




*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

THE QUEEN LEAVING THE PAVILION FOR A REVIEW.



## THE QUEEN AND HER SOLDIERS.

*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

THE QUEEN'S PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

THE relation of the Queen to her soldiers has been described by Her Majesty as a maternal one. "Noble fellows!" she once said of those doing battle for the country. "I feel as if they were my own children; my heart beats for them as for my nearest and dearest." The soldier, on his side, is possibly the most chivalrous and loyal of the Queen's subjects. The humblest drummer-boy in the Army feels that he, in some degree, is the champion of his Sovereign Lady, and when "Tommy Atkins" is in doubt as to what he is fighting about, he rallies his valour and enthusiasm by "For the Queen, lads!" A touching incident illustrative of this feeling occurred at Colchester Military Hospital when the Reservists were being called out for the present campaign. Among those summoned to the front was a man whose wife was believed to be in a dying condition. "Is it not sad for him to leave his wife when he will probably never see her again?" said one of the nurses to a patient in the hospital. "Yes, sister," was the reply of the veteran; "but you know the Queen comes first."

There are few sadder hearts in the country to-day over this terrible war in South Africa than that of our venerable Monarch. Every fresh engagement, with its aftermath of killed and wounded, brings tears to her eyes, for

it awakens memories of that Crimean period when sorrow and gloom hung like a pall over the land, and there was scarcely a family which was not mourning its dead. There are few people living to-day who can realise as the Queen can what a big war means to the country, and it has been the wish of her declining days that her reign might end in peace. The tension at which Her Majesty has lived during the past months has been very great. Again and again her private secretary, Sir Arthur Bigge, has been sent to the War Office to gather the latest details regarding the casualties of the war, so that the Queen's anxiety might be relieved before the official despatches were received. Princess Beatrice has found it necessary to caution family visitors against introducing war topics in the Queen's presence, especially engagements where there has been great loss of life, for although Her Majesty regards this war as a just one, and long usage to affairs of public import has strengthened the Queen's natural courage and resolve, the woman in her is very strong, and feels keenly the suffering entailed by war upon her brave soldiers.

The connection of the Queen with the Army is one not merely of a constitutional and Imperial character, but partakes of the private and personal. The Duke of Kent

was the only one of the sons of George III. who received the thanks of Parliament for actual service in the field, and the Queen has always shown a special interest in the Royal Scots, to which regiment the Duke belonged. On one occasion, when presenting new colours to the men, she said, "I have been associated with your regiment from my earliest infancy, as my dear father was your colonel. He was proud of his profession, and I was always taught to consider myself a soldier's child."

The Queen may be said to have made her military *début* when she was an infant in arms. Her soldier father took her in the carriage with him when he attended a review at Hounslow Heath, although she was but of the tender age of four months. The Prince Regent was not pleased at this public appearance of a little princess near in the line of succession, and it is re-

lated that he remarked with some asperity to his brother of Kent, "That infant is too young to be brought into public." The military associations of the Princess Victoria continued after the death of her father, the faithful attendant of her early childhood being an old soldier who had been his body-servant. She was absolutely devoted to him, and would yield to his entreaty when all others failed to gain obedience. He it was who led her donkey when she took her morning airings in Kensington Gardens. In order to fully realise that

peculiar affection for the soldier which the Queen possesses, one must remember that the atmosphere of her youth was impregnated with the martial spirit. Only four years before her birth Waterloo was won. The country was throughout her girlhood at a white heat of exultant patriotism, and she was accustomed to hear Wellington spoken of with bated breath, as though he had been a demi-god. "One cannot think of the country without the Duke, our immortal hero," were the significant words of the Queen when she received the tidings of his death.

Out of compliment to her soldiers, Her Majesty was accustomed, previous to the death of the Prince Consort, to review the troops on special occasions mounted on a charger and dressed in military costume. Those of us who have only seen the Queen enter the Review Ground at Aldershot



HER MAJESTY IN MILITARY COSTUME: REVIEW AT WINDSOR, SEPTEMBER, 1837.

sitting in homely comfort in her carriage find it difficult to realise how martial a figure she made on such occasions in the earlier years of her reign. Her Majesty has had at least four different military uniforms, which we will now proceed to describe. As the girl-Queen she wore a trim blue cloth coat and skirt, with a star on the breast, and a round cap with a peak, ornamented with a deep gold band. She was thus dressed to review the troops in the Home Park at Windsor two months after her accession, and rode a grey charger. This

girlish costume was later discarded for a long habit with a cut-away jacket, and a large hat ornamented with military plumes. At some of the reviews in Hyde Park the Queen appeared in yet a third style. The long skirt was retained, but in place of the jacket, Her Majesty's trim figure was displayed in a tight-fitting bodice to the waist, and her form encircled with a bandoleer. A large-brimmed hat with feathers, and a long gauze veil falling at the back over the shoulders, completed the dress.

