Masculinity in Crisis: The Creation and Representation of British Manliness and Masculine Identity, 1890-1914

Ellana Diane Coote

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Arts by Research

History

School of History

University of Kent

Supervisors: Dr Peter Donaldson and Dr Emma Hanna

September 2023

Word Count: 39,996

Acknowledgements

I would like to give my lifelong thanks to Mum and Dad, for being the ones who introduced and encouraged me to do history, and for always being there to support me along the way. I would also like to give thanks to my Nan, for always listening and taking an interest in whatever it is that I am doing. I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Dr Peter Donaldson and Dr Emma Hanna, for all their very useful feedback and assistance over the past year, without which this thesis would look very different (and probably not for the better)! Last, but certainly not least, I want to give special thanks to Catherine, for all the support and inspiration, and for all the chats (late-night or otherwise!) that have helped my work and ideas make it this far.

Abstract

Though the scholarship surrounding the history of masculinity, especially in Britain, has been broadening in recent decades, there are still many gaps. This thesis sets out to explore whether there was a crisis in masculinity and masculine identity at the turn of the twentieth century; in doing so, it explores the rise of militarism and shifting opinions towards soldiers, fears surrounding degeneracy, and the revival of chivalric ideals stemming from the nineteenth century. During a period of immense upheaval and uncertainty, particularly regarding the army and its efficiency after the Boer War, these areas are key in understanding the societal response to nationwide anxiety and insecurity. That the Boer War followed a decade characterised by decadence—typified by the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895—did little to soothe Britain's fears over the state of its men. This becomes all the more important as the Great War was drawing closer, and would soon throw British masculinity into a new spotlight; recognising how the men of this period understood themselves and those around them, especially regarding the notion of masculine duty, is critical, and lends this study an importance beyond its specified years—particularly in the realm of Great War historiography. Accordingly, popular media such as books, periodicals, artwork, films, and plays offer fascinating and significant insights into the creation of masculine identities and expectations between 1890 and 1914. Critically, this thesis additionally takes into account the growth of transgressive identities alongside hegemonic expectations and considers the role of age and class in the formation of late Victorian and Edwardian masculine identity—two aspects often left underutilised in this area of scholarship, especially in conjunction with the aforementioned topics. Ultimately, it will become clear that though there was a 'crisis' in masculinity at this time, this was part of a series of crises stretching back into the nineteenth century and beyond in which men were often believed to be incapable of fulfilling their duties.

Nevertheless, the crisis that came to a head between 1890 and 1914 was intensified by contemporary fears and failures, and is particularly noteworthy for all the hitherto unseen ways of conveying masculine ideologies (rising literacy and newfangled films offered new and larger audiences, for example) across society by the turn of the century.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Figure 1: Hook Edwardian family album #6, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/b5kqF4 (public domain)

Introduction

The nineteenth century was a seminal period for a wide assortment of reasons, but among them are the changes experienced by men and the varying expectations placed upon them by different sections of society. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were times of great anxiety—many of which related to the male role: industrialisation, the increasing mechanisation of the army, the growing freedoms experienced by women, the failures of British soldiers on the battlefield, the apparent degeneration of the nation. As such, there is an argument that there was, at the turn of the century, a '"crisis" of masculinity,' and the evidence behind this notion does seem immediately compelling; however, John Tosh

suggests further, more exhaustive research is necessary for this argument to be fully realised—which this study aims to provide.[1]

On the face of it, there has been much work done on masculinity in the Victorian and Edwardian periods—and it is unmistakable that, over the past forty years, the field of scholarship surrounding the history of masculinity and sexuality has expanded hugely, with several notable historians providing key works that are referenced often: Tosh, Joanna Bourke, H. G. Cocks, and Jeffrey Weeks to name a few. However, many studies exist in isolation. Tosh could safely be considered one of the principal contributors to the history of masculinity, and has underlined a key issue in the studies existing up to 2005, particularly due to the rise of cultural studies: a lack of trajectory, and understanding of 'the long view.'[2] Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, writing in the same year, highlight similar concerns, noting that the history of masculinity has engaged with 'longer-term chronologies' far less than in women's history.[3] Tosh further suggests men have sometimes been seen as 'entirely ungendered persons' in contrast to women and their historical role.[4] Harvey and Shepard also express a need to pay more attention to the role of class and age in male identities, as well as requiring more work to be done on the social reach of dominant codes of masculinity, the tensions between dominant and alternative masculinities, and the range of other codes available to different men—suggesting a level of potential complexity that has not been fully explored within the field.[5]

Furthermore, the period itself presents gaps within its scholarship. Whilst much research is devoted to masculinity and the experience of the Great War of 1914-1918, and the Victorian age, comparatively little has been specifically devoted to the twenty years leading up to the war—for example, the Boer War. Byron Farwell is among the scholars who pinpoint the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) as a turning point, and his work underlines the necessity of

---

[1] John Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 330-342 (pp. 337-338).
[2] *Ibid*., p. 330.
[3] Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 274-280 (p. 275).
[4] Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', p. 330.
[5] Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', pp. 277-278.

examining the role of the British Army in determining masculine identities.[6] Some believe that the Crimean War was the 'last gentlemen's war'; others suggest this was the Boer War.[7] For many reasons—chiefly the inefficiency of the army—the Boer War was a blow to the confidence of officers and civilians alike, and many of the subsequent changes and adaptations would profoundly affect men and their ideologies. For example, fears of degeneration in Britain, stemming from the nineteenth century, became a huge concern across the nation in the aftermath of the Boer War. For Bentley Gilbert, the country (imperialists in particular) took up the cause of 'national efficiency,' fashioning men as idealised defenders of the nation, and casting those classed as something 'other' as threats to the country's livelihood.[8] This agenda stretched from popular culture to official commissions; whilst magazines such as the *Strand* equated the 'dual crises' of the physical male body and 'British manliness as an ideal', at the same time, the 1904 Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration criticised the nation's performance and physical capabilities, cementing, J. L. Cranfield argues, the link between 'domestic health and military success.'[9]

Consequently, Cranfield has undertaken a thorough analysis of the *Strand*'s campaign during the Boer War to propagate an ideal image of masculine perfection (often drawing upon romanticised classical and historical examples) in the face of mounting anxieties surrounding the efficiency of British soldiers. As a result of the Boer War, Cranfield suggests, the association between empire and the male body—and a focus on the national body—was increasingly emphasised within the *Strand's* pages; men's 'imperial value' could be defined by their physique.[10] The *Strand* was notable, Cranfield argues, in how suddenly it appeared to be aware of such issues arising from the Boer War; a 'fantasy male body' was engendered as

---

[6] Byron Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), p. 152.

