

# SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

## A Vivid Character Sketch of Lincolnshire's Great Soldier.

(By THOMAS COX MEECH.)

WHEN the first entry was made in the new baptismal register at the Parish Church of Welbourn in the year 1860, the writer of that official record little dreamed that he was beginning a chapter of national history.

It so happened that the first child in the village to be baptized after the commencement of the new Register was William Robert Robertson, the son of Thomas C. Robertson and Mrs. A. Robertson (formerly Miss A. Johnson, eldest daughter of Mr. William and Mrs. Rosamond Johnson, of Navenby).

The year 1860 might by fatalists be regarded as a soldier's year. It was the end of one decade of great wars and the beginning of another, intervening between long periods of peace.

The 19th Century, it will be remembered, opened amid the storm of the revolutionary wars. Along the shores of the Mediterranean by the Banks of the Danube and the Rhine, European warriors wrestled in battle with their neighbours. Napoleon, in the words attributed to him by Byron—

Warred with the world which  
vanquished me only  
When the meteor of conquest allured me  
too far.

Following Waterloo came long years of commercial and industrial development. There were minor conflicts, but when Queen Victoria came to the throne of Britain in 1837 the Ambassadors of the whole civilised world assembled, at peace all with Great Britain and all with one another, to do honour to the girl monarch.

Peace was the one thought, the one theme of song and prose. The words of Thackeray's "May Day Ode" have been quoted by writers as representing the common sentiment:—

Look yonder where the engines toil:  
These England's arms of conquests are,  
The trophies of her bloodless war;  
Brave weapons these.

Victorious over wave and soil,  
With these she sails, she weaves, she tills,  
Pierces the everlasting hills,  
And spans the seas.

Through the 'forties there were but distant rumblings of threatening thunder. The Crimean War, in which British and French fought side by side, broke out in 1854 with its famous battles of Balaclava, Inkermann, and Alma. Then followed the Indian

Mr. Thomas Robertson, the father of Sir William Robert Robertson, came from Grantham and settled in the village of Welbourn. He was a man of some local importance, and occupied the position of postmaster. By trade he was a tailor, and as is customary in villages the sub-post office of which he was in charge was attached to his own business. His son William very early in life gave indications of his aptitude for



Sir William when a Trooper.

designing and planning on scientific principles.

The village school of Welbourn enjoys the honour of giving the present chief of the British Army his preliminary education. Miss E. Wilson, who still lives opposite the village school, was an assistant teacher when Sir William was a pupil there, and by her lessons in arithmetic laid the earliest foundations of that mathematical accuracy so necessary to the modern leader of soldiers.

The pupil at Welbourn School with whom we are now directly concerned took his work seriously from the begin-



SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O.

ahead of his fellows in many things. One who knew him well remarks "he had the most strange mixture of... Everything he purposed he always accomplished." touch with any of those opportunities No doubt the villagers of Welbourn

who found the humdrum of an everyday life unsuited to their temperaments.

The various grades of what are comprehensively known as the "Middle Classes," were very sparsely represented in the Army. It is no reflection on the patriotism of that period to say that the kind of boy who went for a soldier was not exactly the studious youth noted for special devotion to his school work. It was looked upon, so far as the



Miss Wilson,

who was assistant teacher at Welbourn School when Sir William was a pupil there, and who occasionally taught him.

rank and file was concerned, as a life appealing to the boys who preferred stories of adventure to mathematics and drawing.

There was no immediate national danger to bring service in the Army home to the people of all classes as a public duty. The general attitude of folks outside the classes to which I have referred, was that there were plenty of men to be got among those who had no settled interests to keep them at home.

### A NOTABLE SUCCESS.

#### Lincoln Student Wins Coveted Scholarship.

Educationists of Lincoln will be interested and gratified to learn that Mr. Ernest E. Wells, who is a student of the Municipal Technical School, has been awarded an open post-graduate scholarship in technology of £75, tenable for one year at the School of Technology, Manchester, by the governing body of that institution. These scholarships are open to graduates of any University in the British Empire, and to other persons possessing qualifications for research. As Mr. Wells took the B.Sc. degree of the University of London with honours in chemistry, in 1915, he was eligible for the scholarship that has been awarded him, and which will enable him to carry on research work at Manchester, under the direction of the professor in the subject concerned. Although the scholarship is tenable for one year only, it may be renewed at the discretion of the Governors, and extended over another year.

As Mr. Wells is a thorough student, and possesses a capacity for hard work as well as high intellectual ability, his career at Manchester will be watched with deep interest by the educationists of Lincoln, and little or no surprise will be felt by those who know him best if he succeeds in achieving something original in that department of scientific research in which he chooses to exercise his powers. He is a born chemist, and it is highly probable that he will confine his activities to that branch of the subject which is concerned with the dyeing industry, in which the Germans—thanks to the apathy of certain British manufacturers and to certain peculiar natural advantages—have excelled so long. Lincoln citizens may be assured of one thing, and that is, that Mr. Wells is qualified in every way for taking full advantage of the distinction that has been conferred upon him, and that he will leave his mark on whatever he touches, and make his contribution to those products of scientific thought and activity which are the hinges on which modern civilisation turns.

Mr. Wells' distinction is the more gratifying in that it is conferred upon one who, educationally, is a product of the Municipal Technical School, in which he began his secondary school career, and in which he continuously worked from the day he entered the school to the time when he was awarded this open science scholarship.

He began his education at the Alfred Street Elementary School, under the head-mastership of the late Mr. E. M. Oates, and from there passed into the Municipal Technical School, where he was awarded an Internal Scholarship by the governors. In 1910, he successfully passed the Matriculation Examination of the University of London; in 1914, he took his Inter Science Examination which he passed with honours in physics; and in 1915, he took the B.Sc. Degree of the same University, with honours in chemistry.

Lincoln has a right to be proud of his educational career and intellectual achievements, and of the distinction that has lately been conferred upon him, and we wish him every success in his new sphere of work where he will, no doubt,

Meeting at Lincoln.

A meeting of the Lindsey Standing Joint Committee was held at Lincoln on Tuesday. Mr. W. Embleton-Fox presiding. Also present were the Rev. Canon Quirk, Col. E. S. Mason, and Messrs. A. H. Leslie Melville, H. D. Simpson, G. Martinson, J. D. Blanchard, T. Cheney Garfit, J. Drakes, J. Forster, J. Franks, and W. K. Waddingham, with the Clerk (Mr. C. Scorer).

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT.

The Chief Constable (Captain Mitchell Innes) reported that the number of indictable crimes reported during the past quarter was 91, for which 100 persons were charged—27 apprehended, and 73 proceeded against by summons. Of these six were committed for trial, 60 summarily convicted, and 34 discharged. For the corresponding period of last year 119 offences were reported, and 138 persons charged. The number of persons dealt with for non-indictable offences during the past quarter was 1,726, of whom 258 were apprehended for various offences, and the remainder dealt with on summons. For the corresponding period of last year 1,423 persons were proceeded against. There had been a decrease in the cases of begging from 36 to 29, and in the cases of drunkenness from 193 to 93. Forty-seven persons were proceeded against under the county by-laws. There were 65 vacancies in the force at present, and seven in the headquarters' reserve. Canon Quirk asked what was the reason of the increase in the number of non-indictable offences, and the reply of the Chief Constable was that it was accounted for by the Defence of the Realm Act.