After the return of the troops from the Crimea, the Queen reviewed them at Aldershot in a new military costume which eclipsed all others in martial elegance and display. The habit was of fine scarlet cloth; the collar was embroidered in gold and silver with the devices of a field-marshal; across the left shoulder was the blue ribbon of the Garter; a brilliant star gleamed on the left breast, and fastened round the waist was a crimson and gold net

sash, fringed with gold tassels. The hat was of a graceful design in black felt with a round crown, ornamented with an officer's plume of red and white feathers. The crown was thrice encircled with cords of crimson and gold, terminating at the back in two gold and crimson tassels. Seated on a gaily caparisoned chestnut charger, the Queen made a brave figure as she rode down the lines with her handsome husband beside her, and it is a matter of history how,

in response to her words of welcome home and thanks to the brave soldiers, bearskins and shakos were thrown into the air, sabres waved, and the air was rent with shouts. One might linger long in describing the military scenes in which the Queen has been the idol of her soldiers, but we must pass on to describe the camp home which she had built on the very centre of the great military colony and training-ground at Aldershot.



THE QUEEN DISTRIBUTING THE CRIMEAN MEDALS.

The Queen's Pavilion stands on an eminence at South Camp, Aldershot, a short distance from the Basingstoke canal, which divides it from the North Camp. It is a low, unpretentious building, made entirely of wood, and occupies three sides of a square. The sloping sides of the plateau upon which it stands are clothed with evergreens and trees, which protect it from observation. A fine carriage-drive winds from the gates up to the grand entrance.

The stabling, close to the gates, has accommodation for fifty horses. Near to the Pavilion is a reservoir of particularly good water. The centre of the building is devoted to the use of the Queen and Royal Family, and the apartments consist of breakfast-room, sitting-room, dining-room and saloon, bed-chambers and dressing-rooms. The two wings are appropriated to the ladies and gentlemen of the Household. The servants' quarters are very neat and trim, and the kitchen and scullery are at the far end of the building, on the left of the entrance. The viands are passed to Her Majesty's table from the kitchen through an aperture connected with the dining-room.

When the Pavilion was built, surprise was

is that the pictures, statuary, and *bric-à-brac* have a military significance. Around the walls of the rooms hang portraits of famous soldiers of the past and of the Victorian period, and scenes of battles distinguished in the history of the country. The Queen's private sitting-room has some family portraits amongst the military pictures. It is comfortably furnished with lounges and writing-table, and opening out of it *en suite* is Her Majesty's bedroom. The dining-room contains little save the long table surrounded by chairs, but the ceiling is unique, being covered with a billowy drapery, from which the impression might be received that the Queen was dining under canvas. In this room Her Majesty has throughout her

reign entertained crowned heads and many distinguished soldiers of this and other countries. During the period of military glory and patriotism which succeeded the fall of Sebastopol, the Queen and Prince Consort, with their family, spent so much time living at Aldershot for the convenience of



From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.

