

light to alter that opinion. On perusing again the evidence, I find Warder McKillop stated: "Deceased was a long time in the army, and had some disagreeable ways with him," but the Coroner never took the trouble to inquire what those ways had been. May they not have been due to the man's illness? Again, when the doctor was called to examine deceased, Warder McKillop informed that gentleman that "deceased had taken his food regularly, and had frequently eaten the meals left by other prisoners." It is a pity, in the interest of veracity and decency, Warder McKillop did not produce, in support of his statement, those most generous prisoners who so readily parted with their prison meals. Mr. Fraser, the chief gaoler, also informed the doctor that deceased was a disappointed applicant for the position of gaol cook, and thus accounted to the doctor for his malingering. Here we find that, for some reasons which will probably remain for ever in the dark, deceased had drawn upon himself the ire of his gaolers, and nothing after this that he said or complained of was materially heeded.

It cannot, from the foregoing, be wondered at that Dr. Button was off his guard (if, indeed, not misdirected), and naturally did not give that attention to the prisoner's statements which, under other circumstances, he would undoubtedly have done.

I profess the greatest respect, in common with all those who know him, for the professional skill, and kindly, generous nature of Dr. Button. I believe no physician in Otago is more competent to determine or better qualified to treat disease. That he did not discover this particular patient's malady, from its very nature, and under the prejudicial circumstances stated, is not surprising, but it is equally unfortunate that he should so allow himself to be deceived by the misdirecting statements of the gaolers, and, in a measure, endanger his professional name by relying too much on their representations.

Again, glancing at the evidence, Warder McKillop satisfied himself and the chief gaoler, that, on the 23rd, deceased was "in pain and unfit for work." Now, although both were thus satisfied, it has not yet been explained why prisoner was put upon half rations. Such is not the gaol treatment awarded a sick prisoner. The evidence of Middleton states: "Several times when he (Wilson) came in from work he was hardly able to speak, and his face was contracted like that of a man in a fit. He used to complain of a pain in the heart, and was sometimes hardly able to move. Witness was positive that deceased went out to work on the 25th ult., and said that while they were at tea that evening the warder took deceased to the Governor, and he was afterwards locked up—why, witness did not know, but he regarded it as punishment. Some time after, witness received orders not to give deceased tea with his food in future, and put him on half, or No. 2, rations." Does not this require strict investigation?

"I have," said deceased, "been before the doctor, and they brought a witness to say that I ate the food of two men." This was McKillop's statement to the doctor on the 27th; but it was proven by another witness for a fortnight before he died (5th April) he did not eat half-a-pound of solid food. Where, we may well ask, was the gaoler during all this time? Will any one deny that a man of the most simple observation could fail to notice the steady but regular change which gradually creeps over a man fast approaching his demise?

We are told even by the Coroner: "On the day of his death he appears to have had more than usual attendance, as he was seen by four different persons." His coming dissolution, then, was known; now, if his state were sufficient to awaken so much curiosity, anxiety, and attendance, why, I ask, was the doctor not sent for? Could it possibly be that the gaolers were aware of deceased's state, and wilfully allowed him to die as he pleased? The gaoler must have known that he was seriously unwell, for his heart of kindness was so far moved that, during the whole day long, he was permitted the exceptional use of his blankets, but, forsooth, all comfort and medicine were still denied, No. 2 rations rigidly enforced, and, locked in his solitary cell, a veteran soldier of the Empire—a man worthy of a better fate—was allowed to die, unheeded, untended, and neglected.

There is no class of our fellow subjects more deserving of sympathy and consideration than the retired soldiers of the British army. Unlike the soldiers of ancient and modern Europe, whose path lay, when sent forth on missions of conquest and of war, in genial climates, amongst the fig trees and the vine, our soldiers are inured to a harder and more bitter fate. Enlisted into service, the men by whom the British army is kept fresh and young undergo, generally, but a short period of drill in England, from whence they are ordered abroad to serve in portions of that Empire whereon the sun never sets. In the words of Whiteside: "The scorching sun of the East and the pestilence of the West they endure, to spread our commerce, to extend our Empire, and to uphold our glory." These brave men, alike the envy and the admiration of the world, follow the roll of the drum and the colours of their country "wherever danger is to be faced or honor won" in confronting hostile guns and spears. And how does a great, free, enlightened, and wealthy country requite them? After a period of service, during which a generation comes and frequently passes away, and at a time of life when men employed in civil occupations have earned a small competency and are supported and cheered with home and friends, the poor soldier, now grown old and unfit for work, often with maimed limbs, broken health, or a ruined constitution, is cast adrift on the world to gather a scanty crumb abroad, or, if he returns to the scenes of his boyhood, to find perchance his friends dead, companions scattered, and he himself in his native land a stranger.

To such a class Wilson belonged, and, out of the *creme de la creme* of the ranks of that illustrious regiment in which he served, attained the honorable and somewhat distinguished rank of sergeant-major. In a moment of drunkenness he committed a misdemeanour; and you, sir, will excuse me, and every man who bears a generous heart and loves justice and humanity will support me, in demanding a fresh investigation to assure ourselves that the veteran soldier, now no more, was not wilfully submitted to cowardly and cruel treatment.

With this letter I dismiss the subject, and before taking final leave of the question I should perhaps state that deceased was for a time in my employment, and I found him an honest man and a good servant.