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ART. III.—THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY.

IN a recent number of THE CHURCHMAN, the organization and work of the Army Scripture Readers' Society was ably set forth. Of the need for such instrumentality there can scarcely be two opinions; it is admitted on all hands. The article treats of one agency in a concern of momentous import—the Spiritual Requirement of the Soldier; momentous, because his influence for good or evil is nowadays not limited to the ever-present associates with whom the man's lot in life is cast for a term of years, but extends, in a degree heretofore unknown, to the community at large. This result of re-organization of the army—its social bearing—demands more attention than has hitherto been accorded it. And perhaps if one individual more than another should feel interested in the matter, it is the parish clergyman. For the military leaven will permeate his flock—a factorage borne on the current of a quiet, steady stream from barrack to cottage. Especially must the village and village church tell their tale in the furtherance or hindrance of ministerial work. In large cities and manufacturing towns the returned soldier stands less predominant; his voice is less weighty. In the hamlet it is otherwise: he is an oracle—a man who has seen the world.

Two questions arise for consideration:

1. Has religion¹ in the army been recognised and advanced in a like proportion with the temporal welfare of its members?
2. How far do existing means cope with the spiritual wants of the soldier?

To weigh these points thoroughly, it is expedient to look at his condition morally and socially at the beginning of the century, and to compare it with that of his successor toward the end.

Then, the soldier was uneducated; his animal nature was unchecked, if not indeed fostered, by the State. As he entered the ranks through the portals of the beer-shop, so he lived at it, and, save when war and pestilence intervened, practically died at it. For though disease—*much* both avoidable and curable, as seen in present daylight—slew its thousands, truly drink, with its handmaid, vice, slew its ten thousands. Yet the greatest general of the age considered men of such material best fitted for their calling, and viewed adversely, as a weak concession to philanthropy, humanizing measures of reform! *Now*, he is sent to school a second time, and is provided with a library and reading-room. Temperance (*i.e.*,

¹ We use the term in its generical—highest—sense.

abstention from drink) is approved by all the military authorities, quite as much, perhaps, on grounds of State economy as of morality. *Then*, he was regarded as the black sheep from the country,¹ a waif of humanity, to be tolerated and expended. *Now*, he is beginning to be recognised, entitled to the respect of society as much as the civilian, nay, even to deserve and share some of the good things heretofore reserved for hard-worked butlers and worn-out valets! As his life was animal, so, too, was his punishment when the code of military law was transgressed. He was flogged.² *Then*, what was the lot of the married private—even of the sergeant? It was a condition that entailed such loss of womanliness and self-respect as hardly a wigwam could present; a toleration of profanity happily unknown to the Indian. *Now*, the Benedict is comfortably housed in quarters of the approved model-lodging-house order. As to the unmarried man, he occupied a kind of “bunk,” with scarcely more light and air than pertained to the cabin of a ship. Sanitary procedure was a thing unknown. *Now*, he has his regulated cubic feet of air, is regarded much as a valuable plant, and, indeed, sleeps in a “conservatory.” More care, more scientific attention, is bestowed upon him than upon any other public servant of the same rank in life. *Then*, his food—daily boiled meat—was nauseating alike from sameness and from ill cookery; the “cuisinières,” ignorant (necessarily) of the very rudiments of the art, were changed almost daily, and “told off” in rotation for this as for any other duty. *Now*, cooking is varied, the nutritive properties of the meat are preserved, and the food is served up by trained soldier-cooks retained in such post.³

The recruit was asked his creed when he joined a regiment. Very generally the reply would be “Church of England.” But it was a well-known fact, viewed rather as a joke, that the answer came often from without, and at the suggestion of the recruiting sergeant or orderly-room clerk. These officials

¹ Formerly, the army was almost wholly recruited from the rural districts.

² While heartily condemning the indiscriminate use of the lash in former days, the writer cannot acquiesce in an unreasoning and emotional humanitarianism which would, in military life, abolish flogging for *all* offences, and, in civil, capital punishment for *all* murders.