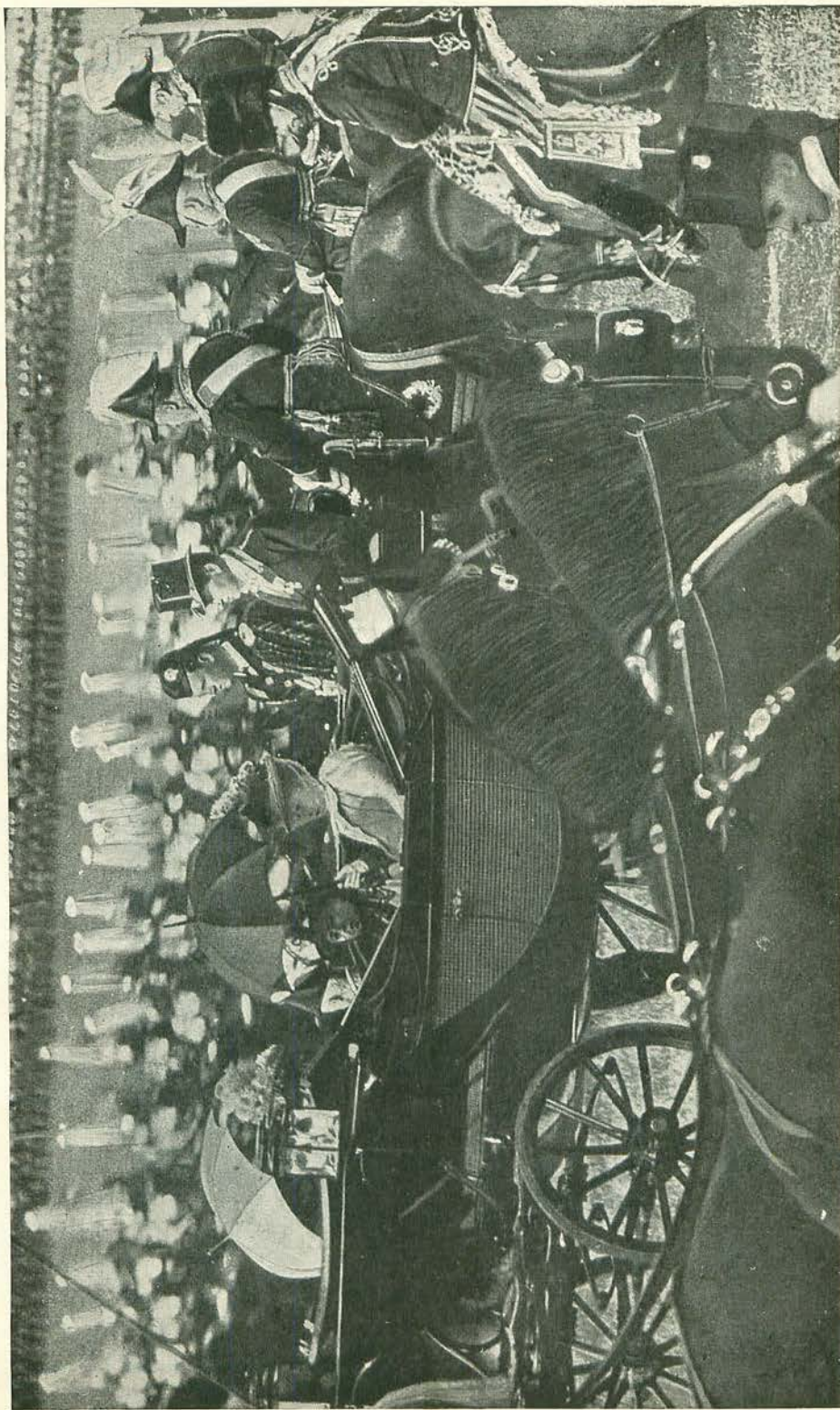
ANOTHER VIEW OF HER MAJESTY'S PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

expressed that it was not of more princely dimensions and adorned and furnished in a more costly manner; but apart from the fact that the Queen has always preferred the plain and substantial in the residences strictly devoted to her private use, Her Majesty deemed it fitting that her camp home should partake of that severe plainness and utility which pertain to the surroundings of a soldier in camp. There are therefore no evidences of luxury at the Royal Pavilion, and it has never been permitted to be a "show" place. The interior has not been photographed until quite recently, and the views which are here given were the first taken.

The distinguishing character of the rooms

witnessing the various reviews and martial festivities, that the Court news was sometimes dated from the Royal Pavilion. The Queen was so fond of her home at the camp that she and the Prince Consort often came unannounced, save for a telegram to the authorities sent on the morning of the intended visit, and by midday all the troops would be in the field for Her Majesty's inspection.

