

of the others were really desirable soldiers or citizens. While during and after the Spanish war a very worthy class of men entered the service, there is no denying that to-day, if what officers tell us is correct, the recruits are of a much lower order. But whether the deserter is worthless, or a man who violates his oath because of unbearable dissatisfaction, it has never been possible to make the public run him down like a burglar or a bank thief. Adjt.-Gen. Ainsworth is particularly wroth at this, but it avails him nothing. Two years ago he increased the reward, and he bends every effort to catch those who escape, yet the desertions steadily increase.

All this is the more baffling because, as the War Department boasts, the American soldiers are the best paid, best fed, and best housed in the world. They live often in beautiful parks, such as Governors' Island, Fort Sheridan, Fort Snelling, etc. Their work is light. True they have to do what Mr. Millard calls menial work—cook and clean for themselves, keep the grounds in order, dig intrenchments, and do all the necessary work about a barracks. If men enlist thinking that there are army service corps or unseen fairies to do the dish-washing and make the beds, they are bound to be disappointed. If there were such helpers, the soldier would have little to do, indeed. And the present comparative idleness save at manoeuvre seasons is one great cause for dissatisfaction. No American soldier works one-third as hard as the French or German soldier, who marches every day, not once a week or once a month. From the foreign point of view, our soldiers are pampered.

What else can be done to make them happy? The lack of trained officers on duty with companies, and the absence of a beer canteen, are given as two reasons for desertion; and the former unquestionably presents a grave evil. As for the latter, there were plenty of desertions in the old days of the canteen, and the average soldier does not suffer from too little drink. If anything, it is more occupation he needs, particularly in the Coast Artillery, whose stations are often inaccessible and whose activities are limited to a couple of hours' drill a day. Hence many have suggested that these idle men be taught

some trade. Be that as it may, before the task of keeping men with the colors is abandoned on the ground that the average white American simply will not stand being bossed by a man in uniform, one other measure ought to be tried. This is the holding of officers responsible for the desertions, or in other words for the happiness or unhappiness of their commands.

Thus when one-third of a company deserts from one of the best posts in the service, as happened in Company K, Twenty-eighth Infantry, at Fort Snelling, there is something so obviously wrong as to call for prompt official investigation and the punishment of those responsible. If it be answered that there is no real way to-day to punish an officer for negligence or inefficiency, it is surely the duty of the War Department to lay its plight before Congress, and with the President to insist on remedial legislation. Some such holding of company commanders and regimental commanding officers to account is absolutely essential. Ours is the only important army in the world in which colonels are not held rigidly accountable, and the responsibility for this state of affairs rests at the War Department's doors, through which politics enters just as freely as ever, despite Theodore Roosevelt's beating the air with his threats against officers who sought political aid for advancement or favors. Something like this must surely be done. Besides the 5,000 deserters, the army loses thousands who purchase discharges, are discharged for crime, or quit on the expiration of their enlistments, or retire, or die in service. The authorized strength of the army is 76,901, exclusive of the Philippine Scouts. It is safe to say that between one-third and one-half of the cavalry, artillery, and infantry regiments are renewed each year—with great loss in efficiency and money. Curiously, the colored soldiers, of a race that is always accused of having in domestic service at least no sense of honor or contractual obligation, hardly ever desert, their percentage being scarcely over one-half of one per cent., to 5.17 per cent. for white troops. That means simply that colored men are happy in the army and white men are not.

#### BRITISH "SELF-DEPRECIATION."

Among those American readers who may have formed a conception of the English character as marked by self-assurance, not to say arrogance, an article in the London *Spectator* will cause some lifting of the eye-brows. The *Spectator* had received a letter from a Canadian correspondent, apropos of "the injury that is done to the Empire by our national habit of self-depreciation." Englishmen, the *Spectator* admits, "lightheartedly abuse themselves for their shortcomings," and as a nation, England "ought to be ashamed of having so greatly overdone the pride that apes humility, and thereby acquired the habit of self-depreciation."

It can hardly be doubted that this picture will appeal to the American sense of humor. If anything had impressed itself on the imagination of our people, during the past century or so, it was the calm sense of superiority displayed, individually and collectively, by Englishmen. Lowell's remarks on "a certain condescension in foreigners" were applied to the English people. The English novelists themselves have delighted in portraying this national attitude, and if an occasional cynical apologist appeared, like Sydney Smith, to explain that the British tourist's haughty silence in the presence of fellow-travellers was due to the fact that he could not think of anything to say, the atmosphere, nevertheless, remained.

There are two sorts of self-depreciation. There is the one which voices real despondency, but there is also the other which embodies the extreme form of self-laudation. Dickens's immensely wealthy bank director, who at Mr. Dombey's dinner table "mentioned his little place at Kingston-upon-Thames and its just being barely equal to giving Dombey a bed and a chop," and the "little bit of shrubbery the ladies would find there, and a poor little flower-bed or so, and a humble apology for a pinery," was sufficiently true to life. But it will hardly be contended that the traditional Englishman has been in the habit of applying this form of self-depreciation very often to his national affairs. Therefore, in the way of both social and political inquiry, it should be interesting to ascertain just what trait of character the *Spectator* has discovered. It gives some intimation in a citation from its Canadian

correspondent regarding the "shrieks that English trade has been captured by Germany; howls that a German war-balloon is flying over London by night; facts one day showing that at least 40 per cent. of the English nation is getting ready to go to the workhouse; facts the next day showing that the other 60 per cent. should already be in an asylum for the insane." The prevalence of these notions it ascribes primarily, and perhaps rightly, to the sensational portion of the English press.

