

argue that if it is wrong all preparation for it must also be wrong. In other words, we have conscientious objections to being trained or allowing our children to be trained to take human life. Thousands upon thousands are of the same opinion, and as there is nothing wrong in such beliefs and the actual practice of them, we deny the right of any Government, far less a so-called Democratic Government, to compel us to do that which we believe to be wrong. We are not unpatriotic, disloyal, nor simply Anti-Militarists, but are working, with other Peace Societies scattered in every country in the world, for the attainment of a just, common sense, righteous method of settling International disputes. With the ever rapidly growing sentiment towards peace and the abolition of race hatred, and with the establishment of the Hague Tribunal of Arbitration, we conceive it to be an unpardonable crime to trample upon the consciences of those who are endeavouring to promote a better feeling towards our neighbours.

Miss Smith brings to her aid the well-worn argument of compulsion in education, and adds thereto the registration of births and the Factory Act. The obvious sincerity of the writer compels us to believe that she is serious, but really there is no analogy. Education is acknowledged to be in the highest interests of the young people. They are not compelled to leave their parents' roof; in fact, they can be educated by the parents if need be. The child is not punished if the education is neglected, neither is the franchise taken away upon reaching the majority. In the case of the registration of birth the child is not penalised if he fails to attend the Registrar's Office and make the necessary declaration. The Factory Act is entirely for the promotion of good government and the prevention of abuses, and for the protection of child life. The law in each of these instances recognises that the child is a minor. On the other hand, the Defence Act deliberately ignores parental authority, penalises the child for obeying his parents, and then at the age of 21 disfranchises him into the bargain!

We are next told that the idea of service is engendered and that discipline is taught, both excellent ideals, to be sure. But would Miss Smith argue that in order to

inculcate these it is beneficial to train the child at the most impressionable and imaginative age in the arts of war, to teach that every Nation outside our own may be an enemy who in future years may invade our shores, and will then have to be shot? Does she not realise that "Service to one's country" is less emphasised in militarism than in other professions? I would commend to her notice Buckle's weighty words in his "History of Civilisation," where he says:— "In a backward state of society men of distinguished talents crowd to the army, and are proud to enrol themselves in its ranks. But as society advances, new sources of activity are opened, and new professions arise which, being essentially mental, offer to genius opportunities for success more rapid than any formerly known. The consequence is that in England . . . it nearly always happens that if a father has a son whose faculties are remarkable, he brings him up to one of the lay professions, where intellect, when accompanied by industry, is sure to be rewarded. If, however, the inferiority of the boy is obvious, a suitable remedy is at hand; he is made either a soldier or a clergyman; he is sent into the army or hidden in the Church. . . . The evidence respecting the military profession is equally decisive. For although that profession has in modern Europe produced a few men of undoubted genius, the number is so extremely small as to amaze us at the dearth of original ability. That the military class, taken as a whole, has a tendency to degenerate, will become still more obvious, if we compare long periods of time." (P. 114.)

Her argument regarding discipline is equally unsound. Mere submission to superior authority, untinged with parental love, is never likely to promote discipline in the truest sense. Obedience to a military officer amounts to subservience, and the moment the restraint is removed the animal nature of the man is let loose, as Miss Smith would soon learn if she were living near the barracks of a garrison town. She is under the delusion that Territorials are all made total abstainers and non-smokers on joining the forces, because she has discovered in "Hints to Territorials" some good advice regarding these vices; but I can assure her that she is living in a fool's

paradise. Were she to walk along the streets of Wellington any evening, her notions would receive a rude shock. I fear that she is totally ignorant of the dangers of camp life. Even the Rev. Captain-Chaplain Luxford warned the Government against the Moral Leper, at this early stage of the system. Mothers know only too well the damage that can be done in one camp even after 18 years of careful training, and Miss Smith can know very little of ordinary boarding-houses if she puts them on the same level!

I am glad that the writer objects to the oath, but she clearly does not realise that the Act makes no provision for its administration to any Junior or Senior Cadet or member of the General Training Section, and that the oath has been illegally given. But the military authorities have deliberately enforced it, and lads have been imprisoned and fined for refusing to take it, against the direct provision of Parliament. Further, and which is more serious, the oath has been altered by these same military authorities, and the Magistrate has condemned it. This opens up a question not mentioned by Miss Smith, viz., the establishment of a military autocracy in a free country which will override the civil authority. We have lately had glaring instances of an attempt to do so. Under this military system "Passport regulations" are made legal, by which lads are penalised if they neglect to notify the military authorities on going for a holiday. Courts-Martial are introduced in times of peace, and numberless other undesirable institutions established. The presence of a host of military officers, holding positions of influence, in Wellington is a menace to free democratic institutions, to say nothing of the tremendous cost to this Dominion of their upkeep. Neither does she consider the inconvenience caused and the loss of valuable time incurred in attending drills and camps, etc.—time which should be spent in technical and higher education, or industrial pursuits. At the present time the periods of such drills and camps is comparatively short, but General Godley will soon need more time for training if the scheme becomes established.

Miss Smith complains that we have made no objection to the