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Recreation, With Reference To The Sanitary Condition Of The Army

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Friday, June 1st, 1860.

W. STIRLING LACON, Esq., in the Chair.

RECREATION, WITH REFERENCE TO THE SANITARY CONDITION OF THE ARMY.

By Captain E. S. JERVOIS, Commandant Military Convalescent
Establishment, Great Yarmouth.

“ALL work and no play makes Jack a dull boy !”

This is an old maxim, but admits of no contradiction, and I think it will generally be admitted that there is no individual to whom it more fully applies, both mentally and physically, than to the soldier.

It may occur to you that so much has already been done towards the moral and intellectual improvement of the soldier under the present administration, and that the importance of the subject is so well understood by the authorities generally, that there is little need for referring to it at all.

In responding, therefore, to the request of the Council of this Institution to read a paper on “Recreation, with Reference to the Sanitary Condition of the Army,” it may be necessary to remark, that my object is mainly to endeavour to show the advantage that might accrue, if the measures now in use could be considerably extended, so as to establish one wide and uniform system of amusement for our army in all situations.

I am quite aware that many commanding officers of brigades and regiments have done much in promoting amusements for the men under their command, and that many valuable suggestions from such quarters have been put aside by the authorities, on account of the expense they would involve. But, if the subject is well ventilated and placed before the public, I entertain no doubt of its being received with a generous approval, especially as it might be shown, I conceive, that any outlay in these matters would in the end be recognised as a wise and remunerative economy, inasmuch as it would tend to reduce most materially the number of sick, to improve the character of the soldier, and make him desirous of prolonging his service, instead of wishing to quit it after his first period.

That such results are attainable there can be little doubt, and it therefore becomes a duty that every one who has the command or management of soldiers should devote his attention to discover the means which are most likely to lead to those ends.

In proceeding with the subject I shall bring before you the remarks and opinions of several persons who are identified with the cause; by which it will I hope be seen that their views terminate in the objects I have suggested.

To effect much benefit to the soldier, rooms must be provided for him presenting greater attraction than the public-house; let him have the canteen at hand as a place of refreshment only, and, destitute even of a newspaper, he should drink at the "bar;" so that the comparison with it and the "reading and game rooms," and even with his own barrack room, should, by affording ample amusement and cheerful companions, always be manifestly in favour of the latter. Such desirable ends, however, can only be accomplished by some general plan, both as to accommodation and the means of recreation, instead of those which exist at present, viz. that a regiment frequently finds itself placed in a town in Great Britain presenting every temptation to drunkenness and vice, very indifferently provided with barrack accommodation, and with no inducements whatever for the soldier to remain in his quarters.

Similar remarks may be made in regard to hospitals, especially those of a general kind, where men are detained for considerable lengths of time; this has been fully exemplified in that at Yarmouth, and doubtless in many others where attention has been directed to the permission of games, &c., for the men.

It appears to me, therefore, that a general scheme should be organised embracing barracks, standing camps, hospitals, and troops in the field; the latter for obvious reasons would of course be subject to limitation, but should by no means be excluded.

Objections may be anticipated as to expenditure and increase of "train;" those objections however would soon vanish were the experiment made; and we have already seen enough, from the limited measures now in practice, to authorise the assertion, that great and valuable consequences are to be anticipated from their expansion and application to the soldier in every situation.

To carry out this scheme it would be necessary to erect buildings, permanent or otherwise, upon some well-approved plan, at every station, barrack, or camp, for the use separately of each corps or brigade.

In these I would have every inducement placed for the soldier to pass his leisure time in a beneficial manner, keeping distinct the rooms allotted for reading from those in which games or other amusements are practised, so that the men employed in the latter may, without annoyance to those engaged in more quiet occupations, pursue their amusements without any restraint on their hilarity; for, unless the soldier is unrestricted at such times, his enjoyment is materially diminished.

The first opportunity I had of witnessing the extraordinary results of the advantages of games and amusements, as applied to sick soldiers, was in China in the year 1851.

The 59th regiment, then quartered at Hong Kong, was more or less affected with disease throughout its entire strength, partly from the deadly effects of the climate upon the European constitution, but principally from a free indulgence in that most pernicious liquor called by the Chinese *sam shu*; and the *morale* of the men was at so low an ebb, that they did not appear to care what they did or what became of them.

