wellington, he shared in the transcendent common sense which distinguished them both, saw into the heart of the most complicated matters at a glance, and delivered his opinion about them plainly and without compromise. This power and this habit brought him into collision with politicians. To give an instance, ministers were much exercised over the number of troops that they should keep in Sicily, where the government of the miserable

Ferdinand and of his treacherous and profligate queen kept the whole island in a ferment. They consulted many generals on the subject, and obtained various calculations from all of them except Moore, who answered bluntly: 'If you keep the present government, no number of troops will make the island safe; if you displace the present government, a handful will suffice.' He was absolutely right; but ministers do not like answers of this kind; and, as Moore never vouchsafed any others, he was constantly in trouble with his masters, who never realized how great a man he was. But his sense of duty was so strong, his loyalty so true, and his uprightness so unswerving that no ill-treatment could make him other than a perfect servant to his country. Moore was essentially a man of high ideals, and these ideals, without any preaching but of silence and example, he imparted to his officers. No man did more to continue the good work of Wolfe in bringing home to officers their responsibilities in respect of their men. He was a very strict disciplinarian, and would never, upon the representation of officers, mitigate sentences of courts martial upon men. 'No,' he said, 'if the soldiers behave badly, it is the fault of their officers, and a plea for mercy is no more than an attempt to extenuate the consequences of their own neglect.' In the camp at Shorncliffe he had at last an opportunity of training a brigade according to his own ideas; and the magic of his influence in the battalions which he commanded is as strong to-day as it was over a century ago. His principle of making every regimental officer responsible for every individual man under his command has comparatively recently been extended to the entire army; and the English system of discipline, with its perfect understanding between officers and men, which has been so triumphantly vindicated during the past great war, is mainly the work of Moore. And let it not be said that this is a purely military matter. It is above all things a *human* matter. Soldiers, be they British, Sikhs, Pathans, Mahrattas, Gurkhas, Somalis, Kaffirs, or West Africans, are not machines but men. It was Moore's great lesson to the officers to treat those under them as men. From the officers who, from generation to generation, have imbibed his teaching many civilians have learned it also; but there are not a few masters and mistresses who would be none the worse, in the conduct of their ordinary domestic business, for a little training in the school of Moore.

The immediate fruits of Moore's industry were gathered by Wellington. The Great Duke was not an amiable character; and his army after the peace complained, with some justice, that he took no further interest in them. Yet they trusted his judgement, valued his praise,

and accepted his censure without question to the end. The Duke had spoken; and there was no more to be said. Wellington, however, is rapidly becoming a name. His dispatches, excellent reading though they be, are ascending to those upper shelves where dust is allowed to collect, and where volumes, if perchance dusted, are replaced upside down and in no particular order. One phrase alone of his has passed into current speech—'The King's Government must be carried on,' words characteristic of one in whom the sense of duty was always uppermost. A great many of his generals became colonial governors and did extremely well. James Kempt and Benjamin D'Urban were among the best of them. Harry Smith and Lord Seaton, two admirable colonial administrators, were both of them from the Light Division, and therefore disciples of Moore. Harry Smith was one of the few governors who was successful at Cape Colony; and Seaton, a most remarkable man, left his mark strongly and for the good upon Canada.

On the literary side, the war of the French Revolution and Empire produced three soldiers of really remarkable attainments. William Napier, I imagine, is reckoned the first of them; and it is not a little remarkable that the work of an amateur should, from sheer literary ability, have eclipsed that of so great a craftsman as Southey. Later research has revealed not a few inaccuracies in his work, some pardonable enough, others due to his vehement prejudices against some individuals and in favour of others. Indeed, not a few of his statements provoked acute controversy in his lifetime, and would have provoked more had it not been recognized that the man, owing to constant physical distress and pain through an old wound received in action, was in moments of excitement hardly to be accounted sane. But, accurate or inaccurate, Napier has a consuming fire about him which burns up all rival histories. It is no matter how the battle of Albuera was actually fought; Napier's account of it is the only one that will ever be remembered. The daring artistic device by which he lands his fifteen hundred unconquerable British soldiers at the summit of the fatal hill, and ends his chapter abruptly, leaving them there for us to gaze and gasp at, infuriated his critics; but it remains a masterpiece. There is at least one of his sentences which has been graven upon hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the tombstones of soldiers fallen in action. 'None died with greater glory than he; yet many died, and there was much glory.'