[7] David Talbot, 'Crimean Disaster: The Last War Between Gentlemen', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 October 1970. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>; Fred J. S. Drew, 'Remember the Glorious Dead', *Bury Free Press*, 20 July 1956. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[8] Bentley Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain* (London: Joseph, 1966), p. 61; Alice Bonzom, '"Human Derelicts" and the Deterioration of the Nation: Discourses of Identity and Otherness in Victorian and Edwardian Britain (1860s-1910s)', *French Journal of British Studies*, XXVII-2 (2022), (para. 2-3 of 46) in <http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/9360> [accessed 19 October 2022].

[9] J. L. Cranfield, 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40.2 (2012), 549-573 (p. 554).

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 557-559.

a result.[11] Cranfield's work is invaluable in displaying the significance and vast array of ideas propagated within a single publication; furthermore, it cements the necessity of examining the Boer War and its specific effects on masculinity in the years leading up to the Great War. Additionally, it highlights that people at the time were aware of the issues surrounding them, leading the editors to purposefully manipulate images and text to refashion a more chivalric, traditional form of masculinity—stressing the importance of periodicals as spaces where discourse could operate, and as a way of spreading ideas among the public. At this point, moreover, martial masculinities and the well-being of the wider masculine population are clearly and constantly intertwined. However, there appears to be a gap in the research of how these popular ideas, and others stretching back into the 1890s and beyond, impacted men in their everyday lives; how far these heightened, exaggerated fears—and the range of developments they caused, from physical culture to the Boy Scouts—impacted men in their everyday lives will be important to consider.

Like many other scholars of this period (Cranfield and Alice Bonzom, for example) Farwell also spends time discussing the failing physical standards of army recruits at the turn of the century—but also mentions the attention paid to symbols such as uniforms, suggesting it is also pertinent to consider the role of image in the construction of self-identity and perceptions of men—allowing for the discussion of not only the body but uniforms and clothing.[12] This will, therefore, be an appropriate area to evaluate, and will yield useful insights into the visual construction of masculine identity, and will also be applicable across classes and sections of society, thus linking with Shepard and Harvey's need to examine the interplay between class, age, and masculinity.

Also underlining the importance of the Boer War within this study, Antoine Capet has conducted a specific examination of Winston Churchill as 'the Happy Warrior', exploring his military exploits from the 1890s to the Boer War, where he became a celebrity for his daring escape from a prisoner camp (the reaction of the public to military idealism is, itself, a topic of note).[13] The importance of this is how Churchill became, due in part to the publicity surrounding him, a real-life boy-hero, straight from the pages of a child's adventure novel;

---

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 564.

[12] Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*, pp. 81, 86.

[13] Antoine Capet, 'The Happy Warrior: Winston Churchill and the Representation of War, 1895–1901', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 66 (2007), in *OpenEdition Journals <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.10447> [accessed 10 November 2022]*.

and, just as significantly, Churchill himself seemed to believe the ideologies expressed within them, desperate for a chance to experience the romanticised excitement of war. Capet's study of Churchill is a strong motivation behind the need to examine how both the ideology of the young soldier-hero impacted those who encountered it, and how the press bolstered those who conformed to such standards—especially in the face of failure during the Boer War. Notably, moreover, Churchill was not alone. Farwell similarly highlights the way soldiers—before the Great War, at least—would look forward to battle; like Churchill, many officers would take periods of leave to experience warfare, even if it was not within an official capacity.[14] This issue became severe enough that Queen Victoria herself called for officers to tone down their brave (reckless) exploits, to little avail.[15] The relevance of all this is that it underlines a critical need to examine the forces behind these beliefs; masculinity was, and increasingly became after the Boer War, inextricably linked with military success. How these martial masculinities translated into the civilian sphere, and vice versa, will be a significant and interesting point to dissect. Anne Summers' comprehensive examination of militarism in Britain before the Great War—woefully understudied for a variety of reasons—gives further impetus to consider the role of the army and military values in fostering masculine ideologies at this time.[16]

Both within and outside the army, it is incredibly important to acknowledge, as Farwell highlights, a 'gentleman'—though a critical concept of the time—is notoriously difficult to define with certainty.[17] It is harder still to define what it was to be a man in broader society; with so many complexities and contradictions, what one man—a gentleman, for example—would consider the pinnacle of masculinity is often vastly different to what a working-class man would deem to be appropriate. Thus, it is critical to draw these distinctions and investigate the complexities and contradictions within the formation of Victorian and Edwardian masculinities, of which there are many. For example, public schools, whilst incredibly effective in disseminating hegemonic masculine ideals, were also seen by some as hotbeds of transgressive, homosexual discovery.[18] At the same time, working-class boys did

---

[14] Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*, pp. 115-117.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 105.
[16] Anne Summers, 'Militarism in Britain before the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, 2.1 (1976), 104-123.
[17] Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*, p. 70.
[18] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 114.

not have public schools to shape their character—and thus must have been imbued with (potentially different) masculine characteristics elsewhere. Likewise, on a wider scale, public expectations and demands on men could be overbearing; whilst expected to be a public figure of one kind, he was expected to be a domestic figure of another—all whilst the divide between male and female spheres became increasingly rigid, as Tosh argues.[19] Interestingly, it has only been more recently that the Victorian and Edwardian man has even been considered in the domestic realm, away from his public image, as per the studies of Tosh, Claudia Nelson and Julie-Marie Strange.[20]

Nelson further highlights the view that man's biological 'egocentrism' (incompatible with domestic self-sacrifice) was encouraged by his role in the public sphere, suggesting the existence of an inherent, biological masculinity, and relating to eugenic theories whilst also highlighting a flaw in the dominant ideology.[21] It opens up questions of whether hegemonic masculinity could be damaging, whilst demonstrating both the fragility of that ideology and the tension between different values and identities. Whilst a man's upbringing prepared him for public life, it left him on the outskirts of the domestic home; he occupied a liminal space between his public duties and the more sensitive requirements of fatherhood. To be successful in public life alone was not enough; 'to internalize the maternal Angel [was] to become more of a man, not less', and, in addition, could help a man in his public life.[22] Adopting a 'feminine parental role' could be a man's 'salvation', an ideal that was praised within contemporary literature; in turn, this offers questions about what society truly wanted from men, if they were already supposed to be publicly heroic and selfless—with masculine codes becoming ever stricter by the turn of the century, effeminacy being among the worst characteristics to possess.[23] Importantly, and in a way many authors have not highlighted, Nelson's study emphasises how much discourse there was on all aspects of male behaviour

---

[19] Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', pp. 333, 336-337.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 333; Claudia Nelson, 'Deconstructing the Paterfamilias: British Magazines and the Imagining of the Maternal Father, 1850–1910', *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 11.3 (2003), 293-308; Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[21] Nelson, 'Deconstructing the Paterfamilias: British Magazines and the Imagining of the Maternal Father, 1850–1910', p. 294.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 299.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

and identity. Clearly, the overlap between what the press extolled and the everyday reality of men needs to be examined.