The wild grandeur of this great camping-place amidst the hills and hop-gardens of Kent and Surrey has special attractions for the Queen, and to-day she still enjoys a visit to Aldershot to inhale the pure, bracing air, fragrant of pine, and to enjoy the beauties of the gorse and heather in



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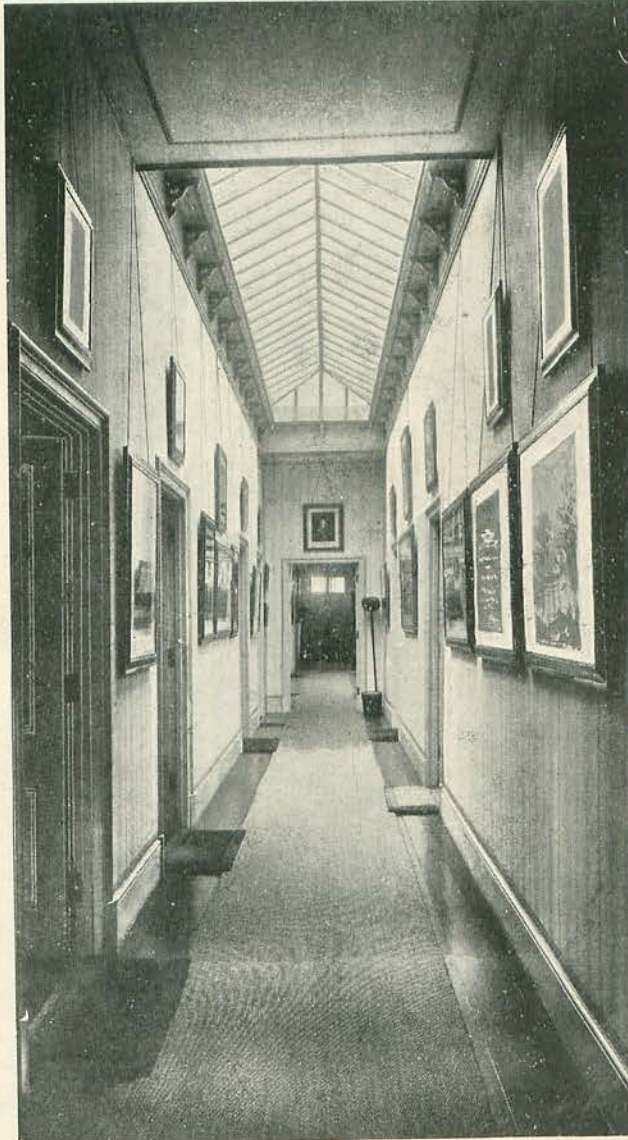
THE LAST REVIEW HELD BY HER MAJESTY AT ALDERSHOT.

their seasons. From her sitting-room window she commands a view of the Long Valley, stretching from Cæsar's Camp below the eminence on which the Pavilion stands, which is the practice-ground for the troops and where the special manoeuvres take place. It is a moving panorama of martial display which the Queen's windows command. Without moving from her chair, she can see the troops performing their evolutions and hear the playing of the bands, the trumpet-calls, the sound of the bugle, and the shrill notes of the bagpipe, while glittering helmets, waving plumes, and brilliant uniforms make a stirring picture of the pomp and circumstance of war; and when the glory of a summer's morning beams on the Long Valley, alive with these military operations, it is a scene not readily forgotten.

When the Queen now goes to Aldershot for a review, she sometimes spends a day or two at the Pavilion, and distinguished officers in camp diné with her in the evening.

Especially was this the case when the Duke of Connaught was in command at Aldershot.

It is not fully realised to-day how intimate the connection between the Queen and her soldiers was at the beginning of her reign, when it was a moot point whether the Prince Consort should not succeed Wellington as Commander-in-Chief. The Duke himself first suggested such an appointment, and repeatedly pressed it upon the Prince, who eventually declined on the ground that he could serve Her Majesty better as her private secretary than as the Commander-in-Chief of her Army. However, the Prince throughout his life took the greatest interest in promoting the welfare of the troops, and many of the social and recreative schemes at Aldershot



*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

THE CORRIDOR OF THE QUEEN'S PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