The military writer that I shall next recall to you is one whom I, at least, hold in great admiration, namely, William Cobbett. Hazlitt says that there is not a single sentence in Cobbett that has

ever been quoted again. This may be; and yet I have found enemies of the Anglican Church quoting one of Cobbett's charming descriptions of an English village, of the old Church bowered in tall green trees, and of the Rectory, tenanted by 'one of those black slugs' whom Cobbett delighted to dishonour. Be that as it may, Hazlitt gave him no extravagant praise when he declared Cobbett to be one of the best writers in the language. 'He speaks and thinks,' he said, 'plain, broad, downright English'; and indeed the only writer whom I am inclined to compare with him in this respect is Benjamin Franklin. Had Cobbett's military training anything to do with the formation of his style? I am inclined to think so. No doubt he had a natural gift of language; but his gift of simple direct speech cannot but have been quickened by his experience as a non-commissioned officer in the training and education of stupid men. We are accustomed to think of him as the most combative of mortals; and it would be natural to infer that so contentious a spirit and so acute a mind would have made him, as a soldier, what officers call a bit of a lawyer. Yet in his eight years' service in Nova Scotia he gained the respect and confidence of all his superiors. He did, when he had left the Army, turn his pen to condemnation of brutal punishment of soldiers; but, so long as he wore the King's uniform, he seems to have conducted himself well; and it is highly probable that subordination to military discipline for a time was beneficial to his character. The only person to whom he was meek and submissive seems to have been his wife, who was a soldier's daughter, and understood discipline. In any case I think that the Army can with justice claim some reflected glory from the author of *Rural Rides* and of an English Grammar which for long was considered—and may perhaps still be considered—the best that ever was written. It is devoutly to be wished that the military profession would study this grammar, and, indeed, all living writings by Cobbett. His style—simple, nervous, and direct—should be a model for all soldiers.

The latest military author of this period that I shall recall to you is little known, far less indeed than he deserves. Henry Bunbury served in many campaigns and, ending his career on the headquarters staff at the Horse Guards, was not only brought into contact with all the leading soldiers of his day, but became intimately acquainted with all the details of our military policy. His book—*The Great War with France*—is not a continuous history but merely the narrative of his personal experience, and was originally published for private circulation only. I cannot understand why it is so little known. He writes admirably. His general summary of our military

policy and experiments is by far the best that exists. His portraits of individuals are extraordinarily life-like; his sketches of the various actions in which he took part are clear and vivid without any strain of language; and all alike are touched by a quiet unmalicious humour. In a word, his literary gifts are unusually great, and are never marred by any lapse of taste. He has not the consuming fire of Napier; but his work is more even, more careful, and, as I think, more readable.

The next great soldier who must detain us was remarkable both with sword and with pen. I do not suppose that any one now reads any of the publications of Charles Napier. They belong mainly to bygone controversies and are dead. But, like his brother William, he could write with extraordinary pungency and force, and with a grim humour that is all his own. It is not often that a man can achieve immortality through a general order. Indeed, I know of but two examples. The first is that of a Governor of Gibraltar, whose name unfortunately has escaped me, but who prefaced a general order concerning the dress of officers with the sounding aphorism, 'All men have fancies: few have taste.' The other is that of Charles Napier, who warned his army against destroying sacred birds in Scinde by the epigrammatic sentence, still quoted in India, 'If officers shoot peacocks, Baluchis will shoot officers.' I am afraid that, fine fellows though the Napiers were, their sense of their superiority to the rest of mankind is to me a source of constant irritation. William Napier cannot even say that Sir John Moore was reckoned the handsomest man in the Army without adding that his own father was handsomer still. Nevertheless, Charles Napier, the greatest of the three brothers, crotchety and cantankerous though he was, did very noble work for the British soldier both in war and in peace. In magic of leadership he has never been surpassed. He was the first who ever mentioned the name of a private soldier in a public dispatch; and he laboured incessantly to secure better housing and more reasonable treatment for him at all times and in all places, and to wean him from his besetting sins by offering him more rational pleasures and amusements. Herein he followed up the good work of Wolfe and Moore towards the perfecting of the British soldier; and it is noteworthy that the greatest number of mourners at his funeral, and of subscribers to his monument, were private soldiers. But, even if he had not done this great service, he would, I think, stand forth, in the century 1815–1914, as the only British soldier comparable with Marlborough, Moore, and Wellington in force of character and sureness of insight. He too, could see into the heart of things, and, seeing, could deliver prophecies which proved unpleasantly correct.

And now I come to modern times, and therefore to dangerous ground. The number of officers who have filled great administrative and diplomatic posts, and filled them well, is very great, and the number of those who have written books is legion. There are many names which I long to mention, but I must refrain myself, and I must ask, Of which of them can we say that his work is likely to be of lasting influence in the Empire?