Furthermore, Matt Houlbrook has proven that even the most British and masculine of symbols—the guardsman—was complicated by reality. Whilst serving as soldiers, many also undertook work as rent boys.[24] This is a trend that often appears within scholarship surrounding masculinity of this period; Cranfield highlights that in the *Strand*, for example, photographic images of real-life soldiers and warfare could complicate romantic notions set down in text.[25] Thus, this discrepancy between idealism and reality is an extremely pertinent one to keep in mind, and will offer great insight into the reality of masculine expectations in the period between the Boer War and the Great War. That the Great War happened provides further impetus behind this study; the weight of the conflict between 1914 and 1918 makes it critical to understand the cultural forces at play in the decades beforehand, which is stressed by Michael Brown, who invokes recent historiography to point out that masculinity is critical in comprehending the experience of that conflict, making this study useful to historians beyond 1914.[26]

Whilst this period is critical for the rise in stringent masculine norms, it is also necessary to understand the full spectrum of masculine identities in Britain, to set these hegemonic ideals against those who transgressed them. A range of surviving sources, for example, exist to suggest that many men in different classes secretly enjoyed cross-dressing—adding further fuel to the importance of acknowledging how far masculine ideals permeated the private sphere. Moreover, Michel Foucault has notably considered the end of the nineteenth century to be critical in the formation of a recognisable homosexual identity; though some now contest this view, it is undeniable that a string of scandals, culminating in the sensational imprisonment of Oscar Wilde in 1895, revealed a transgressive, homosexual underworld, particularly in the heart of London.[27] It was in the 1880s, too, that the 'first modern

---

[24] Matt Houlbrook, 'Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards, circa 1900–1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 42.3 (2003), 351-388 (p. 353).
[25] Cranfield, 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', p. 570.
[26] Michael Brown, 'Cold Steel, Weak Flesh: Mechanism, Masculinity and the Anxieties of Late Victorian Empire', *Cultural and Social History*, 14.2 (2017), 155-181 (p. 175).
[27] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 43, 101.

homosexual panic' took place.[28] How far transgressive identities truly did develop in the face of growing opposition will be pertinent to examine.

As such, it will be necessary to consider how these transgressive figures were treated and portrayed, with newspapers providing the most useful contemporary source for this. Critically, it is important to linger not only on how hegemonic masculinity was defined by what it was but also what it was not. Mª Ángeles Toda provides an excellent study in this regard. Toda compares the adolescent-aimed *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (1905) to E. M. Forster's adult-aimed (though unpublished) *Maurice*, exploring the limits of acceptability in relationships between boys and men as defined by public school ideology (according to Mangan, this ideology was 'imperialism, militarism and athleticism'; intellectualism was actively scorned)[29]. This is useful in two ways. *The Hill*, as a popular book aimed at a younger audience, portrays a kind of romantic friendship between boys whilst simultaneously repressing any element deemed transgressive (though at least one guarded reference to homosexual scandal in the context of a public school is mentioned, hinting at what is being omitted)—therefore providing insight into a best-selling piece of literature which would have potentially helped shape the ideology of masculinity.[30] For some, *The Hill* actually played a role in 'institutionalising romantic friendship'.[31] In this way, such literature complicates the role of the public school in fostering a paradoxical ideology in terms of intimate male-male relationships, which subsequently affected many men throughout their lives—complicating their understanding of themselves and their sexuality.[32] This draws attention to the contradictory tensions along the boundary of what was encouraged (a platonic but deep relationship between boys) and what would be considered transgressive—causing the line between homosocial and homosexual to be blurred.

Maurice, in turn, is notable for being a challenge to that dominant ideology, and a criticism of the effect of public schools. Forster presents the contradictions of public-school male-male

---

[28] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 38.
[29] Toda, Mª Ángeles, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', *Atlantis*, 23.2 (2001), 133-145; J. A. Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 23.3 (1975), 324-335 (p. 324).
[30] Toda, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', pp. 135-137.
[31] Jeffrey Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 195.
[32] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Guild Publishing, 1979), p. 17.

relationships and challenges notions of class, providing several forms of alternate and hegemonic masculine identities and how they are formed.[33] Toda's analysis critically points out how forms of homosexual behaviour were tolerated in the public school environment, proposing a form of 'liminal homosexuality'; once removed from the homosocial environment, such behaviour was expected to pass.[34] Notably, this opens questions of how masculine and sexual expectations changed according to age, which is valuable to this study; Toda's argument suggests societal expectations of men were not always fixed, but were instead fluid, and changed according to both age and class. Ultimately, Toda's presentation of Forster's criticism—that public school ideology was filled with lies, and set boys up to be conformists—is incredibly useful; it both highlights counter-discourse that existed in the years before the Great War, and offers insight into the mindset and experience of a man who transgressed the hegemonic standards of behaviour expected of him by society—as well as indicating how much a historian may glean from examining contemporary literature, in the same way as Mangan, who has utilised literature to alternatively explore the 'Mythology of Physical Heroism', dictating the moral conduct and values by which public school boys lived.[35]

The role of class in masculinity, as underlined by Harvey and Shepard, has been understudied in this period—with much focus going to public school boys and the impact of upper-class education on their ideologies (Mangan's repertoire alone is especially thorough in this regard). Farwell draws the line between working class men (the 'other ranks') and upper-class officers—highlighting their contrasting spheres and giving interesting perceptions into the different roles and expectations expressed by different classes of men, affecting not only their understanding of themselves, but of each other.[36] It is undeniable that a boundary between the masculine identities of working class and upper class men existed, with Farwell giving such examples as William Robertson—a rare example of a private who rose to the rank of field-marshal and experienced immense insecurities along the way.[37] Furthermore, on a basic level, Farwell highlights the stark differences between the everyday existence of poor and rich men; those in the slums were unlikely to even wash regularly, whereas one officer,

---

[33] *Ibid*., p. 142.
[34] *Ibid*., p. 140.
[35] Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', p. 327-328.
[36] Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*, pp. 79-80.
[37] *Ibid*., pp. 76-78.

even when pressed for space, managed to bring a bottle of scent with him on a campaign.[38] It is impossible that such mundane distinctions could not have an effect on each man's perceptions of both himself and those around him.