Through the obliging co-operation of the senior naval officer on the station, the old "Minden" (74-gun ship) hulk was placed at the disposal of the general commanding as a convalescent ship, and was furnished with

games of various kinds, newspapers, &c. The sick were sent on board in detachments, as they became well enough to leave the hospital, and remained there until considered fit to return to their duties.

A similar plan of recreation was adopted on shore; ball and racket courts, cricket, foot-ball, quoits, &c. were provided for the men, and in a comparatively short time the garrison assumed a totally different aspect; the men, instead of assembling in the *sam shu* shops, were to be seen enjoying the amusements provided for them with the greatest alacrity and cheerfulness, and the result was that the moral and physical effects produced were most surprising.

I will now pass on to the year 1858, when, in consequence of the number of invalids and wounded soldiers who were constantly arriving from India, it was considered necessary by the authorities to provide a convalescent establishment for their reception; and, the Naval Hospital at Yarmouth being at the time unoccupied, it was opened in the month of April of that year, and has continued in use with the most advantageous results; having had at intervals as many as three hundred patients under treatment, and at one time there were soldiers of upwards of one hundred and ten different regiments on the strength of the establishment. The hospital is one of the best in the kingdom, covering a space of about ten acres, and close to the sea. It was well supplied, and the utmost care, attention, and kindness, were bestowed upon the patients by all around them; yet, such was the lassitude felt by all, under the unavoidable confinement within the walls,—although its centre contains a fine garden, and there is a terrace overlooking the sea, on which the men are permitted to walk,—that they became dissatisfied, and were continually asking to be sent to their depôts, or to be allowed to go on furlough to their friends; notwithstanding that they were well aware their cases still required the best and most skilful treatment, as well as generous and expensive diet, with rest and quietude, and that their friends or relatives had not the means of furnishing them with these requisites. The question arose, to what was this to be attributed? Purely to the absence of amusement or employment.

The means adopted to remedy the evil were these. Two large rooms, each about forty-three feet long by twenty-four feet broad, and in close proximity to each other, were set apart, one as a reading-room and library, and the other as a game-room; both these were ornamented with flags and pictures of battles and portraits of distinguished men.

The reading-room was liberally supplied by the authorities with books, newspapers daily, and periodicals.

The game-room was also supplied with chessmen, draughts, solitaire, backgammon, and dominoes; and there were only two other games considered necessary to complete the list, a bagatelle and skittle board, which were supplied from a private fund, together with telescopes and writing materials.

The effect produced was quite marvellous; the games were pursued with the utmost avidity, and the tone and manner of the men became entirely changed. Their time no longer hung heavily upon their hands, cheerfulness and contentment were restored, and they ceased to make application for removal, until the medical officers considered them fit to leave.

Having, I trust, distinctly shown the benefits which accrue from the

introduction of games and other recreations amongst the sick and convalescent, I will next advert to the advantages which might be expected, if the same system were adopted with soldiers who are not sick, in the common acceptation of the word, but who merely suffer from the *ennui*, or lassitude, consequent upon want of employment in their leisure hours.

The manner in which our soldiers are comparatively thrown upon their own resources for amusement, and consequently the amount of crime and disease, principally attributable to drunkenness, simply caused by want of other occupation, can hardly have escaped the observation of those who have lived in a garrison town, or in the neighbourhood of a camp.

A general officer, writing in the Journal of this Institution, remarks, "Neither officers nor soldiers are always provided with means of healthy recreation."

Could not a portion of the spare time of the former be devoted to the superintendence of, and participation in, the recreation of the latter, with the most advantageous results to both?

There is, perhaps, nothing which will so much influence the soldier as any attention which the officers may choose to bestow upon him. It is quite natural that it should be so, for directly you have succeeded in establishing your own mental superiority over the soldier, from that moment you gain his respect; again, as soon as you obtain his confidence, you find that he is ready to comply with your wishes, and do his utmost to serve you. But how is this superiority and confidence to be attained?

First, by proving to him the advantages of education, and taking every opportunity of imparting those advantages to him.

And, secondly, by using your utmost endeavours to show him, that you really take an interest in his welfare, and do everything in your power to relieve the monotony of his existence.