DISTINCTION RECOMMENDED.

The Chief Constable recommended that the Committee recommend Supt. H. Osborn for the award of the King's Police Medal. He recommended this, he said, as a recognition of long and distinguished service to the county, and in particular for his outstanding conduct in connection with the Defence of the Realm Act. This was the first recommendation he had brought before the Committee since the medal was instituted. Supt. Osborn's services expired this year, and although under present conditions he would have to remain, it was necessary under the Home Office arrangements to make this recommendation now. The position of Supt. Osborn on the Humber side had been an extremely delicate and difficult one, but he had given the utmost satisfaction, both to the Naval and Military authorities. He had shown a great deal of tact and resolution in the matters with which he had had to deal.—The Committee unanimously agreed to make the recommendation.

A HORNCASTLE COMPLAINT.

On the Surveyor's report was a complaint from the Horncastle magistrates of the acoustic properties of the Court House, and a suggestion for certain alterations. Mr. Martinson observed that it seemed to him a marvel that during the 20 years he had sat there they had never had a Court House which had any acoustic properties. It was decided to postpone the matter until the end of the war.

POLICE FORCE ECONOMY.

A statement of the amount required for police wages in August, September, and October showed that £1,533 14s. 11d. would be required, and the total needed for the contingent expenditure was £1,050, and for the police pension fund £1,134 10s. Col. E. S. Mason pointed out that clothing for the police was to cost £134 10s. 3d. more, but they were providing no caps and helmets this year and the force would do their best to get on without new gloves. The total saving there was £115 12s. 4d., so that the total increased price would be only £20. But they must remember they were only providing this year for 184 constables, whereas last year they provided for 260. The accounts were agreed to.

An Interesting Scotch Proverb.

"Bread is the staff of life, but the pudding makes a good crutch"—that is if made with ATORA Beef Suet. More digestible and economical than if you use raw suet. Sold in 1 lb. cartons 11d., and 2 lb. cartons 6d. Ask your grocer for it; refuse substitutes.



SIR WILLIAM'S MOTHER.

doubt found a ... Needless to say, it is now carefully preserved among the treasured records of the school.

This is the essay wten in a most accomplished hand for boy of his age:

STORM AT WELURNE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

On the 11th day of J. 1872, there was a fearful storm at Welurne and neighbourhood. It began at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and last till 8 o'clock at night. The rain fell torrents till 5 o'clock. Then there a tremendous whirlwind, which start Fulbeck and made dreadful havoc Colonel Fane's garden, and also bidown some of his glass houses.

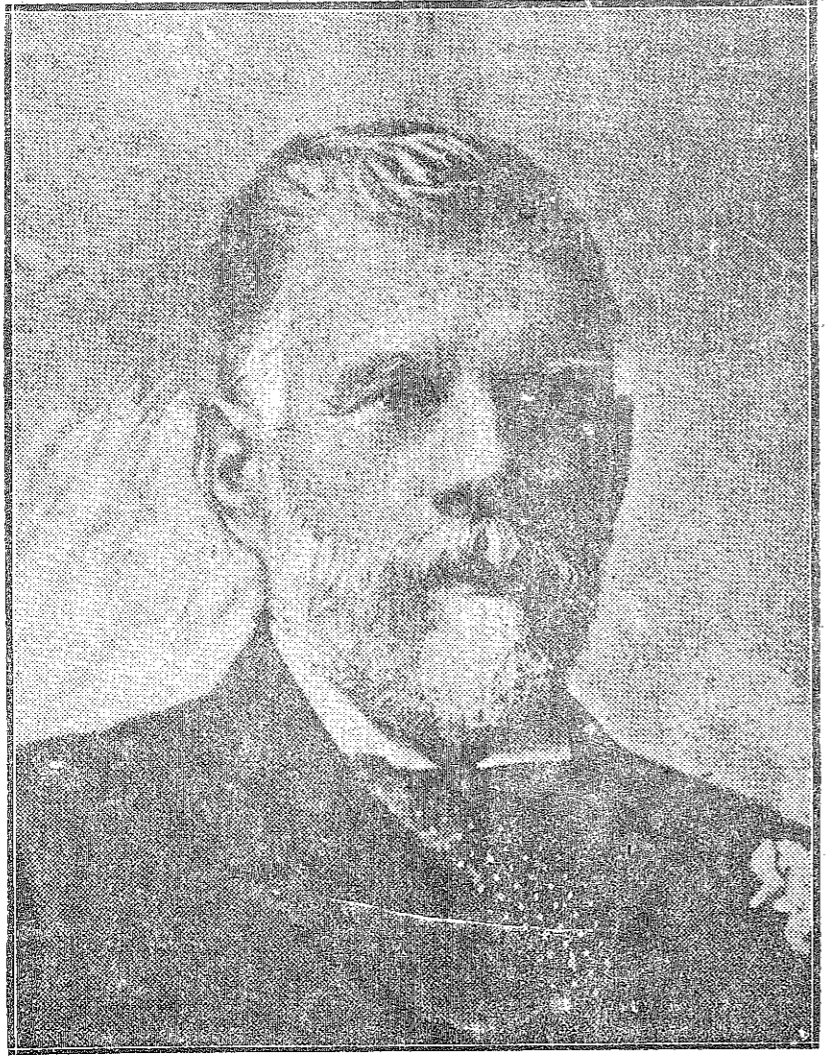
Then it went to Enham and tore up trees by their roots and uprooted part of the goods side slates flying in all directions. It went below the [railway] line, justing the village, and tearing up tred breaking off branches; from that the direction of Coleby.

Then ensued torri rain and loud cracks of thunder, a lightning was most fearful.

W ROBERTSON.

It is interesting to the conciseness and completen the essay. It states essential faccribes exactly what happened, and the narrator were following these movements of the storm with to noting the progress of its worastation. One can almost imagas the brief official telegram de the essential facts and results etc.

In the peaceful of Welbourn the lad was not to come in



SIR WILLIAM'S FATHER.

The year 1860 might almost be termed the beginning of a second stage in the development of scientific warfare. After the Crimea inventors and industrial captains began to apply their skill to the production of war material. By the end of that decade, competition in this art was well established. The war spirit extended to the Western Hemisphere, and it will be remembered that the first shot in the American Civil War was fired against Fort Sumpter in Charleston Harbour on 12th April, 1861.

In 1860 a sinister influence was at work in Europe. The man of blood and iron had been discovered in Prussia. Bismarck was moulding his plans for welding the German States into a federation under the dominating power of Prussia.