Thus, balance between the classes and their respective ideologies is critical. Mangan specifically highlights, for example, the significant impact of Oxbridge dons on their undergraduates, especially those with athletic priorities; a highly specific set of values was, therefore, passed on to the next generation influencing the education and priorities of the very people who would lead the country, through the Boer War and beyond.[39] However, Mangan also highlights that public-school ideologies were also stretching to grammar schools in this period—suggesting doubly that it is necessary to look beyond the upper classes to evaluate how deeply and how far these values permeated society on a realistic, everyday basis.[40] Importantly, historians such as Dorothea Flothow and Mangan underline the idea of fair play, in everything from school life to the battlefield, relating to contemporary literature and reflecting the justification given within such works for killing those who did not conform to the same honourable beliefs—ultimately stressing an all-pervasive ideology of moral, masculine superiority.[41] Farwell, whilst presenting a well-rounded and extensive image of the British Army, suggests officers did, widely, conform to the public-school ideologies pressed upon them, maintaining the strict masculine ethos of the 'gentleman' amongst themselves, and exuding the confidence and bravery expected of them—to the extent that violence would be shown to those who did not fit the 'sort' they wished to associate with.[42] Furthermore, Farwell highlights the indifferent way in which the upper classes often treated their lower-class men, fully believing they were of an inferior type and needed to be led—owing to the superior education of the officer.[43] Expanding upon this, it will be useful to explore the Victorian revival of medievalism and chivalry, and the way this tied with the mounting militarism of the period—and the way lower class men were expected to conform to masculine ideals of chivalry during ordeals such as the *Titanic*, but would be excluded in

---

[38] *Ibid*., pp. 85-86, 73.
[39] Mangan, J. A., 'Lamentable Barbarians and Pitiful Sheep: Rhetoric of Protest and Pleasure in Late Victorian and Edwardian "Oxbridge"', *Victorian Studies*, 34.4 (1991), 473-489 (p. 487).
[40] *Ibid*.
[41] *Ibid*.; Dorothea Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 66 (2007), (para. 12, 21-23 of 33), in OpenEdition Journals <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.10404> [accessed 15 October 2022].
[42] Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*, pp. 70-71, 105.
[43] *Ibid*., pp. 75, 88.

other situations, such as the glamourous Earl's Court Tournament of 1912. Additionally, though Farwell employed as much material by lower-class soldiers as possible where appropriate, he points out the difficulty in obtaining working-class accounts; almost forty years after Farwell's book was published, it would be useful to see if any more insight is available at this stage, and how this may complement and contrast the experiences already presented by him.

Several scholars highlight the importance of growing literacy in this period.[44] This is notable for numerous reasons, but it is most critical in relation to this study for the fact that it opened a new world of highly influential media to a huge range of people for the first time in history. Mangan argues that literature played a critical role in constructing 'communal symbolism' and its associated ideologies and beliefs.[45] With developments such as Forster's Education Act in 1870, and action being taken within institutions such as the army, within the army alone there was an increase of almost 30% in the number of rank and file who obtained a third-class certificate of education or better between 1870 and 1896.[46] More broadly, male literacy in Britain as a whole grew from 69.3% in 1851 to 97.2% in 1900.[47] Thus, it is impossible to suggest that these new levels of literacy played no part in the construction of late Victorian and Edwardian masculine ideologies. Periodicals and children's literature, many of which specifically attempt to fashion an ideal masculine identity, will be most pertinent to garnering an understanding of the creation of masculine ideologies—as underlined by Cranfield and Flothow, respectively. Importantly, contemporaries were not oblivious to this phenomenon; in 1902, amidst the fallout of the Boer War, popular children's author George Alfred Henty explicitly stated that his intention was 'to inculcate patriotism in [his] books'.[48] However, of course, it is not useful to look at these texts in isolation, and Flothow highlights the difficulty in ascertaining the impact of children's literature; it will be

---

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 83; Alan Ramsey Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home: The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 98.
[45] Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', pp. 324-325.
[46] Alan Ramsey Skelley, *The Victorian Army at Home: The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 98.
[47] Matthew Taunton, *Print Culture* (2014) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/print-culture> [accessed 2 December 2022].
[48] Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', para. 2 of 33.

important to examine reviews and personal testimonies to gauge just how much of an impact published books and articles had on the men who read them.

Interestingly, historians such as Mangan underline the impact of modern ideologies on our understanding of the Victorian and Edwardian periods; for example, public school ideologies and their context are now outdated and frowned upon, just as Summers highlights the impact of modern reluctance to acknowledge militarism, especially among the working class, in the years before 1914.[49] Thus, it is necessary to be aware of these biases and influences, especially in the twentieth century. Whilst drawing on contemporary published sources, it is essential to examine people's responses to truly gain a complete image of both the public expectations of masculinity, and the private realities; Bonzom highlights the necessity of this task, which has hitherto been unfulfilled, in stating that it would be worthwhile to examine the point of view of those who transgressed masculine norms, and how their treatment impacted them.[50] In addition, increasing literacy rates makes it impossible to neglect works of literature as useful sources from which to glean contemporary attitudes, both within them and in people's reactions to them; even penny dreadfuls, a seemingly innocuous form of entertainment, were feared by some for the effect they could have on young (working class) minds, highlighting the belief of contemporaries that literature could have a significant effect on the mindset of children in particular.[51] By placing this individual aspect within the wider tapestry of forces behind masculinity, a richer understanding of the state of the nation, and its 'crisis of masculinity', will be yielded.

---

[49] Anne Summers, 'Militarism in Britain before the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, 2.1 (1976), 104-123 (p. 105).

[50] Bonzom, '"Human Derelicts" and the Deterioration of the Nation: Discourses of Identity and Otherness in Victorian and Edwardian Britain (1860s-1910s)', para. 45 of 46.

[51] Patrick A. Dunae, 'Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys' Literature and Crime', *Victorian Studies*, 22.2 (1979), 133-150 (pp. 133-135).