But the sensational press, one must remember, is the last of all publications to adopt a programme of national self-depreciation unless it either expresses an overwhelming popular sentiment to the same effect or has some political end to serve. The two most conspicuous phenomena of present-day British politics—the campaign for a protective tariff and the campaign for unprecedented increase in naval armament—are novelties of the past ten or fifteen years. Neither policy appealed to the British popular mind a generation ago, and the only means possessed by the politician of exciting widespread interest in either programme was through frightening the British people about themselves. Mr. Chamberlain well understood that his "tariff-reform" propaganda had not a shadow of chance for success among the voters, unless he persuaded them that England's trade was decadent, her manufacturing prestige threatened by Germany and America, and her control even of her own home markets gravely imperilled.

But to create such a belief, a systematic campaign of national self-depreciation was indispensable. Similarly, when the people or Parliament balked at the prodigious increase in naval appropriations and at the oppressive taxation requisite to meet them, there was no obvious course of action but to impress on the public mind that supremacy of the seas was slipping from England's grasp, that the British coast itself was in hourly peril of invasion by the hated German, and that Blériot's crossing of the Channel in an airship meant the end of all the old-time safeguards. A public once convinced of the truth of these assertions might be induced to open its pocketbook, but it could hardly fail to be started on the road to self-depreciation.

It will be said, perhaps, that there is more truth than poetry behind the alarmist allegations on which these political campaigns are based. In the present case there is this much of basis for the "scare"—that competition by non-English manufacturing states in neutral export territory is sharper than it used to be, and that, with the growth of navies in the younger states, England's numerical naval predominance is possibly not so great as it was a generation ago. But it requires the arts of a pessimist for political purposes to carry the inference to the extreme of national decadence, and the serious efforts to build up such a theory have been exploded with little difficulty. One is reminded of our own national state of mind a couple of decades ago, when arrogant Great Britain was pilloried on the stump as blocking this country's endeavors to make headway, as sending "British gold" to debauch our voters in elections where the protective tariff was at stake, and even (Mr. Bryan and his friends can tell us when) as placing around our national ankles the fetters of the gold standard of currency, to keep our unhappy people in financial servitude to London. Contrasting that campaign of political self-depreciation on our own account with the present similar campaign in England, the American sense of humor is excited. No doubt the time will come when the British sense of humor will be stirred at recalling the incidents of the present day.

#### GREECE REVISITED.

ATHENS, August 5.

It has been one of the surprises of my return to Greece, after fifteen years of absence, to see how many more foreigners now come here in summer, and to discover that there is no real answer to the question, why not? Why should a few professional Hellenists have all to themselves this glory of scenery and of "arts and memories of an ancient land"? To enjoy these one needs only an eye for nature and an elementary knowledge of history and art. A friend of the artist G. F. Watts quoted him to me as saying that summer is the only time to see Greece properly. Anyhow people are coming, and will come more. Even in out-of-the-way Delphi, we met in three days representatives of France, Germany, Russia, Sweden, and America; in Athens and easily accessible places one sees considerable parties, "personally conducted" under various agencies, especial-

ly American and German, and in the aggregate, no small number of independent travellers.

#### I.

It was June 23 when I landed at Patras, fifteen days direct from New York. Along with the delightful sense of familiarity, changes were at once apparent. Patras is larger; there is a breakwater, and a second mole, and more shipping; but the old castle and the mountains behind the town are the same. Then came the railway journey to Athens. There can scarcely be a more beautiful railway journey in the world. The narrow-gauge track follows the windings of the southern shore of the Corinthian Gulf, among the vineyards that produce a large share of the world's supply of the little dried grapes we call currants. To the left is the sea, beyond the sea the mountains, a continuous panorama, constantly varied, culminating in Parnassus, with Helikon to close the line in the east. No historical or poetic associations are needed, nature suffices. A part of my pleasure lay in watching the growing enthusiasm of a party of ten Americans who were seeing for the first time that glory of color, endlessly playing over mountains and sea, delicate beyond any human art to suggest, heightening as the gulf widened and the "haughty day filled his blue urn with fire"—violet, purple, and blue, with just enough rose to set these off, and all etherealized by the flood of pure white light. But words mean nothing when you are thinking of color. It is only after seeing such visions that one understands why the Greek poets made so little use of words of color. Some assert it was because the ancient sense of color was little developed. Absurd! More probably it was because their sense of color was more highly developed than ours, so that the crude inadequacy of words was more universally felt, and poets never attempted the impossible. The best one could do was what Pindar and Aristophanes did, employ with moderation all the words for light, gleam, gold, and brilliance. The light they knew was prismatic with the hues we still see in Greece in summer, and at their best in summer alone. No doubt this was what the great English painter referred to. Another note in the foreground, along with the green vineyards and gray olive trees, was the masses of oleanders (ancient daphne) in full bloom—and its period of bloom extends over many weeks. The shrub takes prompt possession of the broad spaces covered with sand and gravel by winter floods. If let alone, the shrub which we know as a tub-plant becomes here a bushy tree. Then after crossing the Isthmus it was the Saronic Gulf and a different light—first Aigina in the south, with the mountains of Peloponnese to the right; then Salamis, glimpse of Hymettos, al-