³ The greater aptitude of the French soldier for campaigning may be set forth by an incident or two witnessed by the writer. Before the “famine” period of the Crimean War, our soldier-butchers viewed the heads and tails of oxen as so much valueless offal. The Frenchman found this out, and for the merest trifle bought them. Again, when spring came, and scurvy abounded, he has noticed the latter exploring the desert plateaux, and here and there picking out with his knife a blade of young dandelion or other material for *une salade* of antiscorbutic property.

hurried through a necessary formality, and on several grounds the National Church was most convenient. Hence Dissenters were by stroke of pen sometimes transformed into Churchmen. Things are changed now. The sectarian is given every facility for worship in the denomination to which he has hitherto belonged. The declaration of faith is, in every sense, a "sober" procedure, and, in some measure at least, it may be said, "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

As regards godly living, practical religious life among our soldiers, speaking broadly, we must look back to the first quarter of the present century; its ground was India.¹ Expatriation from country and home undoubtedly helps onward any latent or feeble desire for the better life. Especially does such condition speak to the young man. So among Indian officers, detached when subalterns to isolated military or civil posts, and shut off from Church ministrations, it came to pass that first on one, then on another, the light of Divine truth shone through the Bible. Some slight evidence of awakening—not through official channels—is noticeable in Legh Richmond's "Annals of the Poor." But religious life in the army can only be said to have established a firm footing in the days of the Crimean War, and then from the example of Hedley Vicars. Among officers, the Gospel found quickest apprehension, most followers, in the higher-educated, "thinking" branches of the service—the Artillery and Engineers. The field officer or captain of a battery or half battery has a greater field and influence for good over his men than the captain of a troop of cavalry or of a company in the line. The intercourse between officer and man is more individual, and, so to speak, there is more of home life than pertains to a regiment. Yet of every corps it may be said that witnesses to the truth gathered from all ranks—men whose prototype was that centurion who feared God and led his soldiers to do likewise—are happily to be found.²

To come back to our subject, the question whether the spiritual needs of the soldier have met with the same proportionate recognition as the physical, and whether the agencies are such as would be pronounced satisfactory by the incumbent of a well-worked parish. We venture to answer "No." Fully admitting the difference of sphere and far greater obstacles incident to army life, yet to a certain extent there is some parallelism between the two. The regiment is a condensed

¹ The records of Wesleyanism show that there were godly soldiers serving in the French wars of George II.; e.g., at Fontenoy.

² Witness the large annual gathering in London of naval and military officers for united prayer. The youngest subaltern, the grey-haired general, there meet.

parish, with its constituent men, women, and children, its schools and services, its hospital. But the word "change" is now stamped on every part of Army life, and this fact, while it constitutes the difficulty in a military chaplain's work, also points to the grave moment of the subject under consideration.

As long as the life of a soldier was almost virtually dissevered, save in the pot-shop, from that of the civilian; his military career so hedged in that it might be indeed said "there was no discharge in that war;" the public might be excused, though not exonerated, for lack of interest in its lost sheep. Regiments served as long as fourteen or even sixteen years in such climates as India, and were completely remanned during the period. Few men lived to obtain a permanent pension. Those who succeeded reached it through a questionable portal—some obscure ailment, to which the military surgeon gave the benefit of a doubt when the sufferer was an old veteran.¹ All that is changed. Still young, after serving at the most impressionable age just long enough to form a character for good or evil, the soldier returns home to leave the field and workshop, to sow tares or wheat. Which shall it be?

We cannot dissever ourselves from obligations which, ignored, may—must—react prejudicially on the home. A lesson may be taken in time from France, and a horoscope be drawn as to possible consequences from military commingling with the populace. An empire of reason, of communism, or of religion—which shall it be?

If further argument for fuller evangelistic work in the army were needed, it may be founded on the increase of crime—drunkenness and insubordination. In a recent article,² rather alarmingly pessimist in tone, one of our highest military authorities, while treating the subject of army organization with unanswerable facts and logic, mentions these ill-omened truths. Much of this crime doubtless arises—assuredly the latter form—from the age of recruits. Boys are enlisted, and of course they think and act "as boys;" especially when their non-commissioned officers are scarcely older and wiser than themselves.

How, then, is evil to be combated?

Let us look at existing agencies. And there are two aspects in which these may be considered: Peace and War.

¹ Worse things happened occasionally. "Malingering," a well-known military term forty years ago, was practised. A young soldier on the eve, say, of embarkation, sought by some destructive process to an eye or limb to obtain emancipation from a dreary outlook.