I shall judge of the writers first. In my own lifetime the military writers of greatest repute in their profession have been Malleson, Hamley, Chesney, and Henderson. Malleson has been found wanting, and his writings are moribund, if not dead. Chesney is, I fancy, already forgotten, though very brilliant in his time. Hamley, unless I am mistaken, has been superseded by Henderson; and Henderson, for the moment at any rate, reigns not undeservedly supreme. But few are the military treatises that do not soon fall obsolete; and a book, to touch the Empire, must be read by civilians as well as soldiers. Are there such books written by military men? I tremble to give my answer, even while guarding myself by express exclusion of living writers, for I know not what masterpiece I may unwittingly have overlooked; but I should name two—*The Great Lone Land*, by William Butler, and *The Confessions of a Thug*, by Colonel Meadows Taylor. The Red River Expedition has become a mere name in our military records; but Butler's description of his journey across the waste of Saskatchewan will keep it alive to countless memories. And I fancy that, even when the British Empire in India has ceased to be, English-speaking men will still be fascinated by Meadows Taylor's story of the fraternity that raised the "confidence trick", supplemented by silent murder, to the finest of fine arts.

But what other soldier—setting aside operations in the field—has done work that has penetrated the Empire through and through? I name without hesitation, as standing quite alone, the founder of the Boy Scouts. No one but a soldier could have started this movement. There is just enough of military craft, glamour, and order about it to attract and interest boys; and yet the code of discipline rests on no more than the code of honour. I do not think that I exaggerate when I say that the boy-scout movement has done more to improve the character of British boys—to stimulate, refine, and ennoble—than all the Education Acts that ever were passed and all the National Schools that ever were erected. I must contain myself and turn again to my Prayer Book, 'There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.' But corruption has at least not touched the

Boy Scouts yet; and they stand as perhaps the most wonderful creation that ever sprang from the brains and energy of a British officer.

I have spoken so far almost entirely of officers. Yet the greatest service to the Empire, has, after all, been rendered by the British private soldier. At first it was very unwillingly that he went abroad, unless it were upon active service. None of Cromwell's regular regiments went on his West Indian expedition. Raw levies were substituted for them, composed of bad and disorderly men; and they, as so many thousands that came after them, died like flies. In India the first white troops raised by the East India Company perished as rapidly, and needed to be incessantly renewed. In fact, though the soldier as a rule was enlisted for life, the East India Company could never obtain recruits except for a limited term with promise of a pension; and the first short-service soldier, as he is called, was John Company's. In New York, where there was a tiny garrison of two companies, the men during the hard winters frequently died of cold. In England, it must be remembered, the soldiers were quartered in ale-houses; and it seems never to have occurred to ministers that in new countries there were no ale-houses, and that therefore there was no shelter. The first garrisons sent to Minorca and Gibraltar and to Acadia suffered equally from exposure through the same cause. Small wonder that foreign service in peace was loathed and dreaded, and that battalions, when warned to embark for the Mediterranean, dwindled away to nothing from desertion. However, by one means or another the battalions were shipped off to their destination, and, once arrived there, settled down to remain unrelieved for the best part of a generation. Officers and men accommodated themselves somehow to their strange environment and made the best of it; and, considering that the men were drawn from the dregs of the population, they were reasonably contented and happy. The essential quality of the British soldier—good nature—asserted itself; and, except in their cups, the troops lived on friendly terms enough with the inhabitants. More than a century has elapsed since our last occupation of Minorca, but the little Minorquins at Port Mahon still play marbles and still say 'knuckle down', the phrase learned from their English playmates of the eighteenth century.

It was long before the status and, with the status, the character of the private soldier showed any marked improvement. The passion for alcohol, which afflicted not his class only but all classes of his countrymen, fought against him. And yet there was improvement, very gradual but very steady, in spite of many discouragements. So far as I can gather, the making of the roads in the Highlands,

under the supervision of such careful and considerate officers as Wolfe, did more than any one thing to bring officers and men together. They were still, however, far apart, for in 1760 a sergeant records with positive pain how the officers before Quebec harnessed themselves to the guns and worked with the men. Such labour, common enough now, seemed to him debasing to officers and gentlemen. It marked, however, a great step forward. In 1779, after the capitulation of Saratoga, the captured soldiers were separated, contrary to the terms of the agreement, from their officers; and they took leave of each other in tears, the men shouting, 'God bless your honours,' as long as they were within hearing.

In the short interval between the peace of Paris and the outbreak of the wars of the Revolution and Empire, the status of the soldier sank again, for the simple reason that, in spite of all representations, Pitt would not give him pay enough to keep him alive. The Old Contemptibles of that day, however, bore themselves worthily enough, so long as they lasted, even under the temptations of the West Indies; but of course they were quickly killed off; and then there was wild chaos and shameful misbehaviour until the Duke of York re-established discipline and order, beginning with the officers. It was the Duke who insisted that the name of every man who became a casualty should be sent home, and not merely a bare number of 100 killed and 250 wounded. It was he who established a penny post between Flanders and England for the private soldier, who founded the Duke of York's School for the sons of soldiers and the Royal Military College for the sons of officers. It was he who reformed the medical department and the chaplains' department, and indeed every department; and it was he who, by attention to the wants as well as to the discipline of the Army, raised the whole tone of the military profession, and with it the self-respect of the private soldier.