Now a soldier of the present time, after a short experience in the service, becomes a very clear and practical observer in all that concerns himself. Raw recruits in most cases pursue a thoughtless course for one or two years, but subsequently they look around, and begin to perceive the advantages that the well-conducted are enjoying, the increase of pay, &c. attainable by good conduct, and they scan everything that is presented to their attention carefully, and are keenly alive to its advantages or the reverse; and, when you have once impressed the soldier with the conviction that the measures in which you profess an interest are really likely to be productive of benefit to him, he will readily adopt them, and, as before stated, gratefully accept your agency in his behalf.

I have often found that many soldiers who at first look upon games such as chess or draughts as too difficult of comprehension, or too dry to be amusing, were gradually induced to learn and practise them among their comrades in a room at the barracks, and soon found great relief from such occupation and amusement; and herein is a strong reason for placing such recreation within their reach, so as to draw them off from amusements of a more criminal and destructive tendency.

They do not object to learn them under the eyes of their comrades, when they would not attempt to do so before strangers in places of public resort. It is simply to give them easy access to a place where they will

find amusements at a nominal expense, and conducted upon a non-coercive system, and you will soon find that a soldier is not quite so difficult to please as some may imagine.

There are many who assert that a large proportion of the men of nearly all regiments are a noisy and dissipated set, who cannot be induced to attend schools or day-rooms; but this is the very reason why those who are not so, should not be left to their own resources to become noisy and dissipated also.

That soldiers will voluntarily attend lectures and amusements provided for them was proved to me by the following incident:

Attached to the military hospital at Yarmouth is a small detachment of effective men who perform various duties connected with the establishment, and after a certain hour are at liberty, like other soldiers, to make out the remainder of the day in the best way they can.

It is a remarkable fact that, during the past winter season, whenever a lecture has been delivered to the invalids, upwards of one-half of the above-mentioned detachment have invariably applied for permission to attend also, showing that they preferred an hour's rational amusement to the variety of inducements held out in a town like Yarmouth to spend their evening in drinking and dissipation.

When then you have thus once succeeded in convincing the soldier that there are other enjoyments which will afford him equal pleasure without painful consequences, from that moment you take the first step towards his moral improvement and individual excellence, which is after all the grand secret of an efficient soldier.

The days of old traditions are gone by, and if we intend (which I firmly believe we do) that our army should continue to hold its own, having thrown aside "Brown Bess," we should banish our corresponding prejudices, and teach the soldier to be more independent in action, and worthy of the weapon which has been placed in his hands; at the same time taking every care to ensure him the greatest amount of strength, agility, and bodily health.

In endeavouring to attain these objects, gymnastic exercises may be fairly estimated as a valuable agent; and on this subject I have been favoured with access to the Report of Colonel Hamilton, Grenadier Guards, and Dr. Logan, with reference to their use in the French and Prussian armies. Some extracts from that Report will be the best evidence I can lay before you:—

From Col. HAMILTON'S Report.

It is considered desirable that the complete gymnastic apparatus should be constructed, and every part of the gymnastic exercise, when the weather permits, be carried on, in the open air; but, as it is necessary to keep the men daily employed, even in bad weather, a building like a riding-school is also fitted up with some of the most useful apparatus, where the men can exercise at all times.

The total absence of injuries arising from these exercises, which is attributable to the methodical manner in which they are carried on, and the great activity displayed by the men who have gone through the regular course of instruction, leave no room to doubt that, were a similar system introduced into the English Army, it would be highly advantageous to the men. The following are some of the practical results of the exercises:

About twelve men were placed three feet apart, in two ranks, at a few paces from the foot of a perpendicular stone wall eleven or twelve feet high, which surrounds the magazine in the fort. At a given signal the front rank men ran towards the wall, and with the combined exertion of leaping, climbing, and vaulting they cleared it with as

much apparent ease as if it had been a five-foot wall ; they were followed immediately afterwards by the second rank.

Walls averaging from twenty to twenty-five feet in height were scaled, either by means of long poles with a hook at the upper end, or the men would reach the top without any poles, by only taking advantage of occasional holes and irregularities in the surface.

Speaking of the gymnastic exercises in the corps of Sapeurs Pompiers, he says :

The activity, boldness, strength of muscle, and general expertness of the men, as displayed in their various exercises, speak highly in favour of the instruction they have received.

