THE PATTERN MILITARY OFFICER, BY A MILITARY TUTOR

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1855.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Pattern Military Officer is reprint of an article, which appeared in a Military periodical, four years ago; but which was written, some time before. The favourable manner, in which it was noticed by the press generally, induces me to republish it—with very many additions. Also, with Notes; and an Appendix. I am aware that its merits—even in its new and greatly improved form—are not of a very high order. I know, that the *accomplished* Officer will find, in it, little that is novel or instructive. Still, to the mere *tyro*, it may serve as an introduction to more elaborate Manuals.

London, June 23rd, 1855.

THE

PATTERN MILITARY OFFICER.

He is a *light* infantry officer[1]—yet weighs thirteen stone! He has been one these thirteen years. During that period, he has served in all the four quarters of the globe. He has been frost-bitten in Canada, and laid up with jungle fever in Hindostan,—he has fought in five "general actions," and in innumerable

[1] "The Light Infantry Regiments (says a writer in a military periodical) consist, in reality, of regiments little different to the other corps of the line. The men are of the same length of service—their arms and accoutrements are precisely similar; and their drill and exercise nearly so; for all the regular battalions are directed to practice Light Infantry drill."

What we want, in our Army, are a dozen or so of Infantry regiments—really, not nominally *light*. They should consist

skirmishes,—he has led two "forlorn hopes,"—he has been blown up by gunpowder, and nearly drowned through the upsetting of a pontoon bridge,—he has been shipwrecked, whilst escorting convicts to Van Dieman's Land,—he has been thrice a prisoner,—he has been seven times wounded.

And now, I think, I hear the reader say,—"Surely an officer, who has seen and suffered so much, must have attained to some rank in the army—doubtless, by this time, he is a *colonel*."

No—although "a soldier, of fortune," he has been very unfortunate! He is not even, a *captain*. He entered the army, a subaltern [2]

(both officers and privates) of active, hardy men—capable of marching forty miles a day for several days in succession. Men of the middle height are, in general, better walkers than tall men—even if the latter be stout in proportion. In the Peninsular war, it was a common occurrence for a short soldier to volunteer to carry—in addition to his own knapsack—that of a gigantic, though wearied, Grenadier. Of course, for a *bayonet charge*, Grenadiers are the most effective; for, in hand-to-hand fighting, length and weight of arm will always tell.

[2] Few are so ignorant of military matters, as not to know that a subaltern (from *sub*, under, and *alter*, another) is a com-

(as *ensign*, of course)—he is a subaltern still. His services, though acknowledged by his superiors abroad, have been overlooked by the authorities at home.[2] The fact is, being the son of an obscure country curate, he has had *neither money nor interest with Government*—and, without money or interest with Government, few British officers have been known to get on. Few—very few—by merit, alone, have got on. Even Wellington did not—great as was *his* merit. Two of his grades were purchased. The influence of his brother obtained for him the command of an army in India.

But, although the Pattern Military Officer's country has not done its duty to him, he still does his duty to it; he is, as active and zealous an

missioned officer, under the rank of captain. A lieutenant or an ensign is a subaltern.

Field officers, are above the rank of captain; and under that of general. A major or a colonel is a field officer.

[2] At the time, I am writing, the English military authorities are very numerous:—there is the Minister of War, the Under Secretary at War, the Commander-in-Chief, the Master-General of the Ordnance, &c. But great changes are contemplated. Some departments are to be abolished—others will be consolidated. The Commissariat and Ordnance will cease to be "civil" departments.