When King William I. came to the throne in 1861 the preparations had already begun for the ruthless march of force. First little Denmark was robbed of her territory, then Austria humiliated, Bavaria coerced into alliance with Prussia, France deprived of Alsace Lorraine, the other German States bullied or cajoled into a confederation by which they put their lives and their means at the disposal of the Prussian military chiefs. All these things were part of one calculated and well-thought-out policy applied with merciless mechanicism.

These historical memories are naturally and inevitably suggested by the fact that the man destined to play a foremost part in checking and subduing the fever for domination was born when Prussia's arrogance was beginning to enforce its intolerant and intolerable greed for conquest.

Europe is now witnessing the outcome of the ambitions fostered and encouraged by Bismarck in William I., and inherited by that monarch's grandson. Forty years of Prussian influence has brought the other German States into a partnership of grim mechanical warfare. Austria, in pursuit of the same policy, has this time been forced into alliance.

During the wars of the 'sixties science applied itself to warfare, and since those days soldiering has become a profession in which business capacity is essential. Organisation amongst other European powers in mutual defence has faced German organisation, and the greatest war in the history of the world is being conducted with the precision of a stupendous and all-absorbing business.

The organising brain now at the head of the military side at the British War Office is the man for the hour. His earlier training and his life's work have fitted him for the task. He represents as a distinguished and shining example the qualities of the English people who from every home are supplying the human material for the war.

drawing, and his leisure hours were very largely devoted to landscape work.

To the average small boy drawing is a lesson, not a hobby, and there are men living to-day who look back upon those early times with a better understanding of William Robertson than they had in their boyhood. Tricks were played upon the young artist who "worked" when, in the judgment of some of his school-fellows, he should have been playing.

It was by no means a case of the delicate child keeping out of the rough and tumble or of the artistic temperament scorning commonplace pleasures. The children of Welbourn soon knew that the boy with the pencil was not a milksop. Drawing, to him, was not part of the day's work—it was a pleasure, and he had that will power which is not to be deterred from doing that which pleases its possessor.

He was particularly interested in maps, and his aptitude for this form of recreation soon attracted the attention of the teachers. They saw that he meant to master this class of work. They gave him time and opportunity to develop his taste. It was the kind of inclination that marks out the career of the modern successful soldier.

As a boy, William Robertson was



The shop at Welbourn where Sir William's boyhood, and when his father carried on business as a tailor.

training-ground of many village lads in their teens. In a sense Sir William Robertson may be regarded as one of those great men whose early training is associated with the parsonage. The Rev. Canon A. Leslie Melville took him in hand, and found him not only a useful worker, but a fit subject for encouragement in those studies which had attracted him at school. He also came under the influence of the Rev. Mr. King, of Ashby, but the desire to be a soldier came uppermost, and as soon as he was of military age he accepted the Queen's Shilling.

In the year 1879 soldiering was the occupation of the few. Western Europe apparently had settled down to the acceptance of things as they were left after 1870. There were wars in far-off regions, of which people in districts remote from the centres of political activity read in their newspapers, but the martial spirit was not brought home to the ordinary everyday dweller in small towns and villages.

The Army was officered by the aristocracy. Its ranks were in the main recruited from agricultural labourers, and, with the exception of forces like the Engineers, from unskilled workmen, with a sprinkling of high-spirited youths

particular youth had "gone to be a soldier."

The Royal Engineers probably, one would imagine, might have suited him best, but no doubt in his then frame of mind soldiering was soldiering, and the thing was to get a start. He enlisted as a trooper in the 16th Lancers, and a picture is preserved of him as a well-set-up lad of 19, in all the pride of his first uniform at Aldershot.

In those days promotion was not so rapid as in these modern times. It was not exactly a case of the gray hairs coming before the stripes as in the days of the old Corporal in "The Story of Waterloo," played by the late Sir Henry Irving; but a lad had to be a man of parts and to get through a good deal of work before he became a non-commissioned officer.

Still less frequent were the promotions to the commissioned ranks. The "gentleman ranker" was not quite the most popular person even among officers. Trooper Robertson gave unmis-takable evidence at this early stage of his capacity for leading men. In the Army, as at school, he impressed his comrades and those set over him with the fact that he had marked out a course for himself, and spared neither energy nor application in his stern unbending determination to follow it.

[Next week we shall deal with Sir William's promotion to commissioned rank and his military career.]

# SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

(By THOMAS COX MEECH.)

A Vivid Character Sketch  
of  
Lincolnshire's Great Soldier.

responsible task performed with thoroughness and with such capacity that the young officer was marked out for speedy promotion.

For some four years the rising genius of the Army held a post on the staff at Simla, and was attached to the Intelligence Branch. Here came further opportunities for hard work and keen insight. As a member of the Intelligence Branch it was his duty to know all about people on the frontier, and to detect the signs of the times among them.

Here at home we are sometimes inclined to regard the people of India as though they were one race with varying customs according to their geographical areas. We know a Lincolnshire man, or a Devonshire man, and a man from the Highlands of Scotland as persons with their own local traditions and local pride, but all of them pretty much of muchness when it gets down to their real nature.

On the frontiers of India, as our soldiers know, the differences between one tribe and another are almost beyond the comprehension of the European. In religion and in race they differ so completely that there is an ever dying instinct of antagonism between them. To know one tribe is not sufficient. The man who is to be of real use as an Intelligence Officer must know them all, and must be able to advise his comrades what signs mean one thing and what indications mean another in their habits and customs.

Lieutenant Robertson set himself to this work with the same perseverance and tireless energy that he exhibited all through his career. He learnt the different languages, and made him-



between thirty and forty passes: and the whole country embraced by these reconnaissances was gazetted and much new information collected."

From this official tribute in the terse language of a despatch which had to be sent from India to London, one may gather the amount of labour undertaken by the Intelligence Department. In a wild country intelligence of this kind is not collected without personal danger.

While the forces were marching to release the garrison, Lieut. Robertson was out ahead, finding the proper pathways through the mountains and precipices. During one of these expeditions he had a Pathan as a guide. The life of the traveller is in the hands of his guide in many of these weird regions. The Pathans are a people with a fierce allegiance to their own wild religion, and this guide had come under the influence of a native leader of his sect who favoured the cause of the Umra Khan, the chieftain at the head of the attack on the Chitral garrison.

Lieutenant Robertson was led into an ambush where a number of other Pathans, goaded to religious frenzy by the priest, set upon him. Fighting for his life he was badly wounded, but he managed to cut his way through and got back to the expeditionary force, bringing with him information of the highest value.

In the "London Gazette" of the 15th November, 1895, there appears the following record:—

"Lieut. W. R. Robertson, 3rd Dragoon Guards, Field Intelligence Officer, is a very active and intelligent officer of exceptional promise."

When those words were penned the

## LINCOLN AND LINDSEY APPEALS.

### Complaint Against Spilsby Tribunal.

The Lincoln and Lindsey Appeal Tribunal met at the Lincoln Guildhall on Thursday, Mr. A. C. Newsom presiding. Capt. Marris was the military representative.