There appears to be an object in every exercise in which they are instructed, and each of them may be brought to bear in some one position in which they may be placed in their occupation as firemen.

From Dr. LOGAN'S Report.

From all, the experience gained in the French army is stated to be, that the results of the gymnastic system are to the effect of giving activity and freedom of motion, invigorating the health, proving a means of occupying the time of the soldier, and affording a variety from the more monotonous restraints of their ordinary military exercises, imparting to the many a feeling of confidence and self-reliance in the field, or difficulties of position, all tending to add to the natural impulsiveness, the acknowledged dash, of the French soldier.

These conditions may be viewed as abundantly recommendatory for the introduction of similar gymnastic schools and system in the British army; as means to prove very beneficial in a sanitary consideration, most certainly affording a relief to the soldier, from the little varying and therefore often wearisome routine of his ordinary drills, and by combining amusement with duty.

It would be for the authorities to prescribe the extent and necessary organization of a system of the kind.

It would prove an important sanitary advantage to the soldier to have his muscles and sinews braced up by such physical training.

Colonel Hamilton concludes the Report by observing—

It is doubtful whether the introduction of a regular system of gymnastic exercises, to form merely an addition to the drill of the English soldier, would be accepted as a boon; but it would not be difficult to make such regulations with regard to them as would cause their introduction to be looked upon as a relief from the monotony of a soldier's barrack life, while it would materially contribute to his health.

It appears therefore that the practice of gymnastics should be introduced more as a recreation, and, if as an established system, that it should be voluntary, rather than compulsory: the constitution of our army being so different to those of the powers alluded to in Colonel Hamilton's Report.

It is scarcely necessary to comment on such amusements as cricket, quoits, foot-ball, fives, and other out-door games. Their advantages are already thoroughly admitted, and I would here beg to refer to notes on the subject by Colonel Lindsay of the Guards.

Fives Courts.—When well-managed, I have found them much used in summer and autumn. They sometimes fail, as the men lose their balls, and it is nobody's business to provide them for sale to the men; but, when this has been done, the men are glad to have the recreation. Fives courts have been erected at several of the large barracks in the country, and with success.

Skittle Courts.—At Dublin, in the Royal Barracks, there are two provided for the regiments therein; but they are not generally provided by Government. Whenever out of London, I have always induced the officers to bear the expense of establishing two for the men, and it has been attended with full success.

Gymnastic Exercise.—(About to be established.) I believe that I originally was the mover in this direction five years ago, at Aldershot; and in the House of Commons, on

Army Estimates, I applied for and succeeded in getting wood and iron allowed to erect poles and bars; but, my battalion being removed, I never used them. If conducted upon a regular system (that is, a course of systematic instruction), it is calculated to afford not only recreation, but the development of the physical faculties of the soldier in many points most essential to him.

Draughts, Dominoes.—I got each captain of my battalion to give his company three sets of each of these games; they are much used, particularly in winter.

Chess.—Very few I find can play.

Quoits.—Every captain of a company provides two sets of quoits. The men keep them up.

Games, Running and Hammer-throwing.—We constantly get up competition among the different companies; in addition to this, whenever at out-quarters we give a whole day for all sort of games. The officers subscribe from 15*l.* to 20*l.* towards this object.

Foot-ball is encouraged during autumn and winter. The effects of these various games when out of London is great. The in-door games have their effect in London; but the opportunity for those of an out-door character is small, and town life makes much difference in the habits of the men. But games and recreation have the best effect upon the spirits, health, and discipline of the men. It has the effect of taking away a sort of ennui which routine always must engender, and the monotonous life which a soldier in a garrison leads. It is calculated to make him more contented while serving, and to do his ordinary duty with cheerfulness, from a light-hearted disposition. I do not think too much can be written or said in favour of recreation. Eight hundred human beings cooped up in a small space, sixteen always occupying the same room, are likely to become worse by mutual contact and communication, instead of improving, unless something is done to counteract vice, and to make their lives pleasant. Recreation is one of these elements. Library and Reading Rooms, and opportunity for smoking in barracks, are the others, combined with regularity and discipline—in fact, to render a “second nature” caused by discipline, agreeable.