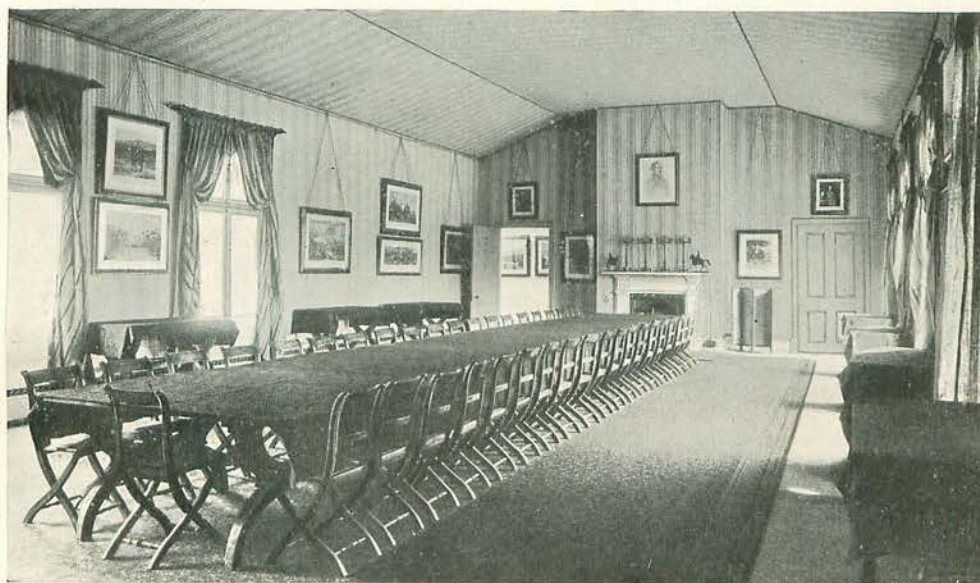
sprang up under the fostering care of the Queen and Prince Consort. There are three churches, two theatres, a hospital, a fine officers' club, numerous schools, recreation and reading-rooms, and provision for

sports of all kinds, and there is not one of these institutions—provided, it must be remembered, to meet the requirements of the eighteen thousand soldiers who receive their training at Aldershot—in which the Queen has not taken a personal interest.

When the Duke of Marlborough saw a soldier leaning pensively on the butt end of his musket just after the Battle of Blenheim, he asked him, "Why are you so pensive after such a glorious victory?" "It may be glorious," replied the brave fellow, "but I am thinking that all the human blood I have spilled this day has only earned me

special claim upon her consideration. The first death-warrant which the Queen was called upon to sign was that of a criminal who had once been in the Army. "Are there no extenuating circumstances?" asked the girl-Monarch with a beseeching look. "He was once reported for gallant action in the field," replied the Minister in attendance. "Ah, then he has fought for his country," said the Queen, with brightened look, and quickly wrote "Pardon" across the warrant.

It may not be generally known that the Queen maintains in modern efficiency two large military libraries for the use of soldiers



*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

HER MAJESTY'S DINING-ROOM, THE ROYAL PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

fourpence." The position of the soldier has materially changed since those days, as an inspection of the camp at Aldershot will show. The men are comfortably housed, well fed and clothed, receive fair pay, and are provided with good education and rational enjoyment, and a very great advance in their position has been made during the Queen's reign—and, indeed, under her auspices. Flogging in the Army was abolished largely in deference to Her Majesty's wishes. "Tommy" has indeed been favoured always by his Sovereign Lady, who feels that the man who fights to protect her throne and kingdom has a

out of her private purse. They are known as Queen Victoria's Soldiers' Libraries. The first of these is at Aldershot. It is a handsome brick building situated close to the Royal Pavilion, and was built by the Prince Consort as a gift to the officers of the Army. At his private expense the Prince provided it with the best military books extant dealing with the history and science of war. Many were collected from abroad, and no expense was spared to render it a model of its kind. During the Crimean period the Queen realised the need for her soldiers of scientific military training, and provided an extensive library for the use of the rank and file. After the





*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

HER MAJESTY'S SITTING-ROOM, THE ROYAL PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

war the books were divided between the library at Aldershot and the one at Dublin. Her Majesty has since, year by year, added important books by military experts to these permanent collections.

While the Queen has endeavoured by her influence to promote the efficiency and the comfort and well-being of all who wear her uniform, she has with true womanly feeling sought to improve the position of the wives and children of the soldiers. The married men's quarters at Aldershot is the part of the camp which she is most interested in, and all schemes for the benefit of the women and children obtain her heartiest support. During the Queen's reign the position of the soldier's wife has materially changed. Generally speaking, they are a respectable and deserving class of women, and entitled to sympathy for the privations arising from the precarious profession to which their husbands belong. At the outbreak of the present war Princess Beatrice paid a special visit to Aldershot, and