Mr. Carnley represented the 20 years' old son of an Edlington farmer and the appeal occupied the Tribunal for some considerable time. It appeared that the young man in question was of a disposition to save money and had a banking account of his own, with some hundreds of pounds to his credit. In April he took a farm at Adlethorpe, and the period of exemption he had been granted by the local Tribunal expired on April 30th.

The Chairman thought it remarkable that the son should take this farm when he knew he would be required for military service if he could possibly be spared.

Mr. Carnley: I think there is nothing reprehensible in his conduct. He invests his money in cattle and I think that was a most praiseworthy thing to do. It was almost in the national interests.

The Tribunal decided that the son should go.

Mr. Carnley also put the case of a H castle fellmonger, who, he claimed, in a certified occupation, and had all savings invested in the business.—To support the appeal the appellant submitted a petition signed by over 80 farmers in Horncliffe district, but Capt. Marris said this was unnecessary, as the appellant was doing nothing to do with farmers.—The Tribunal were of the same opinion and decided to dismiss the appeal.

### CASE OF THREE BROTHERS.

In the next case there were three brothers concerned. It transpired that they were all engaged on a farm of 80 acres, which 65 are arable and 15 grass.—The military fought the appeal, as all the brothers had been given exemption by the local tribunal.—Capt. Marris said the farm was at Butterwick. All the men were married, each of two having one child dependent upon him, whilst the third had three children. Their ages were 32, 31, and 28 years. He submitted that two of the men might be spared.

For the men it was contended that no could be spared, as the land was stony and required much labour, especially now harvest was here. No other persons were employed on the farm. Three other

THE LINCOLNSHIRE CHRONICLE

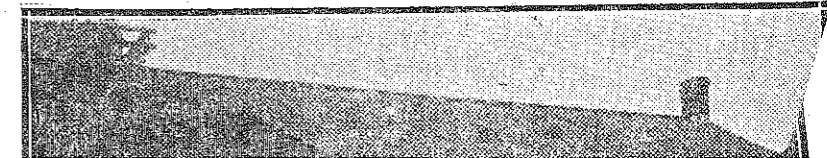
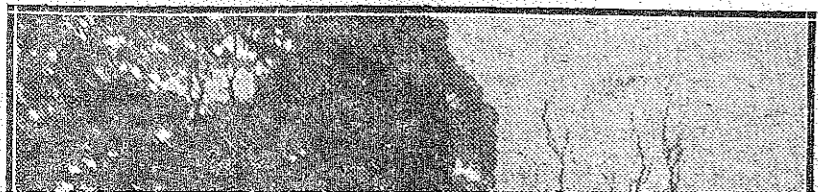
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There are ranks and have never reached the actual attainments of the men in the ranks who went from grade to grade in the armies were bound to advance quickly.

When the youth from Welbourn—the handy lad from the rectory—joined the regiment, he was not unnaturally picked out as a likely and useful officer's servant. But this post though it meant relief from many of those necessary but not always most attractive classes of work known as "fatigue duty" did not present to the Lincolnshire lad the pathway to the goal in view.

He had no inclination for any work that might lead him so far and no farther. He had come into the Army to make soldiering a profession. He was the type of man that must go forward. He went to the regimental school and devoted his energies to every study likely to make him a good soldier as well as to advance his general education.

It is recorded that when he made up



**THE OLD RECTORY at Welbourn.**

his mind to present himself for the certificate which would give him the qualification for promotion to the rank of sergeant, his friends advised him against it, but he knew his own mind and had confidence in himself. He qualified, got his corporal's stripes, and from that moment he never looked back.

From corporal to sergeant was not a step gained without hard work, but he did gain it. Moreover, he got to the grade of sergeant-major.

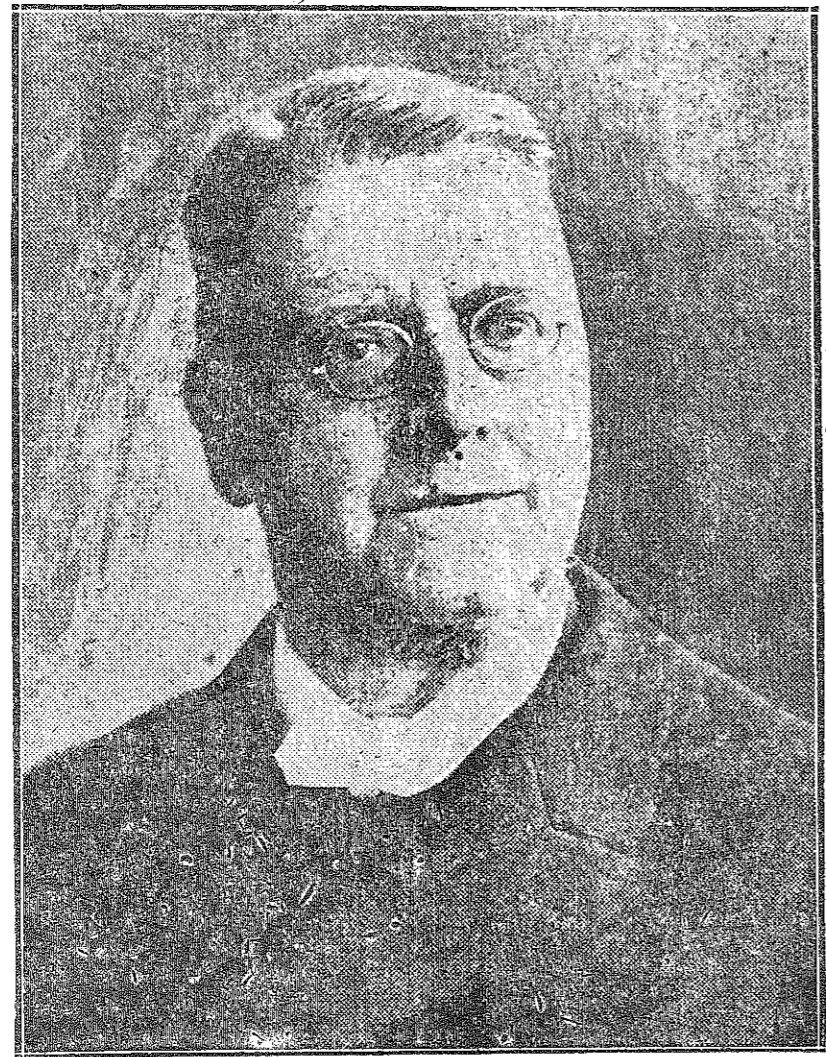
It has been often said that the non-commissioned officers are the backbone of a regiment. The sergeant-major of a troop or of a regiment is a man with a greater responsibility in some respects than a commissioned officer. The rank and file look to him as their immediate guide and mentor. The junior non-commissioned officers are inspired by him, and the many little things that make for the comfort, good conduct and discipline of the men depend very largely upon him.