(Signed) J. LINDSAY, Colonel.

Now, it is the *in-door* and *evening* recreations I wish especially to direct attention to, in order that the barrack-room, or at least the buildings connected with it, may form a recognised *home* for the soldier.

If we look at the attractions prepared in all large towns in which he is quartered, to entice him into places of public resort, not merely “beer-shops” or ordinary public-houses, but those affording every species of amusement and temptation, such as billiards, cards, and dice, with music, dancing, and singing, we must find an all-powerful argument for increased exertion in providing amusement for him in the barracks, in such a manner as to induce him, if possible, to remain there during those hours after the evening meal which are left entirely at his own disposal.

And here it may be asked, What is there at present to induce him to do so, or to return to his barrack until the last moment, in comparison with what he finds in the places of public resort I have alluded to, and into which he is easily inveigled, and finds every inducement to renew his visit?

There are music-halls and concert-saloons at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Aldershot, and Yarmouth, and most other military stations.

It may be asked, How does the soldier find means to attend these places? It is not presumed that he can do so every night. But there is not the slightest doubt that a large proportion of the men in those towns and the camps seek such places of amusement, and spend their money in them, whenever they have any, and in too many instances are led to sell their necessaries to follow them up.

How important must it be, then, to provide a building close at hand, in which the soldier may find amusements equally attractive and less pernicious. Of its success no doubt can be entertained, more particularly in

winter, when he would gladly remain within the precincts of the barracks, rather than be at the trouble of dressing (as he must do) to go out. But, when he finds himself left in a dreary, dimly-lighted barrack room, destitute of amusements, he will, if he has a penny in his pocket, try to escape from it and join the gaieties of the town.

Should it be remarked that the library and reading-room is available to the soldier, it may be stated in reply, it is so; but our argument is, that the above-mentioned room, although valuable in itself, does not contain amusements sufficiently attractive or varied to induce a large proportion of the men to avail themselves of it. Some are incapable of using books or newspapers, by reason of inability to read. Some have not acquired a taste for literary pursuits, and *these* are the men who seek refuge in the town or public amusements, and who, by associations they incur, are led into drunkenness, crime, disease, and desertion.

To exemplify this I shall here introduce an extract from the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the "Regulations affecting the Sanitary Condition of the Army."

Colonel the Hon. J. LINDSAY examined.

5376. The question was put the other day to an officer, and he said that he did not see what the men would do with a day-room.

Colonel Lindsay.—We had a little experience of that the other day, before the new Wellington Barracks were occupied. There were two new school-rooms built in the Wellington Barracks for two battalions, and before the new part of the barrack was occupied the battalion that occupied the old part had the use of the extra school-room—and a very large room it was, I should think 50 feet by 30—that is, about double the space there is in any reading-room I ever saw attached to a barrack. It was watched to see whether this room would be used, and it was *crummed*, even that large room, so that there was not room for the men.

By the Committee.—Was it in the daytime or night?—Both.

Was it lighted with gas?—Yes.

What did the men do there?—They read and took their books there, and smoked.

Had they any games there?—Yes, draughts and dominoes, and those sort of things.

Do you allow cards there?—Never.

You do allow smoking?—Yes, we always allow smoking in our reading-rooms.

I will now read a letter I have received from an officer connected with Scutari Hospital during the Crimean campaign, and which I think completely confirms the evidence given by Colonel Lindsay before the Committee.

DEAR SIR,

I very much regret that the papers I have preserved give me very little assistance in answering your note of the 1st. All I can state is, that during the summer of 1855, when public stores became abundant, and the sick at Scutari were provided liberally with everything ordered for them; when, in consequence, the "Times Commissioner" (the kind-hearted and accomplished Mr. Stowe) could find no occasion for spending the private funds at his disposal any longer on behalf of the sick, he determined, on the recommendation of a friend, to get up a place of amusement for the convalescents forming the dépôt.

There was at the time no place of recreation at Scutari for these men; and hence the low *yaht* shops in the High Street were constantly crowded, and a large amount of drunkenness prevailed. The idea was warmly supported by Miss Nightingale, the General (Storkes), Dr. Lawson, and others; a committee was formed; a very suitable and commodious building erected; and a *café* opened, under the superintendence of an intelligent person engaged for the purpose.