² See *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1883, article on the British Army, by General Sir Lintorn Simmons, G.C.B.

Religious ministrations come through three recognised channels,—

1. Commissioned chaplains (Church of England, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic) attached to the larger stations at home and abroad.

2. Chaplains not commissioned. These are ordinarily clergymen of the parish where troops are quartered, and are *ex officio* appointed. They are paid by a fixed scale proportionate to the number of their charge. Roman Catholic and Presbyterian ministers also, when the attendance meets a certain numerical requirement, are salaried.

3. Army Scripture Readers, located in garrisons, and working under the control and supervision of chaplains. They are for the most part retired non-commissioned officers of varied Protestant denominations. Such men are restricted to unsectarian Bible-teaching, and are paid by a Society.

Of instrumentalities *ab extra*, the chief is the "Soldiers' Home." Its influence for good, admirable administration, every way, by lady-superintendents, can scarcely be over-rated. These homes are but few, however. Effort, not hitherto very successful, has of late been made to establish them on Established Church lines, and to associate more of the secular, less of the religious, feature. It emanated from those who viewed public-houses and Dissent with much the same aversion.

In London, some sixteen years ago, a "Soldiers' Institute," of professedly secular character, was established by officers of the Household Brigade. It was virtually a club for non-commissioned officers and men, and, as such, alcoholic drinks were supplied there. A considerable outlay was incurred; a handsome building erected. The movement fell through completely; and, by a strange irony of circumstance, the house which resounded to the feet of soldiers' wives and sweethearts¹ has become the residence of Cardinal Manning!

It is only fair to add that a "Guards' Home," formulated on the Aldershot plan, has also met with but qualified success. The exceptional temptations of the metropolis, distance from barracks, together with severity of military duty, sufficiently explain why the boon is less appreciated there than elsewhere. It would seem that much in proportion to mileage from the home centre (regarding London in such light), so is the likelihood of good result in Mission-work. Thus, when two battalions of Guards were sent to Canada, during the "Trent" difficulty of 1861, religious influences brought to bear on them

¹ Occasional dances were given.

were attended with happy results, previously unattainable. The village-church, the Sunday-school, and, more than either, the mother's voice, spoke from distant fatherland.

More recently, a coffee-palace, on the distinctive Church lines referred to, has been opened in London. The locality is Pimlico, a good central position. The house is situated in the same street as the pre-existent Home, and they can only be regarded, unhappily, as in antagonism.

In former days a commissioned chaplain was borne on the strength of each regiment. It may be asked, Why not revive the appointment now?

Let us glance back at old times, which in no sense may be designated "good." What kind of man filled the post then? What were his qualifications, how was he appointed? We know little, and that little may be gleaned most reliably from the condition of the Church at large in the time when Whitfield and Wesley preached. Yet, making due allowance for exaggeration by novelists, such as Fielding, and in our own time by partisan historians, like Lord Macaulay, light comes to us through their pages. The military chaplain could not have stood higher than his civil brethren; it may possibly have been, lower. Religion was closely interwoven with politics in those "Stuart" days, and, overriding sectarianism for awhile, they together leavened even the lowest stratum of society, men and officers alike. So, doubtless, a staunch Protestantism and "interest" would be the qualifications—nothing higher. And the army, in all ranks, "drank and swore as in Flanders."

Dating from the year 1662, such chaplain, then, formed part of the establishment of every regiment. These functionaries were also appointed to most of the garrisons and fortresses. The outcome was unsatisfactory; and we need scarcely stop to surmise why such should have been the case. Were the antecedents of "the parson" (as he would colloquially be styled) even above suspicion, the homely adage concerning the touch of pitch may well account for something worse than a barren ministry. A veritable Gomorrah must a regiment have been formerly. Who may cast a stone at an unfortunate man brought into closest contact with evil, and living in days when vice was as fashionable, as openly avowed, as is the profession of religion itself in this nineteenth century?