It was in this position that the present head of the British Army exhibited his business capacity. He took care that everything was done on the straight, that the country got value for its money, and the soldiers got the things to which they were entitled. He stopped up any leakage wherever it showed itself. He saw that there was no waste, with the result that there was economy with efficiency. The men were well fed, and yet the expenditure was kept within limits.

Between the efficient non-commissioned officer and the junior grade of commissioned rank there was a big gulf 20 years ago, but within 10 years after he joined the Army the merits of William Robertson were so obvious that his turn was bound to come for bridging over the gulf. According to the custom of the Army, he was transferred to another regiment on receiving his commission, and was gazetted to the 3rd Dragoon Guards.

At that time of day the field of greatest Army activity was among the old world tribes and the mountain passes of northern India. To this scene of ever varying operations the young lieutenant went. Here he began to find his real vocation. The organising brain working with unerring precision soon manifested its worth.

A punitive expedition was sent to the Miranzia and Black Mountains on the north-west frontier of India. Lieutenant Robertson was appointed Railway-Transport Officer. As may easily be supposed, the question of transport in a turbulent district is not a mere case of sitting down and planning out a time table. It was a difficult and



The late **CANON LESLIE-MELVILLE**, with whom Sir William, after leaving school, was employed, at the Old Rectory.

self acquainted with all the phases of frontier life.

In 1895 came the Chitral Campaign. This was one of the most picturesque incidents in the thrilling history of British relations with frontier tribes. A namesake of the present head of the Army, Sir George Scott Robertson—then Dr. Robertson—was the central figure in it, and he has described his never-to-be-forgotten experiences in a well-known book.

The war originated in the turbulence of frontier rulers and in their racial antipathies to each other. It has always been the policy of the Indian Government to recognise, as far as possible, the ruling head of a tribe or state, and to support him so long as he may claim to be regarded as the established chief. A series of tribal conflicts, murders and internal strife has made the position of affairs in Chitral intolerable. The Mehtar—or chief—nominally in possession, was in reality the weak tool of a

waited upon by an emissary of a pretender to the throne, and told that the future relations of Chitral with the Government of India were to be on the basis that the latter must pay the

must be the son of a man who had himself reigned, and there happened to be a youth possessing this qualification.

Dr. Robertson thus describes the installation of the young chief:

"I then showed that Emir-ul-Mulk (the nominal ruler) had been given every chance to prove himself capable of ruling the country. Though helped in many ways, and even officially accepted as Mehtar as far as my powers permitted, it was clear that he could not maintain proper authority, and it was equally clear that he had been listening to the promptings of ill-advisers. By this last act (his alliance with the marauding neighbour) he practically resigned the Mehtarship. . . . But I had determined to make his younger brother the head of the State, conditional on the approval of the Government of India.

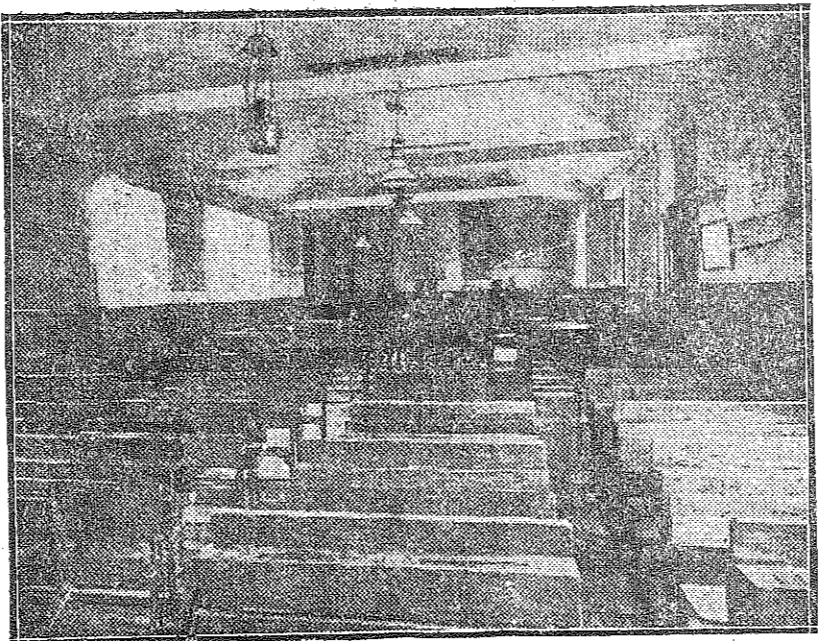
"By a gesture Emir-ul-Mulk was directed to leave the armchair, which was treated as emblematic of a throne, and I then ceremoniously placed the little Shuja-ul-Mulk upon it and formally entrusted his personal safety in Captain Townshend, the officer who immediately commanded the Cashmir part of my escort."

The forces of the marauding chief thus deprived of his opportunity, pressed on. Dr. Robertson and his party were besieged in Chitral, and an army was sent to their relief. Attached to this army as Intelligence Officer was Lieutenant Robertson. An extract from the despatch from Lieut.-General Sir Robert C. Low, the commander of the relief force, gives some indication of

reconnitred, sketched and reported on the route to be followed by the troops in the rear—the mileage of this alone being 186 miles. In addition, 600 miles of branch road were sketched and reconnoitred, as well as



**MR. T. G. NORTON**, only man living in the village who went to Welbourn school with Sir William, and was in the same class.



**INTERIOR OF SCHOOL.**

Where Sir William was educated as a boy.

brothers (of whom one was previously on the farm) were in the Army. Mr. Tindall (the agricultural representative) said it would be unfair to take two of the men. He thought one should go and that the other two be exempted all together.

The Tribunal upheld the decision of the local Tribunal in regard to the two elder men, and granted the appeal of the military in respect of the youngest.

**ON ITS MERITS.**

A Dogdyke man, married and aged 31, was the next appellant. It was said he had been given conditional exemption providing appellant's brother did not apply for exemption. This was the decision of the Horncastle Tribunal. The brother, however, unknown to appellant, appeared before the Boston Tribunal and was exempted for a period.

Capt Marris said he did not see this appeal need have been made. It was obviously intended that one of the brothers should go, but by some means both were exempted, and why not let sleeping dogs lie?

The Chairman: The brother might come in if he is able to assist on the appellant's farm as well as his own.

The Tribunal dealt with the case on its merits and eventually decided to give exemption until the end of October.

Ald. Cottingham, Lincoln, appealed for his horseman, etc., on his farm at Snarford, whom he considered was necessary to the proper working of the farm—a view from which the local Tribunal differed.—Exemption was granted till the end of October.

In the last two cases it was mentioned that the exemption would carry a further two months.

**SPILSBY TRIBUNAL "WRONG."**

A Friskney fellmonger appealed for his son, who is married and aged 29, and who assists him in the business. There was a technicality as to whether the son is in a certified occupation, since he is employed by his father. It was stated, however, that the father had nothing to do with the business on account of illness.