Of course there were still bad regiments, the consequence of bad commanding officers, and from time to time wild excesses. Even after Vittoria Wellington complained that a great victory had for several days disbanded and demoralized his army; and yet there were regiments which passed by the French military chest without taking a dollar. Moreover, when Wellington entered France, he found that the British soldier, with all his faults, was far more acceptable to the population than the French. Nay, at the close of the war, large columns marched for two or three hundred miles through France to the northern ports, without a single complaint from the French authorities of any misconduct. The great lesson had been learned, though it had taken long to learn. Even in 1807, however, there had

been an instance of a regiment landing in a little English port after 140 days at sea. Think of 140 days, crossing from south to north of the equator, in a crowded transport, with no food but biscuits and salt pork, on short allowance of water, and with hardly room for a man to stretch out his arms! Such an experience might even now cause men to break out into wild excesses when first they disembarked; but on the contrary there was not a single case of misconduct; and the municipal authorities, who had expected endless trouble, testified their gratitude and admiration to the officers. Soon such a spirit was to become the rule rather than the exception.

The lapse of two generations after Waterloo was needed to slay finally the demon of drink; yet the happily incorrigible good nature of the British soldier did much to exorcise him in the meanwhile. In Burma, between 1824 and 1826, the British soldier passed through trials which have seldom, if ever, been exceeded, even in his experience. Wherever he appeared, the Burmese generals drove away the population and laid waste the country before him. There were no vegetables, no milk, no fresh meat; there was nothing but mouldy biscuit and putrid pork, and that in a tropical delta full of mosquitos and of the like tropical plagues. Practically all marches were in single file through the jungle, swarming with unseen enemies on every side, and all actions against troops that never showed themselves except entrenched or within stockades. A reverse meant hideous torture and mutilation; a success meant the killing of a few Burmese and the temporary disappearance of the rest. All circumstances conspired to kindle intense exasperation against every man with a dark skin. Yet after nearly two years of such work, when the Burmese armies had at last been driven back, and the terrified villagers began to return in ones and twos to their ruined homes, in abject awe of the unconquerable white man, they found a big kindly creature who welcomed them with a smile. In a very few weeks the deserted villages and towns were again swarming with happy and contented people, and the British soldier was completely—sometimes rather too completely—at home with them, and intensely popular among them. Not a trace of bitterness was to be found among the red-coats. Those that survived to the end were no more than one in seven, the remainder having perished chiefly from tropical diseases, but even so they were always cheerful and always kind-hearted.

Since then the soldier has gone from strength to strength. Now he is anxious to go abroad and see the world, and, wherever he goes, he takes order and good nature with him. It matters not whether he hails from my own garrulous and affable Devon, or from the more

taciturn and suspicious North country, he is the same. It is true that, when he is thoroughly comfortable, he can only find vent for his feelings in incessant grumbling, but that is simply the defect of his supreme qualities of cheerful patience in discomfort, and of charity towards all men. Whence this charity arises, it is difficult to say; but I think that it has its true source in the feeling that he comes of a victorious stock, that he is very strong, irresistibly strong, and that therefore he can afford to be very gentle. An officer of very wide experience told me after the South African War that it was the most difficult thing in the world to make the British soldier kill a man; and the readiness to accept treacherous signs of surrender is a proof of this. However, the good nature—the charity—is there; and we do not realize what it has done for us. To give but one instance, our Allies at Salonica sent forth, quite legitimately, emissaries in every direction to gain the hearts of the people and to lay a foundation for future commercial enterprise. We did nothing of the kind; and yet the people everywhere turned to us and wished to deal above all others with us. Why? Because the name of a British soldier was not to be found on the criminal charge-sheets of that polyglot army. The British soldier, though employed on a duty which subjected him much hardship and sickness with no compensating chance of distinction, had been always not only well-behaved, but honest, gentle, and considerate. And so it was that quite unconsciously he outdid, by sheer force of character, the efforts of all other nations to commend themselves to the Balkan peoples. And this work, be very sure, he does wherever he goes. He is a silent missionary, but of power untold. Better than most of us he has assimilated the precept 'Be pitiful; be courteous'; more truly than most of us has learned the difficult lesson of self-respect without self-consciousness. Such is the fine flower of the tree that was planted by Cromwell and watered not only by Marlborough and Wolfe and Moore and Wellington and Charles Napier, but by thousands of humble and earnest officers whose names have perished but whose works do follow them. The British soldier, supposed to represent physical force only, is a great moral force within and without the Empire. It is not with physical weapons only, nor even chiefly, that he contends all the world over for the honour, in the higher sense, of his Regiment, of the Army, and of the Nation. And he prevails because he makes some conscience of what he does. He knows what he is fighting for and loves what he knows.

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