"Irregularities" prevailed, and these led to reform. Regimental chaplaincies were abolished. By a warrant in 1796 it was provided that, to corps serving abroad, chaplains on the staff, in the proportion of one to three or four regiments, should be appointed. On home service the troops were to

attend the parish church, or else a curate in the vicinity was to be paid a small additional stipend for the charge.¹

This procedure obtained until 1809, when civilian clergy, in Great Britain, gave place to staff-chaplains, for all large bodies of troops at home and abroad. Parochial clergy were left only in charge of detachments. Prior to this year, matters, judging from army-lists of the time, could not have been very satisfactory. Regiments were raised or disbanded as the scare of war or State economy prevailed. Hence the circumstance that, in the year 1800, there were but 22 chaplains on full pay, 39 on half-pay. And again, in 1806, the yet more curious feature is presented of 38 of the former to 73 of the latter! Corps appear to have been ill-advisedly (?) disbanded, too, on return from lengthened foreign service. Some exception doubtless, on the heads of both nationality and religion, was made in favour of subsidized foreign troops. Thus, in 1811, we find 5 chaplains serving with the King's German Legion.

Looking yet nearer to our own days, what was the strength of the department about the close of the first quarter of the century? We see some 16 chaplains apportioned to about 90,000 men, and a half-pay list of 18. It must be borne in mind, however, that the infantry was largely recruited from Ireland, a procedure that obtained, more or less, until pronounced national disaffection, together with increased facility for emigration, checked it.² For their religious needs civilian priests would be provided.

Enough has been said to show that any reversion to the old system of chaplaincy of a regiment is simply impracticable. A corps is now a town or village, so to speak, with the like varied forms of religion.

After Waterloo, the office of chaplain-general was created. Exclusive of this administrative head, there are at the present time 105 commissioned officers classed as follows: Church of England, 83; Presbyterian, 7; Roman Catholic, 15. As the entire strength of the British army is somewhat under 100,000, this would give an average of about 1 to 1,900 men; roughly, 1 to two battalions. But a large proportion of our troops is quartered in India, where no British army chaplain is stationed. Hence concentration of the latter is available. Yet, as the services of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic chaplains must not unfrequently be limited to one corps of such persuasion in

¹ See Clode's "Military Forces of the Crown."

² The exigencies of the Peninsular War led to enlistment of Irishmen for even Highland corps. More recently the famine years of '47-'48 filled our ranks with fine-framed, but half-starved Roman Catholic youths.

a garrison, it is practically found that two regiments, or a number numerically equivalent, is ordinarily the minimum charge of the Church of England officer.

It will be observed that the chaplain's department has been much strengthened since the century opened. A special feature has been the extension of commissions to ministers of other bodies than the Church of England.¹ Let us look in detail at the work of these officers.

If it were asked, where is the chief sphere, the most hopeful ground for successful ministrations, we would unhesitatingly answer—the hospital. In the barrack-room there is more or less interruption, antagonistic influence in one form or other. This applies to visits even of the Army Scripture-reader; obviously still more to those of the chaplain. But in the hospital ward, where, with scarcely an exception, all men pass sooner or later, it is otherwise. This is *the field*. There are no distractions from without: the monotony of life is *very* great, *malgré* means such as books and periodicals, and the patient welcomes every instrumentality that breaks it.

How is this field utilized? Generally a service is held on Sunday in one of the wards, or day-room, and includes men out of bed. This service is brief, necessarily, for the public duties (embracing a parade service in the morning, and, often, voluntary one in the evening) together with distance traversed, taxes the chaplain considerably. A similar service obtains about the middle of the week. And, like the picquet officer, the chaplain looks in after the surgeon's visit on most days to inquire if anything special has occurred, or to visit special cases. He signs his name in a book likewise. Add to these, manifold offices of the ordinary parochial character, necessary interviews with the commanding officers of regiments and General, certain returns and reports, and it will be found that a conscientious man is much "put to it," and tempted to a more or less perfunctory routine, and to the acquirement of the smartness incident to other officers.

The Army Scripture-reader ordinarily comes about once, sometimes twice, a week. His work, it must be remembered, extends over a whole garrison, irrespective of denomination. It is only in the exception of a great hospital like that of Netley that he, and that the society which he represents, can do more. His hospital ministration is varied and valuable—only but too limited by demand on his time elsewhere.