Chapter One: British Militarism, the Spectacle of the Soldier, and Their Impact on Masculinity

Regarding British militarism and its effects on masculinity, the period between 1890 and 1914 is incredibly fascinating. The latter half of the nineteenth century provided a complete upheaval of both the British Army and society's perception of it, a development which stretched up to the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914. The reforms undertaken by Edward Cardwell, including the abolition of purchasing commissions in 1871 and the localisation of regiments, were critical in this regard; Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly posit that the connection between army, local, and national identities was key in the newfound acceptance of the army, and for recruitment.[1] As such, the interaction between soldier and civilian, and his subsequent portrayal, changed, leaning heavily into the glorification and sanitisation of war; effectively, the image of the soldier was softened. At the same time, a greater proportion of the male population experienced military service, blurring the boundaries further, with 14.2% of men aged 18-40 serving during the Boer War—a significant number, considering that 22.1% of the male population served during the Great War.[2] The Boer War thrust the soldier and his efficiency into the limelight, resulting in an explosion of media centred around the conflict—as well as a range of reforms which brought the ordinary civilian into closer contact with the military sphere than ever before. It is undeniable that this interaction affected perceptions of manliness; Edward Gosling goes so far as to suggest that 'desirable qualities,' including manliness and patriotism, were directly placed upon the shoulders of British soldiers through portrayals of them in writing and the music hall.[3]

---

[1] Arvel B. Erickson, 'Abolition of Purchase in the British Army', *Military Affairs*, 23.2 (1959), 65-76 (p. 76); Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 19; Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 147.

[2] Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Victorians at War* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2003), p. 224.

[3] Edward Gosling, "A Soldier's Life is a Merry One', or, 'A Certain Cure for Gout and Rheumatism': The Shift in Popular Perceptions of the Common Soldier in Late Victorian Britain, 1870-c.1910', in *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021), pp. 169-191 (p. 186).

Simultaneously, uncertainties were rife surrounding the physical degeneration of recruits, and a perceived lack of military efficiency; the Boer War exposed the fallibility of the British Army. It is worth noting that the Haldane Reforms came underway between 1906 and 1912, which—building on the earlier Cardwell Reforms—would crucially change the face of the army in the years leading up to 1914 (contemporaneously, Admiral Fisher was notably also reforming the Royal Navy). These were, predominantly, motivated by the costs of the Boer War.[4] However, what came about is incredibly important for military masculinity, and played a large role in disseminating martial values to the wider public; Haldane oversaw the development of the British Expeditionary Force, the Territorial Force, and the Officer Training Corps, lending a new sense of organisation and professionalism across the army—importantly, even to volunteers.[5] Critically, this also indicates a heightened sense of militarism and the dissemination of martial masculinity across society and age groups, with men and boys training in the TF and OTCs—the latter of which will soon be discussed further. Jessica Meyer subsequently underlines that Haldane's reforms were the most significant since Cardwell's—and they came at the right time.[6] In 1905, three years after the end of the war, enlistment returns were a cause for concern; between 1903 and 1914, the army constantly fell below its establishment.[7] 41% of 6,681 potential recruits at St. George's Barracks, London, were rejected, a matter anxiously reported in the press.[8] To add fuel to the fire, volunteers were reported as having higher levels of physical fitness.[9] Something had to be done to restore faith in the abilities of the Regular Army, the reputation of which was inextricably linked with the strength of the wider male population.

Newspapers were full of discourse and debates over the 'military question,' arguably one of the defining debates of this period for British masculinity; one response suggested, for example, having 'every able-bodied man […] taking up arms,' the only solution being for young men to engage 'in the manlier exercises of soldiers' craft than […] effeminate

---

[4] Ian Beckett, Timothy Bowman, and Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 174.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8
[6] Jessica Meyer, *An Equal Burden: The Men of the Royal Army Medical Corps in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 49.
[7] Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, p. 32.
[8] 'Physical Degeneracy', *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 28 April 1906. British Library Newspapers (p. 4).
[9] 'Volunteers' Physique', *Evening Telegraph*, 8 August 1905. British Library Newspapers (p. 4).

games.'[10] Considering that the National Service League (which aimed to introduce mild conscription), formed in 1902, claimed 270,000 members by 1914, and the Haldane Reforms had seen the creation of the Territorial Force and OTCs, this rhetoric—seen everywhere from newspapers to invasion-scare literature—must not have been inconsequential; men were increasingly taking up the manly 'soldiers' craft' in their everyday lives.[11] Military manliness was, evidently, presented as a curative against rampant degeneration, a constant theme throughout media and institutions of the period—but this only hints at the huge contentiousness of the period. British men were constantly measured against foreign soldiers, especially Germans, who fast became Britain's primary military rival; the *Pall Mall Gazette* wondered whether military service, 'with its physical and moral discipline, may prevent degeneration—which supposedly did not exist among German men.[12] Invasion literature, too played a role in extolling the same language and rhetoric, a genre which stretched back into the nineteenth century but experienced a boom in the decade leading up to the Great War, accompanying the influx of military adventure stories sparked by the Boer War.[13] In an era of hitherto unseen levels of literacy, the 'newly literate millions,' Robert Roberts argues, were increasingly provided with fiction 'based on war and the idea of its imminence.'[14] Subsequently, in preparation for this imminent war, the plot device and rhetoric of invasion, as seen historically in books such as George Alfred Henty's, was picked up as a way of highlighting the inadequacy of modern men. A number of figures involved with the preparation of Britian for war published 'invasion-scare tales,' specifically intending to encourage support for militaristic measures and expenditure.[15] The British army—the country, and English men in particular, were not prepared to go to war or undertake their duty to defend their nation; in *The Invasion of 1910*, William Le Queux wrote of 'the degenerate

---

[10] 'Rev. D. Graham Says Young Men Would Be Better Engaged in Making Themselves Efficient in Military Exercises than in Effeminate Games', *Dundee Courier*, 18 December 1908. British Library Newspapers (p. 6).

[11] Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, p. 10.

[12] Pall Mall Gazette, 'Cure for Degeneracy', *Daily Mail*, 9 December 1908. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 6).

[13] Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 34; Patrick A. Dunae, 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 24.1 (1980), 105-121 (p. 115).

[14] Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 179.

[15] A. Michael Matin, 'The Creativity of War Planners: Armed Forces Professionals and the Pre-1914 British Invasion-Scare Genre', *ELH*, 78.4 (2011), 801-831 (p. 802).

slackness of the Public and the Press,' 'the general selfishness,' and their concern with 'trivialities' like football and cricket, leading to the 'doom of England.'[16] Le Queux's book actually opened with a handwritten note from Lord Roberts, appealing to the British public to 'take up the question of the Army' to avoid 'catastrophe.'[17] It is no coincidence that Lord Roberts, frontman of the National Service League, was also involved in invasion-scare literature; the rhetoric touted by these books, that the nation was unprepared, was actually put into action—making the message all the more potent.[18] Major Guy Du Maurier, D.S.O.—another accomplished military man—echoed these sentiments in *An Englishman's Home*; the principal family, the Browns, are 'fat,' badly dressed, or 'very thin,' 'pale faced.'[19] They are militarily inept; Geoffrey wonders whether volunteering is a 'mug's game,' and Brown considers there to be 'moral danger' in it—he even considers militarism to be 'a condition of slavery.'[20] As Samuel Hynes points out, the English here '[exemplified] the worst aspects of the Physical Deterioration Report and Lord Roberts' warnings'; Du Maurier's characters are 'a catalogue of physical deficiencies.'[21] This was not ineffectual; *The Times* attributed an increase in recruits in February 1909 to the play, considering it to have been 'produced at the right psychological moment', and, even more importantly, wrote that the *Daily Mail* had been '[thrusting] down the throat of its many readers, in reiterated doses, the lesson which Major du Maurier […] desired to convey to the public mind.'[22] In a period bookended by two significant wars for Britain, the stakes for British manliness and masculine efficiency could hardly have been higher, and the influence of military ideology was immense.