The *café* was furnished with newspapers, books, bagatelle boards, chess, draughts, and

every other available amusement. From its opening it was well attended, and as long as it was under the management of the committee continued a great source of recreation to the *dépôt*. Mr. Stowe died in Balaklava Hospital, soon after he visited the Crimea, in the same year; and the *café* was ultimately disposed of to a Greek gentleman.

During the winter of 1855, lectures were delivered by several officers and medical gentlemen for the instruction and amusement of the men. These were well attended, especially when the subjects were of an interesting character, and illustrated by experiments.

But there was one—I believe, only one—drawback to all these efforts: they were made at the expense of private funds, which were wholly inadequate.

Had the soldiers been furnished with the means and provided with the opportunity of spending their time, either at athletic sports or intellectual occupation, furnished liberally at the public expense, I believe an immense moral and physical benefit would have resulted, and much sickness and many other evils would have been prevented.

I now wish to introduce to your notice two plans, very simple and unassuming in their pretensions:

The first (Plate I.) is a plan of a building I would suggest should be attached to every barrack in the kingdom, and proportionate in size to that of the barrack. The exterior would be plain and inexpensive; the interior equally so, except that it would be fitted up with games of every description, and pictures of remarkable men. To this I attach great importance as having a tendency to raise the *morale* of the men; and I have found they take the greatest interest in the pictures, if they are of an attractive kind. A small refreshment room or bar attached, where the men could obtain tea, coffee, and tobacco at a low rate, and on the same plan as that adopted at Chatham, would also be a most desirable adjunct.

In this building, which I would denominate the “Game or Recreation Room,” I would afford every facility for concerts, lectures with illustrations, competitive exhibitions of fencing, theatricals, &c. and would allow the regimental band to play on those occasions. I would have the games in the first instance provided at the public expense; and the men could subscribe 4*d.* or 6*d.* per month towards their support. I would engraft the room on the regimental system, and place it under the superintendence of a trustworthy non-commissioned officer, and make it the duty of the orderly officer and captain of the day to visit it whilst going their rounds.

The second plan (Plate II.) is on a more extensive scale, and is better adapted for a garrison or camp; combining gymnasium, library, reading-room, and game-room, also quoit and skittle grounds, rackets, and fives courts; but it is on too large a scale for a single battalion.

The next question I propose to introduce to your notice is, How are amusements to be adapted to the circumstances of an army in the field? At first sight it may appear almost an impossibility. If occupation for the mind and body be desirable in quarters, the same advantage may be looked for in camps on service; I would then suggest that marquees, solely for the purpose, should be carried and attached to the lines of each corps or brigade.

The expense of additional carriage will no doubt be objected to, as well as the difficulty at times of procuring it. Such objections ought not, however, to have sufficient weight to preclude arrangements being made for some means of recreation accompanying every force, even though its use might occasionally be interfered with or suspended in operation.

When troops on service are in motion their time is pretty well occupied,

To follow p. 8.

PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF BARRACK RECREATION ROOM.

ELEVATION OF A GARRISON GYMNASIUM.

GROUND PLAN.

Scale.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET

and they are frequently too fatigued to need amusement. But when a field force remains stationary for any protracted period—Varna, for instance, where, I have been informed by medical officers, the deficiency of any mental distraction added tenfold to the horrors of the terrific outburst of cholera at that place, and which indeed may be collected from the published medical history of that war—the machinery for recreations would be eagerly sought after; men, under such circumstances, having but little occupation, unless employed in throwing up field-works.

The marquees should be furnished with games of every description, tea, coffee, and tobacco, with every facility for theatricals and lectures, and conducted, as far as possible, on the same system as the game-room in quarters.

Athletic games, also, should be established for out-door amusement, when the men are not required for any particular duties.

RESULTS.

If marquees of the above description were provided and attached to every regiment in camp, it would be found that, instead of the soldiers, after the duties of the day, congregating in the canteens and other places of equally injurious notoriety, they would find inducements to amuse their minds in other ways.

Every army in the field will always have a large proportion of sick and ineffectives as long as the men are destitute of any kind of provision for their temporary comforts, and no attempt made to allure them from their present favourite haunts. A soldier's mind when unemployed in the field is in a state of vacuity and restlessness. He must go somewhere to relieve his *ennui*, and, having no place provided for him, he goes where he must inevitably contract the seeds of disease, and render himself utterly useless in his profession.