One other lay agency, but sometimes utilized, may be

¹ The appointment of Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Chaplains to the Forces dates from the Crimean War of 1854-56.

mentioned: that of officers, personally working among their own men. They are often regarded as "obstructives," and inconsistently tabooed as such: inconsistently, because generally—almost invariably—their line of procedure is identical with that of the Scripture-reader; viz., a simple, unsectarian Bible exposition. Very occasionally a hot, perhaps fanatical, young officer may, by disrespect to an ordained ministry, bring down merited rebuke. Far oftener it is otherwise. The individual is too soberly, seriously in earnest to regard anything but "Christ and Him crucified." Officers have some qualifications higher than the reader. They have the weight of position in dealing with *their own men*, and they possess classical attainments—telling adjuncts. But they are looked upon as "dangerous;" *why*, we need not go far in these days to inquire.¹

The position in India is exceptional. The chaplains of the three recognised denominations are there appointed by the Secretary of State. They are no longer military, but civil servants, and receive instructions from Government through the Bishop in whose diocese they are stationed. These employés are fixed in garrisons. When small bodies of men are detached, the routine functions of a minister devolve on the officer in command. Hence, as we have said, sometimes very striking and providential issues. The Army Scripture Readers' Society, recognising fully the great field of India, has striven (with but little commensurate result hitherto) to raise a special fund for this department of their work. It has but thirteen readers in India, and no less than twenty-four important garrisons are as yet unappropriated. It is much to be

¹ If there be one individual of this order who may be used as an instrument for good, it is he who, by virtue of his calling, is brought most in accord with the daily objective life on earth of the Great Physician. Add to experience in it some measure of the "mind of Christ," of the love which St. Paul portrays, and who should be more fitted to combat sickness as well as "sin," through which, overtly or otherwise, that sickness comes? Who can speak with like force of the frail tenure of life? of the subtlety of disease? who else forecast an issue in health restored or—the grave? And who may so weightily set forth the fatal error of delay, of waiting for the "more convenient season" of a death-bed?—a season which he knows must ordinarily, from pain, or mental confusion, or utter loss of consciousness, unfit the sick for seeking peace. The example of a dying repentant thief prompts many to relegate pardon to the issue of the "last syllable of time": the Medical Officer can teach that few—very few—visitations of death leave, as did crucifixion, unclouded faculties for many hours. Hence, too, the great value—weight—of the Medical Missionary—a humble, human type of the Divine Master.

regretted that while appeals for men are reiterated from the East by our evangelical brethren there, almost all the funds have to be supplied by the mother country.

Non-commissioned, *i.e.* attached, chaplains.

It might, at first glance, reasonably be supposed that the civil requirements of a parish or district would militate against the subordinate interests of a military charge. This is not the case. Experience shows indisputably that both the clergy and Nonconformist ministers appointed to detachments enter heart and soul into the work, and are instruments of much blessing to soldiers. With the close union between civil and military elements now foreshadowed, this branch of Army Church ministration is the more important and hopeful.

To such good end, doubtless, the absence of reticence, incidental to relation between the military chaplain, as an officer, and private, must contribute. The confidence of the man is more readily obtained. Again, there is more of home life—that feature which the better, *thoughtful* class of soldier yearns for amid the racket and publicity of a barrack-room. He enjoys social tea-meetings, and the temperance cause is undoubtedly thus furthered in the Army. Possibly the great frequency of such gatherings among Nonconformists may help to account for the indisputable fact that the bulk of soldiers brought under religious conviction—the men truly pious—belong to one or other form of Dissent, and notably, Wesleyan. In a former article¹ the “spell” of hymnody over the lower classes was noticed: the present instance affords apt illustration of a great fact.²

Let us look at the relation of war to our subject. A commingling of good and evil, surely. If the campaign be very brief and decisive, as in those which have characterized British arms of late, then the good side of human nature is apparent, rises to the surface. But in protracted war, with its contingent suffering of every kind, the evil assuredly crops up largely. The value of a life, of a soul, what is it then? The young soldier ordinarily passes through three several phases. There is the shock (which none may forget) at first viewing violent sudden death; then, indifference; then, callousness. “Self,” broken though it be at times by chivalrous acts, develops much. Few conditions of mankind more powerfully demand Christianizing agencies. And here, *en passant*, it may

¹ See CHURCHMAN, January, 1882. The writer may be allowed to express his satisfaction at the increased feeling in favour of shortened services in the church everywhere manifested.

² The Wesleyan body now sets apart ministers for Army work.

be remarked as a pleasing feature of the present day that a high, not infrequently distinctly religious, tone, often characterizes the public utterances of distinguished generals.