The Chairman said it was curious that the Spilsby Tribunal said the man worked principally for his wife's father.

Mr. Epton (for appellant): Oh, that's only the Spilsby Tribunal. They jump to conclusions, and they've been wrong in every case I've had yet. It's the same in the next case to come.

The appellant said his son had never worked a day in his life for his wife's father.

The Chairman: The statements are conflicting.

The Tribunal decided that the man was not in a certified occupation, and the case then went on on its merits.

The Tribunal decided the man must go, and refused leave to appeal on the technical point to the Central Tribunal.

A Lincoln milkseller, farmer, etc., appealed for his son, aged 28, who is his horseman.—Mr. R. T. Race, for appellant, said his client had seven sons. One was working in the Persian oilfields, four were on the farm, one has a milk business of his own, and another has been in a foundry seven years.—Capt. Marris said he must have one of these sons. They would never beat the Germans if all cases were like this.

Appellant: I can't spare any from the farm. There is one making munitions and another is helping to beat the Germans in Persia, whilst one has been rejected. The one in the foundry tells me a thousand could be spared from there.

Capt. Marris: And I don't doubt he's right. (Laughter.)

The Tribunal gave the man one day's exemption, and found that he is in a certified occupation, which entitles him to a further two months' immunity from service.

**NOT TOO MUCH LABOUR.**

The next appellant was a young single man, aged 23, who manages a farm of 93 acres, with the assistance of only one man, and who had been refused exemption by the Spilsby Tribunal because the latter were of the opinion that the father of appellant could manage the farm.

Appellant, however, said his father was knocked down by a motor car last Good Friday, and produced a medical certificate to show that he is incapable of working.

Mr. Tindall said the farm could not be worked with less labour, and the Tribunal exempted the appellant until October 10th, with an intimation that this was final.

writer could hardly know how completely his prediction would be justified. Lieutenant Robertson, as all the world now knows, was indeed a man of "exceptional promise." Life in its varying chances and tragedies sees many promises unfulfilled. Fate is sometimes wayward. Success is occasionally inclined to rest upon early won laurels. Lieutenant Robertson saw in this much-coveted military honour officially known as "mentioned in despatches," an incentive to more work and still more zeal in his profession. He received the D.S.O., which might fairly be regarded as something very near the height of a soldier's ambition. It was in his case the beginning of a further period of hard work and hard study.

[Next week the later stages of Sir William Robertson's career will be described.]

# SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

A Vivid Character Sketch  
of  
Lincolnshire's Great Soldier.

(By THOMAS COX MEECH.)

I reqt of  
entia omnia from last week.)

ER the Chitral campaign the  
future head of the British Army,  
still a junior officer, settled down to  
the hard, steady, persistent work which a  
man must undertake if he is to pass the  
Staff College. This might be termed the  
University of Soldiering. The men who  
pass it are the leaders of their profession.  
They are like the specialists in medicine,  
the consulting engineers in the mechanical  
world, or the tip-top men in  
commerce.

No man goes through the Staff  
College without possessing the faculty  
of hard work and the intelligence to  
apply his knowledge. After Captain  
R. Robertson passed it in 1898, he  
came attached to the Intelligence  
Department at the War Office. In the  
years of peace between 1895 and  
1909, he qualified himself at Head-  
quarters for the important work that  
awaited him in the South African  
campaign.

## NEW ERA IN SOLDIERING.

In comparison with the tremendous  
dict which is now absorbing the  
Gigies of Europe, the South African  
seems a minor matter, but while it  
and there were many hard lessons to  
learn. One cannot be accused of enter-  
ing upon controversial ground now by  
saying that when the Boer War broke  
the people of England had no know-  
ing of the real military problem that  
our soldiers. A short, sharp and  
victorious war was anticipated. There  
was no conception of the long, plodding,  
arduous task extending not to months  
but to years. We have every reason  
to know what soldiers generously  
suffered then—that the Boer, besides  
being a hardworking farmer, is a first-  
class fighting man.

War had to be waged over wide  
areas of land aptly described as  
"illimitable veldt." The Boers  
had an army of mounted riflemen, able  
to undertake long marches and to move  
with the rapidity which at first baffled the  
British Commanders, handicapped as  
they were for lack of speedy transport.  
I do not recall the tragic episodes  
of these facts were brought home  
to us here in England. The difficulties,  
every one knows, were eventually over-

to prevent you from straying into  
unpractical paths.

Theory must go hand-in-hand with  
the practical side of the profession,  
and seek to establish, in simple  
language, and by natural treatment,  
just so much as admits of being  
established and no more. I must not  
be understood to imply that "mere  
theory," as it is sometimes called, is  
of no value. Some people argue as  
though all theory were bad, and must  
be bad because it is theory, and that  
theory and practice have no relation  
to each other and can have none. Such  
an argument is absurd.

It will assist you to keep on the  
right lines if at all times you  
remember to study with the definite  
aim of obtaining guidance for future  
use in war, and not merely for  
the sake of amassing a store of  
information.

## ATTENTION TO DETAILS.

The staff officer must always be  
looking ahead, giving close attention  
to details, and displaying untiring  
energy and watchfulness, so that any  
errors committed may be corrected  
before they have gone too far.

The necessity for constantly attend-  
ing to the welfare of the troops has  
been impressed upon you, and bear in  
mind that this is a matter of small  
things as well as of large ones. For  
instance, if the baggage or the food is  
late in coming up, staff officers should  
not proceed to make themselves com-  
fortable until the troops can do the  
same. Similarly, after a cold or wet  
night they should be astir early in the  
morning, go and visit the troops, wish  
them good morning, see if they can  
help them, and generally show that  
they are taking a real interest in  
them.

Personally, I would not retain on  
my Staff for a day any officer who  
could not give me this information at  
any moment I might ask for it—at  
least not unless he had taken every  
possible step in order to obtain it—  
and the best step is very often that



SIR WILLIAM AND LORD KITCHENER WALKING TOGETHER.

needs to possess great stability of  
character and a powerful iron will.

to offer resistance that he is required  
to exercise his force of will.

work of the Quartermaster-General is

Staff, in the direction of all the  
operations recorded in this despatch."

## "GENERAL MANAGER" OF THE WHOLE ARMY.

The ordinary onlooker in this country  
knew very little of the guiding and  
directing hand in France that was so  
largely responsible for the gradual pro-  
gress in the right direction of the  
fortunes of war. In December, 1915,  
when the Prime Minister announced in  
the House of Commons that Lieut.-  
General Sir William Robertson had been  
recalled from France to assume the  
duties at the War Office of Chief of the  
Imperial General Staff, it is quite  
possible that many laymen and some  
amateur strategists asked each other  
"Who is Sir William Robertson?"

The Army knew who Sir William  
Robertson was, and his appointment was  
regarded as one of the best things done  
in the management of the war.