spent some time with Lady Audrey Buller at Government House discussing the means which were being taken to help the wives and families of the soldiers leaving for South Africa, so that she might report to Her Majesty. I do not think that the Queen favours the celibacy of the soldier, and she is always anxious to mitigate the disabilities which arise in the case of the women married without leave, who are therefore not entitled to help from the Government when their husbands are summoned abroad. Her Majesty is in full accord with the aims of the Soldiers and Sailors' Families' Association, which is doing such splendid work at Aldershot and at other military centres in relieving the distress of the wives of Reservists, and of the families of soldiers married without leave. The Queen's sympathy with the widows and orphans of soldiers is peculiarly strong, and it should be remembered that the Patriotic Fund, which will prove of such benefit after the present campaign is over, was started

under the direct auspices of the Queen at the time of the Crimean War. We are, alas! having evidence from week to week of the Queen's personal grief at the loss of the brave officers who have fallen. All will recall her tender message of sympathy to Lady Symons on the death of her gallant husband, and again to the widow of General Wauchope, who fell in the valiant and ill-fated advance of the Black Watch at Magersfontein; while the leave-taking with Lord Roberts on the eve of that famous commander's departure for South Africa was rendered very pathetic by the Queen's touching reference to the loss which he had just sustained in the death of his son at the battle on the Tugela River.

Throughout the present campaign Her Majesty seems to have been actuated by the desire to associate herself in a personal manner with the soldiers. The gift to each soldier and sailor serving in South Africa of

a half-pound tin of chocolate as a New Year's present arose purely out of the Queen's wish to make each individual soldier feel that he was in her thoughts. "Tommy" has thoroughly enjoyed the refreshing and nutritive beverage with which the Queen's chocolate has provided him, but, useful as it has been in the long marches, the primary object of the chocolate was one of sentiment. "I wish to give each of my soldiers a little personal present," was how the Queen expressed it, and the trouble which she took regarding the design of the box, the placing on the lid of her portrait and an autograph message, her suggestion that the edges should be rounded, so that the boxes would be more convenient to carry in the pocket, and the command that the die of the design should be destroyed, all point to the fact that the Queen was wishful to give her soldiers not so much an addition to their rations as a keepsake.



*From a photograph by Charles Knight, Aldershot.*

HER MAJESTY'S BOUDOIR, THE ROYAL PAVILION, ALDERSHOT.

That it will be highly valued as such is very clear from the jealousy which it has occasioned in the valiant breasts of old Crimean veterans at Chelsea Hospital. "Why, bless you," said one to me the other day, "the boys don't know what the privations of war are in this 'ere campaign, with their plum-puddings and 'bacca and whisky, and the Queen sending 'em boxes of chocolate. I can remember sitting before Sebastopol with a ring of officers and men in a hole we had dug to protect us from the bullets, and we none of us knew when we should get the next mouthful of bread or whether we should ever sit on a *cheer* again. We

were the families of the Life and Foot Guards living in the neighbourhood, and the deep mourning in which some were dressed told a pathetic story. First the wives of the Life Guards, and then those of the Reservists, were conducted to the side of the Royal carriage, and the Queen leaned forward and spoke womanly words of comfort and cheer, sympathising with the bereaved, and expressing the hope that the other women would receive good news of their husbands.

While a hasty public is quick to turn upon its latest hero if he chances to meet reverses, the Queen always speaks with pity of the generals who are in "tight" places.



THE BOX CONTAINING HER MAJESTY'S GIFT OF CHOCOLATE TO HER SOLDIERS.

should have found a box of chocolate mighty handy."

The Queen has sent tons of blankets, flannels, and woollen garments for the comfort of the troops in South Africa of which the public has scarcely heard, but nothing has touched "Tommy" like the chocolate gift.

For the first time, I believe, in the history of the troops, the Queen has made a public recognition of the part which the soldier's wife takes in the sacrifices entailed by war. Prior to the departure of the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Guards for South Africa, the Queen paid a visit of inspection to the barracks at Windsor. As the Guards moved away a group of some sixty women and several hundred children was revealed. They

She is charitable enough to allow that brave and tried soldiers are sure to do their best. No act of special bravery is allowed to pass unrewarded by the Queen. Special medals have been struck for the previous campaigns of the reign, and the Queen will not forget the South African. When the time for distribution comes, it will be a unique occasion in the annals of our Army, for we doubt not that the soldiers of Great Britain, Ireland, and gallant little Wales will share the honours with the splendid young manhood of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, with the sons of our Indian Empire, and with the Volunteers and Yeomanry who have all given themselves for the Queen and the old flag.