---

[16] William Le Queux and H. W. Wilson, *The Invasion of 1910: With a Full Account of the Siege of London* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1906), p. 86.
[17] Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, in William Le Queux and H. W. Wilson, *The Invasion of 1910: With a Full Account of the Siege of London* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1906), p. i.
[18] Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, p. 10.
[19] Major Guy Du Maurier, *An Englishman's Home: A Play in Three Acts* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1909), p. 1.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
[21] Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 47.
[22] Our Military Correspondent, 'The London Territorials', *The Times*, 15 February 1909. The Times Digital Archive (p. 6).

The Spectacle of the Soldier

Uniforms and Physicality

It has already been mentioned that, during this period, soldiers and civilians came into increasingly frequent contact; as such, it is impossible to understate the physical spectacle of soldiers. According to Scott Hughes Myerly, the 'symbolic vision' of the British army is incredibly important; its spectacle both intrigued civilians and influenced the attitudes and values of military and civilian spheres throughout the nineteenth century.[23] The effect of soldiers in uniform on women has been examined by other historians; Louise Carter has discussed the effects of 'scarlet fever' at the turn of the nineteenth century, whilst Angela Woollacott writes of the public display of 'khaki fever' towards British soldiers in late 1914.[24] One wartime hit written in 1915 refers to the shift of women's attention from dandies to soldiers; the bewitching effect of soldiers on women is underlined, along with the qualities mothers were encouraged to be proud of in their sons.[25] But the uniform and the physicality of soldiers attracted (heterosexual) men too. Morals and behavioural expectations aside—the appearance alone of a soldier could direct men on how to conduct themselves. One clear

---

[23] Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 166.

[24] Louise Carter, 'Scarlet Fever: Female Enthusiasm for Men in Uniform, 1780–1815', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 155-179 (p. 156); Angela Woollacott, "Khaki Fever' and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29.2 (1994), 325-347 (p. 325).

[25] Tom Mellor and Harry Gifford, *All the Boys in Khaki Get the Nice Girls* (1915) <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/all-boys-khaki-get-nice-girls> [accessed 13 September 2023].

Figure 1: A postcard featuring the smartly-dressed Coldstream Guards (from private collection)

indication of the impact of men in uniform comes from the serial 'Trooper Tommy Atkins', written by 'Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill':

> […] several representatives of the Cavalry […] who, with their natty jackets, skin-tight overalls showing every muscle of well developed forms, and diminutive caps cocked very much on one side, seemed to think themselves superior […] Already half-inclined to enlist, I had just conjured up a vision of myself in all the glory of a Lancer's uniform […][26]

The authors engender a vivid image of the soldier (aided by illustrations). They equate the Lancer's uniform with 'glory,' binding the tangible presence of the soldier to the glory and prestige of the army and the nation. Along with the admiring observation of their 'well developed forms,' the reader is confronted by the very ideal of martial masculinity. Written in 1895, Britain had not yet experienced the anxieties of the Boer War, but fears of degeneration in English men—and soldiers, too, with the advent of modern weaponry and warfare—were already rife.[27] This image of smart, muscular soldiers—visually as well as verbally presented on the page—soothingly counteracts such

[26] Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill, 'Trooper Tommy Atkins', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 5 January 1895. British Library Newspapers (p. 5).
[27] Michael Brown, 'Cold Steel, Weak Flesh: Mechanism, Masculinity and the Anxieties of Late Victorian Empire', *Cultural and Social History*, 14.2 (2017), 155-181.

fears. As public interest in army matters grew—disseminating its ideology across society—'Trooper Tommy Atkins' was highly successful, underlined by the fact that the *Penny Illustrated Paper* offered back-issues to catch up on the tales, as well as publishing them in the Christmas Annual.[28] Notably, the protagonist of the serial is not working class; he bribes a private, after enlisting, not to make him bathe with the other 'filthy' recruits.[29] It is an educated man, therefore, who is depicted as being drawn in by the glamour of a uniform; in consideration of how much was aimed at middle- and upper-class audiences, a fact to be further discussed later, this seems to suggest that the ideology worked.

Figure 2: Kit inspection, Suffolk Royal Garrison Artillery (Militia), Ipswich, 1905 (c); the men are pictured in their Brodrick caps. NAM. 1993-09-75-19 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1993-09-75-19

[28] R. W. Paul, *Army Life; or, How Soldiers are Made* (London: R. W. Paul, 1900), p. 2; Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill, 'Trooper Tommy's "First War"', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 14 December 1895. British Library Newspapers (p. 381).

[29] Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill, 'Trooper Tommy Atkins', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 5 January 1895. British Library Newspapers (p. 5).

The importance of a soldier's physical appearance was not confined to fiction. With reforms abundant at the turn of the century, newspapers were quick to publish discourse on the matter. Extensive discussion followed the Brodrick cap, for example, introduced in 1902. Resembling 'a pancake in shape,' the cap was detested by soldiers and civilians alike.[30] In the *Nelson Evening Mail*, a recruiting sergeant believed it to be 'a fearful example to the would-be recruit,' whilst another was pointed at by a lad he was trying to enlist, who simply remarked '"And wear a hat like that?"'[31] As Myerly points out, recruits were 'beguiled by the spectacle,' underlining its importance in both a practical and ideological way; whilst influencing the perception of the army more widely, it also served as a useful recruitment tool, emphasising the importance of masculine appearance and its connotations of national promise and prowess.[32] Thankfully, the cap was withdrawn in 1907—but not before the sad death of one soldier, who, having received a face wound during the Boer War, committed suicide, leaving a note attributing his death to the cap, which emphasised his injuries.[33] The evidence for the importance of a soldier's appearance in influencing the public mounts.