Were the experiment tried, there is little doubt that the results would be most satisfactory. The men would become more rational and expert, simply from not having imbibed the usual amount of bad liquor, and from having employed their time in thinking how they could play their next domino, draught, or chessman; which would also lead them to reflect before they wasted a rifle-ball in the air.

It may be added, that the marquee would be a great incumbrance to a regiment in the field; and, secondly, would cause great additional expense to the public.

In reply, it may be asked, Which would be the greater incumbrance—the marquees for amusement, or the marquees for the sick? Which would be the most costly—to have a large proportion of your men in hospital, and otherwise ineffective, with every kind of additional expense attending it, or to have an efficient body of men free from disease, and ready to march at a moment's notice?

If these two questions were fully entered into, it would in my belief be found, that both the incumbrance and expense of a marquee for the amusement of soldiers in the field would be more than counterbalanced by the expense and inconvenience of a large proportion of sick in hospital.

It is frequently adduced by persons familiar with the economy of hos-

pitals, that they pay their own expenses ; the stoppage from the man, 10*d.* per diem, covering the outlay for diet on the aggregate. This I believe to be the case, so far as the subsistence of the man is concerned ; but it must be borne in mind that, in addition to the loss of the man's services, hospitals are maintained at great expense in the buildings, clothing, stores, medicines, instruments, fuel, washing, &c. besides the pay and allowances of those connected with the establishments.

We may sum up, therefore, in a few words. The results of increased facility for recreation would appear to be :

1st. More amusement ; less drunkenness.

2nd. Less drunkenness ; less crime.

3rd. Less crime ; fewer hospitals and prisons, and, consequently, a great increase of effective men, as well as less frequent recourse to flogging among troops in the field ; and, I believe, an actual saving of money.

There is an old saying, "Penny wise and pound foolish." A cheap soldier is like a halfpenny doll purchased at a country fair, which falls in pieces directly its arms and legs are stretched ; whereas, had a penny been given for it in a respectable toy-shop, it might have afforded amusement to the child "until it was time to put away childish things." If we, as a nation, want a "good article," as the shopman says, we must pay for it : and, could a better class of men, such as those who constitute the bulk of our mechanics, be induced to enlist, and then be supplied with every aid that art and material can give him, to insure his activity and health, both mental and bodily, I think it would be found that the proverb would be fully verified ; and I believe most strongly that the extended plan of recreation I am now advocating would be found, not only a great inducement to such a class to enlist, but would subsequently render even this better class of recruit a more valuable and efficient instrument for applying our new, improved, and expensive weapons.

In the outset it was my intention to have gone into statistics and matters of finance, but to do so would perhaps prolong these remarks beyond their proper limits ; and it would be difficult to arrive at any very accurate estimate of the outlay required to carry out a more liberal and extended system of recreation for the soldier under all circumstances.

It is sufficient at this time to bring the subject more prominently to view. Its own merits and decided claims to the consideration of the public are acknowledged by all who are in any way connected with soldiers ; and, if that merit and those claims are put forth in a manner calculated to extend its benefits, they will unquestionably be encouraged and supported by the country.

In concluding these observations on the necessity for, and the advantages of, recreation, exercise, and instruction for our army, and which have, already, been in some degree established, I trust I shall not be trespassing on the position I am in, by expressing a hope for the success of those measures.

It is evident that the Government and those entrusted with our military administration are deeply interested in the matter ; and that they are promoting and encouraging everything that tends to the welfare, comfort, health, and efficiency of the soldier. And I believe it is equally clear that they are circumscribed in their efforts, and that considerations of economy

are continually forced upon them, and operate as a check on their best intentions. This can only be remedied by liberality in the legislative bodies, and on the part of the nation.

I can scarcely hope that my feeble efforts will have effect, further than bringing the subject under notice; but they may be so far of service as to lead others of more weight and influence to take up the cause; and I am satisfied, it only requires to be plainly set before the public, to ensure their full and generous support.

At the present moment, the defence of the country is the all-absorbing topic, and surely no time can be more propitious for us to consider how we can devise means to render our army and navy our best and strenuous defenders.