It has been maintained in these pages that there is need for—room for—additional workers in peace times. But in war the chaplain is simply overpowered, much as the medical officer in past days. Some parallelism indeed exists between the two. But the latter is *now* helped materially by new agencies, such as the Red Cross Society and self-sacrificing lady nurses.

Not so the former.¹ True, the Army Scripture Readers' Society steps in happily, as in Egypt, but its hands are sorely hampered by lack of funds, and two or three readers among 10,000 men—what are they among so many? Reference has been made to the Red Cross Society, and it might be said, "Could not its members be utilized for religious purposes also?" On grounds sufficiently patent to need no comment, the reply should be "No." A passing word to direct the dying on a field of battle to their Redeemer might indeed well fall from their lips, as from the lips of any Christian man.²

If we face the contingency of war, let us ask (as to the National Church), Would any Government supply an adequate number of clergy as chaplains, and, if so, are ministers experienced and fitted to be obtained? Past and present both point negatively in each direction. Since the last great war competitive examination came in, and very many young men at the Universities enter the lists. Already—not altogether from such cause, however—the requirements of an ever-

¹ In the Crimean War a Church of England chaplain had charge of a brigade—three regiments. The routine duties were very heavy, and such officers were often incapacitated through sickness. Hospitals were left unvisited. A sad vision of men, young for the most part, dying without spiritual succour, rises to the mind of the writer.

² The writer can never forget a lesson taught him of the value of a dozen words under such circumstances. The incident has been told, but may bear reiteration. At the battle of Inkerman, a soldier of his regiment, when lying wounded and disabled on the ground, subsequently received another (and, as it proved, fatal) stab. When ministered to, he was loudly cursing the Russian who had acted so inhumanly towards him. A glance showed the fatal nature of the injury. Shocked at the thought of a soul passing to eternity so awfully unprepared, the sufferer was urged by the surgeon to seek pardon from God. The whole current of thought was instantaneously turned; the dying man as fervently supplicated Divine mercy for himself as previously vengeance on another. He was placed for support and shelter behind the low bank of an earth-work, and necessarily left awhile. On return, at the close of the action, with a party to remove the wounded, the medical officer found his patient in the position where he had been placed. He was in the same attitude, too, sitting against the parapet, and—dead.

increasing mass of city populace fall short. Bishops are in accord as to the urgent need for lay ministration as an adjuvant. It is no longer a question with them, "Shall we employ laymen?" but *only* what is the best form of utilization—designation—limit.

It is from such *matériel*, we submit, aid must be sought—existing means be supplemented in the Army. Voluntaryism is a growing force in this age. Statesmen are not slow to take advantage of it. Were theological students forthcoming in adequate number, it would not do to send them, like their medical *confrères*, to a war camp, but rather men experimentally taught in the school of life, and in the Master's service. Such happily may be found. Government would so far assist, doubtless, as to grant quarters and rations, essential requisites. The educated layman would supply a link between the commissioned chaplain and the Army Scripture-reader. Fitted by education and position, he could take the place of the former in emergencies, help him at times in functions (which, indeed, already devolve, not unfrequently, on isolated laymen abroad), and further religion—especially among the officers.¹ It is more than likely that under such circumstances Non-conformists will put forth much voluntary aid.

Whether it be with us war or peace, as God's good providence disposes, the object of these remarks is to show the paramount importance of the soldier being more fully equipped, more fully armed, for a yet higher warfare. To this end all "divisions" may well be subordinated. And, from another standpoint, it may be wise and in accord with the equally Christian and State policy of the late Archbishop Tait, to look forward, and, in the interests of our Church, strengthen her hold on an increasingly important element of society—an element which may otherwise in our children's days be potent in the direction of religious, *ergo* national, decadence.

FREDERICK ROBINSON.

NOTE.—Since this article was penned the "Story of Chinese Gordon" has issued from the Press. In it the following passage, illustrative of Spiritual wants during the Crimean War, appears: "We have a great deal to regret in the want of good working clergymen, there being none here, that I know of, who interest themselves about the men" (p. 20). And this was written by a very young officer—one whose very name is now an incentive to "holy living."

¹ In the latter part of the Crimean War, *after* the great strain of the famine period was ended and procedure rendered feasible, such help would have been very valuable.