Matters came to a well-publicised head in 1904 when Private Manning, of the 2nd Buffs, was imprisoned and dismissed; he was reprimanded for displaying his curls outside his cap whilst out in Dover, and when scolded again in the evening, he struck the offending corporal.[34] His case brought further attention to the hair and headwear of the soldiers, with the War Office growing concerned over 'the British soldier's curl,' which they deemed 'effeminate and unsoldierlike.'[35] Other complaints given regarding soldiers' appearances involved carrying cigarettes behind the ear and wearing mufflers in cold weather.[36] Evidently, the army had

---

[30] 'The Brodrick Cap in the British Army', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 9 November 1904. Papers Past <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19041109.2.22> (p. 3).
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea*, p. 166.
[33] 'The Brodrick Cap in the British Army', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 9 November 1904. Papers Past <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19041109.2.22> (p. 3).
[34] 'The Soldier's Curls', *Daily Telegraph & Courier* (London), 25 March 1904. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[35] 'Soldiers' Effeminate Curls', *The Dover Express and East Kent News*, 9 December 1904. British Library Newspapers (p. 5).
[36] 'Unsoldierlike Curls', *The Evening Telegraph*, 27 April 1904. Gale Primary Sources (p. 2).

clear beliefs in what constituted military masculinity, and dandyish curls had no place—highlighting, again, the carefully moderated role of the soldier in cultivating an image of British manliness and power. That this was shared in the national press is significant, too, especially for the language used throughout. The titles alone are eye-catching: 'effeminate curls,' 'unsoldierlike curls.' This sends a clear message to all men: curls and manliness are mutually exclusive. That does not mean all men agreed, though; one defender struck back in a poem recalling past warriors: 'Grant us effeminacy such as thine.'[37] This is noteworthy for several reasons. Firstly, it highlights that the argument had gained enough traction in the civilian sphere that counterarguments were written to the *Daily Mail*, giving further credence to the suggestion that the appearance of soldiers influenced civilians—a possibility nurtured by the aforementioned domestication of the army from the mid-nineteenth century onwards; secondly, and more crucially, it again underlines how contradictory and contentious the ideal characteristics of masculinity—especially martial masculinity—had become. Whether they were heeded or not, there were

Figure 3: Trooper Field Kit, 1st King's Dragoon Guards, postcard 'supplied free exclusively by "Shurey's Publications"' (from private collection)

[37] Croppie, 'Curls in the Army', *Daily Mail*, 29 April 1904. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 4).

constant and battling voices attempting to influence the boys and men of Britain—a fact that will become clear as these chapters progress.

Regardless of hair and headwear, the importance of the uniform, as stressed by 'Trooper Tommy Atkins,' held fast. As Myerly points out, the soldier—and his dress and posture—embodied the nation's power, and it was through his physical appearance that the army's values of order, hierarchy and unity were advertised.[38] One article from 1900 is scathing over the introduction of khaki. The author describes khaki as 'that ugly neutral tint', but notably highlights that soldiers will wear scarlet when 'intended to be a spectacle.'[39] This stresses an awareness of purpose; the army was aware of its visual appeal, and the importance of maintaining it. A soldier was, as the evidence suggests, more appealing—and therefore influential—when he possessed a dazzling uniform. The author refers to its 'commercial purposes,' which is a curious turn of phrase; it hints at the soldier being a commodity, which, when considering the use of the best uniforms for parades, and the care taken to always maintain appearances, does not seem far off the mark.[40] The soldier was not only important as a representation of the present army; he had the potential to entertain, influence, and stick in the minds of the next generation. The article alarmingly states that it would be 'a national

Figure 4: Mystery man (and medal) and son, both in uniform, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/8B337y (public domain)

[38] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea*, p. 168.
[39] 'New Army Uniform', *Dundee Evening Post*, 21 June 1900. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[40] *Ibid*.

calamity and a check to the recruiting sergeant's industry' if the scarlet jacket was to vanish entirely.[41] This is a further indication that it was contemporaneously acknowledged that some men did join up for the uniform. The visibility and spectacle of the soldier, then, had a clear impact on attitudes towards soldiers; their glamorous uniforms and fit bodies—and the attention that came with them—presented the army as an appealing, even beneficial, place to be. Myerly compellingly highlights, too, how the spectacle of the British army both stirred patriotic fervour through the 'feelings of glory' and superiority invoked by the militaristic imagery, and demonstrated values—discipline, *esprit de corps*, hierarchy—admirable to an increasingly urbanised and industrialised population.[42] Though Myerly's work speaks of an earlier period, it applies to the anxious nation at the turn of the century. The soldier on display became associated with national pride and respectability; in a word, he was the ideal—the epitome of British martial masculinity—presented to both civilians and soldiers alike.

Figure 5: Queen Victoria's carriage and escort crossing London Bridge, Diamond Jubilee, 22 June 1897. NAM. 1964-11-69-7 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1964-11-69-7

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea*, p. 168.

Figure 6: Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Westminster, London, 1897. NAM. 1992-07-297-1 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1992-07-297-1

Films and Music

It would be impossible to discuss the spectacle of the early twentieth-century soldier without mentioning the advent of film. Combined with the importance of the Boer War, these two factors combined present a compelling insight into the formation of masculine, military identity. Footage of soldiers going about their duties was already offered before 1899, but, as Richard Maltby posits, the Boer War was the most significant factor shaping British films in 1900; cinema became the conveyor of news and became 'an agent of consensus and confirmation.'[43] For the first time, audiences came face to face with the soldier in action; the glamour and excitement of the soldier were given an anchor in an ongoing conflict, bolstering his heroic, patriotic image. This is critical; Bowman and Connelly point out how public exercises gave a high profile to the army in certain localities, underlining how *The Morning*

[43] Richard Maltby, 'Introduction', in John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England 1894-1901: Volume Five: 1900,* 5 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), V, pp. xi-xxxii (p. xxxi).