The post of Chief of the Imperial Staff  
resembles that of the Chief of Forces in  
the Field to the extent that it also is  
the position of a "General Manager,"  
but Sir William is now the "General  
Manager" of the whole of the Army.  
The statesman has his part, but the  
Chief of the Imperial Staff is the  
supreme adviser on strictly military  
matters.

Thus the boy born in Lincolnshire  
in 1860, when Prussia was com-  
mencing her long and tragic march  
towards the frightful goal which she  
sought to reach, is now the man who is  
directing, controlling, and perfecting  
Britain's share in shattering Prussian  
power.

[THE END.]

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE WAR.

### WARNING TO OFFICERS AND MEN.

An Army Order issued on Tuesday, respect-  
ing the leakage of military information, says  
there is reason to believe that information  
concerning operations is being conveyed by  
officers and men of the British Army in the  
field to their relatives at home either pre-  
sently, by letter, or by telegram, and that  
in some cases a code has been elaborated to  
facilitate the communication of information  
which would otherwise be stopped by the  
censor.

It is to be regretted that at this

## LABOUR TOPICS.

[By "DEMOTES,"]

[We do not necessarily endorse the view  
expressed by our contributor.—Ed. "L.C."]

### Organised Labour and Education.

For the cause of patriotism and liberty the  
blood of the younger brothers of trade  
unionism is being sacrificed on the various  
fields of battle. All strenuously, zealously,  
and eagerly are performing deeds of valour  
never before surpassed in the annals of  
history. On the other hand various branches  
of trade unionism are doing their utmost to  
organise and increase the output of munitions  
to an absolute unprecedented pitch,  
both in regard to quantity and efficiency, and  
unanimously have agreed to forego their well-  
earned holiday, in order that their brothers  
may lack no ammunition at the front.

### Duty to Rising Generation.

Whilst engaged in this colossal under-  
taking the organised strength of trade union-  
ism must not overlook the fact that it has a  
duty to perform to the rising generation in  
regard to education. How many matured  
trade unionists openly at their branch meet-  
ings have regretted the opportunity of a more  
extensive education in their younger days?  
Obviously, if I am not mistaken, there is at  
the present time a keen struggle between the  
Board of Education on the one hand and the  
Treasury on the other. There is, or at least  
should be, an insistent demand from Mr.  
Henderson, the President, for more money  
to be spent on the education of our children.  
He is the recognised head of organised  
Labour in the Coalition Government, and  
surely chose the department of education in  
order that he, through this beneficent  
channel, could raise the status of the work-  
ing classes. Education is the one factor  
which will contribute to the essential bette-  
ment of the working classes, if we can  
eliminate by this war the dire scourge of  
militarism and oppression. Education in  
freedom-loving country is the one thing  
which the higher classes fear. It is, there-  
fore, necessary that full pressure should  
be exerted by all the forces of trade unionism  
to compel the Treasury to spend more money  
on education. We have our Labour repre-  
sentative at the Board of Education, and  
should be absolutely inundated with resolu-  
tions calling upon the Government  
to improve our system of education.  
consolidate organised industry in the future  
it is the duty of every trade union branch  
to discuss this vital question as it affects  
their economic conditions, and send strong  
resolutions to the Government department  
demanding a higher and fuller education for  
our children, which will fit them for the  
strenuous life of keen competition which is  
ahead in the future.

### Real National Asset.

Why should not the children of the work-  
ing classes have free and easy access to  
higher and more exclusive professions, by  
academic and bureaucratic? Why should  
those who are exceptionally clever be assid-  
uously by an educational ladder to the univer-  
sity, just according as to whether their gen-  
erations be either in the direction of mathe-

business-like, prompt, and decisive, had made it business-like and expansive. More depended on organisation than ever before in the history of the world. It was in a way the sample of the huge organisation which the next civilised war was to bring into force.

One is quoting a very hackneyed saying, much used up to and before 1900, in observing that South Africa is the grave of reputations. Many military men had discovered this to their cost before the Boer War. Some, whose names, till then, had stood for military genius and efficiency, came back from South Africa during those eventful years between 11th October, 1899, and 31st May, 1902, with only the memories of a distinguished past to comfort them in the obscurity to which they retired.

**WORK, AND MORE WORK: SIR WILLIAM'S MOTTO.**

Reputations were lost and reputations were made. Among those mentioned in despatches by Lord Roberts was Major W. R. Robertson. The Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, who, it will be remembered, was sent out to South Africa at a time when the original British plan of campaign had broken down, did not write compliments about his officers. Where there was blame, he chastised and spared not. Where praise was due he gave it in just but strict measure. The man who was commended had to deserve it, and Captain Robertson came back from South Africa with an assured career before him.

Work, and still more work, remained his motto. Step after step he went forward. In 1903 we find him Assistant-Director of Military Operations at the War Office. In 1907, Assistant Quartermaster-General at Aldershot.

In 1910 he went back to the Staff College. This time he did not go to qualify, but to direct. He was appointed Commandant of the College, and thus became the instructor of the heads of the Army to-day. Future Staff Officers passed through his hands, and his final address to the officers of the Senior Division in November, 1912, is preserved among Army records as an example of sound advice to men on the eve of important responsibilities.

A few passages are highly interesting at the present time:—

We must ever be careful to conduct our studies in the broad light of practical experience and human nature—human nature as it is found in war, as affected by the discipline or the lack of it, confidence or the want of it, fear, responsibility, and many other things. Human nature will undoubtedly assert itself in war, and with it you must reckon; and the recognition of this elemental fact will, I believe, do more than anything else

at the War Office, it will be your business to make definite suggestions for disposing of questions that come

—that is by fighting. Never forget that the battle is the



Sir William in his Motor Car.

before you, and in many cases to dispose of them yourself. I have known staff officers bring papers to their chief, having practically nothing either on the paper or in their heads that would help towards arriving at a decision. That is of no earthly use to anybody, as a rule. Papers are sent to Headquarters of formations to be dealt with and not to be passed along as through a post office, or left to anyone to deal with them who cares to do so.

**WAR A CONTEST BETWEEN BRAINS AND GRIT.**

In war more than in any other profession things happen so differently to what was expected, and look so differently when near—in war—than they looked when far off—in peace. A commander in war finds himself in a fog of false and true information and of mistakes and misunderstandings due to the stupidity, negligence, or exhaustion of others, which no one could possibly have foreseen. In short, he is the victim of very many different and unexpected influences, to withstand which he

culminating point of all that has preceded it, including peace preparation, training, organization, and so forth; and that to some extent it will have a more or less decisive effect upon all that follows it.

Keep control over your troops as long as possible. Although offensive action alone will lead to decisive success, this does not necessarily mean that all troops should be thrown into the battle from the very outset. If you remember this it may help you to concentrate superior force at the decisive point.

Remember, too, that the heavy burden which falls upon the shoulders of a commander in regard to the execution of his plan is not entirely due to the enemy's action. The enemy may be in unexpected strength, appear in unexpected places, or offer the most unexpected resistance, but so long as his own troops continue to fight well a commander may not be called upon to display any great energy of purpose. It is when his own troops begin

anxieties, and the faculties to their commander and to rest their weight upon him. It is then that the real leader shows himself, and in so far as he proves equal to bear the weight thus put upon him will he stand out above the masses and continue to be their master.

As has been pointed out, this address was delivered by Major-General W. R. Robertson, as he had then become, in 1912, two years before the outbreak of the present war. When these dates are kept in mind we shall realise how apt was the advice given and how much superior it was in its real value to that wisdom which comes after the event.

**SIR JOHN FRENCH'S TRIBUTE TO SIR WILLIAM.**

In the year following General Robertson was appointed Director of Military Training. In the same year he received his knighthood, and in 1914, when the present war burst upon Europe, he was one of the men who contributed to the masterly organisation by which an expeditionary force bigger than any that had ever left these shores was transported with quickness and efficiency without the loss of a single man or a single horse.

Sir William Robertson was Quartermaster-General of the Forces, and the following extract from Sir John French's despatch in September, 1914, after the operations following upon the landing of the troops and the thrilling experiences at Mons, places upon official record the work which he performed:—

In such operations as I have described (writes Sir John French) the



Sir William's Grandmother, Mrs. Rosamond Johnson, third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Beet, who lived in the house adjoining the old Grand Stand at Lincoln. Mrs. Johnson lived for many years at Navenby, where she died, 29 years ago, in her 88th year.

Sir William Robertson has continued to perform excellent service as Quartermaster-General.



Sir William on his way to the Military Conference in Paris.

From being Quartermaster-General, Sir William became Chief of the General Staff. This is a position of the greatest importance. The chief comes next to the officer in supreme command, and may be described as being "General Manager" of the Army. It is his duty to see that the fighting machine runs smoothly. The General Officer informs the Chief of the Staff of the big operations necessary. It is the duty of the Chief of the General Staff to see that they are carried out, and to discover for himself the way to do it.

The movements of vast forces from one part of a country to another while war is actually in progress is obviously a task that requires a keen eye, a fertile brain, and complete confidence. The slightest hitch may mean the breakdown of the whole operation.

In a despatch of the 5th April, 1915, General French, recording a long series of operations, wrote: "I am also much indebted to the able and devoted assistance I have received from Lieutenant-General Sir William Robertson, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., D.S.O., Chief of the General

and men so that all ranks may co-operate to ensure that the progress of the army is not imperilled or rendered more costly by the criminal folly of a few individuals who, if discovered, will be severely dealt with.

**"THE DIAMOND FROM THE SKY."**

Our columns to-day contain the prologue and opening chapter of the story which has been written round the serial film "The Diamond from the Sky." This remarkable film will be shown in picture houses all over the country, including our own district. Not only is the plot of the film clever in construction, but the greatest care was exercised in selecting actors and actresses to delineate the story. It is of interest to note that the character of "Esther," the heroine, is played by Lottie Pickford, sister of Mary, who is well-known throughout "cinedom."

**LINCS. MAJOR'S WILL.**

Major Aubrey Nelthorpe Beauclerk, North Staffs. Regiment, of Little Grimsby Hall, who died in India on April 22nd, aged 34, a son of the late William Nelthorpe Beauclerk, a kinsman of the Duke of St. Alban's, has left unsettled estate of the value of £13,499 19s. 8d., with net personalty £12,403 3s. 4d. Probate of the will dated February 21st, 1911, is granted to Mrs. Vera Eileen May Beauclerk, of Rose Bank, Bath-road, Hounslow. The testator gives the Little Grimsby estate to his wife during widowhood, with remainder to his children, and on failure of issue, to his sister Florence. In the event of his having no children he gives £500 to his sister, and appoints to her (subject to the life interest of his wife) the funds of his marriage settlement. The residue of the property goes to his wife.

force of trade unionism should be directed through Mr. Henderson, to demand that the resources of the education of the country should be increased to the extent of millions—now is the time to vehemently protest that justice should be done to our growing children. Mr. Henderson, by the medium of education, has sprung from the lowest ranks of the working classes to the very top rung of the ladder. Think of the thousands in this class who have the ability, but on account of poverty and the exclusive facilities of education never get an opportunity to rise to make use of their recognised talents.

**No Fear or Favour.**

A perfect and prolific system of education would conduce to attract to responsible positions men of merit. Too often these positions are filled by favouritism, influence and nepotism. This all tends to the decadence of the nation. If we are to maintain our position in the front rank of nations, no fear or favour should be shown. By means of a full and perfect system of education every intelligent unit should have the opportunity of displaying his talents for the service of the nation and mankind. In the past too often have these talents been buried. The solution of this great national problem, so much to the fore at the present time, will grant opportunities to rich and poor alike. The clever working class lad should have the opportunity of a thorough and efficient education up to the age of manhood, viz., 21 years. If he has brains and ability, why should not he graduate at the secondary school, the grammar school, and the university? Even during these strenuous times of war it is most essential we should kindle the flame of enthusiasm to remedy the defects of the education of the nation, which, partly through sectarianism and apathy, is beginning to take a back seat compared with other continental nations.

**Obstacles to Progress.**

Trade unionism must do its share to force the hand of the Government to act forthwith and comply with the national demand for a fuller and wider system of education. This will not only strengthen the commercial pursuits of the nation in the keen struggle in front of her, but will give a direct impetus to the cause of trade unionism. Goryllity and ignorance have been the greatest obstacles to the progress of organised Labour. The higher classes are quite cognisant of this fact; it is to their interest to keep the masses in servility and ignorance. To spread the beneficent influence of education among the masses it is essential that Labour should be fully represented in the House of Commons, so that Mr. Henderson should over-rule the vote of vested interests, at present so predominant. To remedy this evil every industrial centre should be ready with its Labour candidate, and thus conduce to cleanse the House of Commons of class distinction, selfishness and disinterestedness in regard to the wants and needs of the nation as a whole. Adequate political representation of the masses will tend to the thorough and efficient education of the whole community. This should be the aim and object of every trade unionist who has the welfare of his country at heart. In no better manner can he show true patriotism.

**Lincoln Teachers' Association.**

It is gratifying to read that the Lincoln Teachers' Association is voicing its opinion as to the advisability of a more comprehensive curriculum in regard to this absorbing topic. I should like here to suggest that the Teachers' Association in Lincoln should see their way clear to affiliate with the Lincoln Trades Council, and thus come in actual contact with the working class representatives of trade unionism. This would obviously lead to a consolidated movement for proper and efficient representation on our educational committees. Decentralisation, through the medium of Trades Councils, is a channel through which the hand of the Government may be forced. By these efforts trade union representatives are secured to represent the organised opinions of large industrial centres on the floor of the House of Commons. Such democratic representatives have no axes to grind or vested interests to serve. Collusion with progressive and democratic trade unionism by all the forces of those who are interested in education is a consummation to be desired.

Deliciousness! We cannot find a juster word for Mackintosh's TOFFEE DE LUXE.