Post was disappointed that manoeuvres could not be undertaken across the country, as they did much to bond civilians and soldiers together.[44] Films could take the place of witnessing these spectacles in person. The sheer number of films made (44 Boer War entertainment films were shown between 1899 and December 1912) suggests both a high level of public interest and influence; people of all backgrounds and ages repeatedly accessed glorified scenes of army life.[45] Importantly, Richard Schellhammer highlights that the working classes dominated audiences by 1914; thus, depictions of the glorious soldier were not restricted to any one section of society.[46]

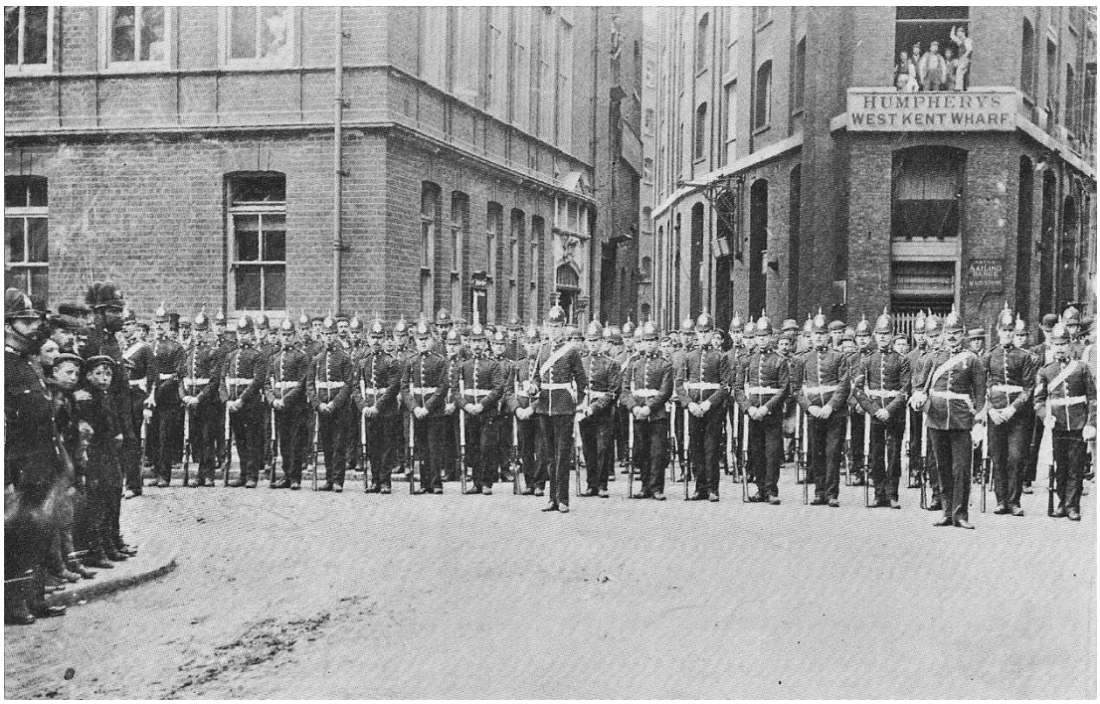


Figure 7: Montague Close: The 3rd Volunteer Battalion The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment on Parade on 'Thanksgiving Day' during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Monday 21st June 1897; photo scanned by Leonard Bentley, available at https://flic.kr/p/og4GXv (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Looking back in 1968, Robert Graves highlighted the persistence of the Boer War's memory in August 1914; 'The heroic departure of the City Imperial Volunteers,' for example.[47] Significantly, these 'heroic' moments were captured (or recreated) and projected to huge

[44] Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, p. 178.
[45] Richard Schellhammer, *How the Boer War Saved the Movies: The Depiction of the Boer War in Early British Cinema* <https://www.academia.edu/156106/How_the_Boer_War_Saved_the_Movies> [accessed 28 April 2023] (p. 3).
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[47] Robert Graves, 'The Kaiser's War: A British Point of View', in *Promise of Greatness: The War of 1914-1918*, ed. by George A. Panichas (New York: The John Day Company, 1968), pp. 3-11 (p. 5).

audiences, and were repeated in the years leading up to 1914; being that Graves was a young child at the outbreak of the Boer War, that these images were recreated and repeated, especially in film, stresses the importance of the depictions overall.[48] One film shows the C.I.V. being inspected by the Prince of Wales in 1900; the men are well-disciplined and smart, highlighting the potential for volunteers to be just as respectable.[49] This was significant, as it was the first time vast numbers of volunteers—some with no military experience—could serve alongside regular soldiers, breaking boundaries further.[50] The C.I.V. was particularly popular, and that there were several films dedicated to it is significant.[51] The intermixing of soldiers and civilians, both within the corps and in these crowds, was no doubt critical in improving the perception of the army. Another film shows the return of the C.I.V., and the sight is triumphant; one trooper carries the captured flag of the United Dutch Republic, with others riding on horseback or bearing their rifles before enormous crowds.[52]

Alternatively, one film from 1901 portrays an interview between Ralph Pringle and Private Ward; having won the Victoria Cross in South Africa, Ward became a national hero, highlighting the elevation of the ordinary Tommy in British society at this point.[53] The set-up of an interview, moreover, exhibits the interplay between film, veracity, and the press at this point. Schellhammer further underlines the coincidence between the portrayal of British soldiers on film, and the shift in public opinion towards them, and such films focusing on the regular private is a clear indication of this; any man, in any class, had the potential to become a celebrated military hero.[54] Linking back to the celebration of volunteers (and their imminent

---

[48] *C.I.V. Procession. Cyclists and Infantry (1900)*, online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-civ-procession-cyclists-and-infantry-1900-online>. [accessed 13 September 2023].

[49] *Inspection of the City Imperial Volunteers [Allocated Title]*, produced by Warwick Trading Company (1900), online film recording, Imperial War Museum © IWM IWM 1025e, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060023330> [accessed 31 August 2023].

[50] Will Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars: Volunteers in the Boer War* (Great Britain: Leo Cooper, 1999), p. ix.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

[52] *C.I.V. Procession. Cyclists and Infantry (1900)*, online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-civ-procession-cyclists-and-infantry-1900-online>. [accessed 13 September 2023].

[53] *Ralph Pringle Interviewing Private Ward V.C. Hero in Leeds (1901)*, online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-ralph-pringle-interviewing-private-ward-vc-hero-in-leeds-1901-1901-online> [accessed 31 August 2023].

[54] Richard Schellhammer, *How the Boer War Saved the Movies: The Depiction of the Boer War in Early British Cinema* <https://www.academia.edu/156106/How_the_Boer_War_Saved_the_Movies> [accessed 28 April 2023] (p. 2).

formalisation in the Territorial Force), this had been an ongoing transformation in public attitude since the Crimean War, acknowledged by various historians, when coverage of the conflict criticised the 'aristocratic management, lionising the ordinary soldier and finding a new hero amid the carnage.'[55] Before the advent of film, military art was critical in bridging the gap between soldiers and civilians (and continued to be a staple in books and periodicals, even after the introduction of photography), and Louis William Desanges was particularly important in turning 'middle class gentlemen into 'god-like' military heroes'; the 1850s and 1860s, for example, saw the creation of a 'Victoria Cross series,' eventually comprising of fifty pictures.[56] The series went on display at the Crystal Place until around 1880, and these were likely the 'best-known images of war' in the mid-nineteenth century.[57] Kentish artist

Figure 8: Print after Richard Simkin, 16 Pounder RML field gun with horse team, circa 1880; Richard Simkin, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Royal_Artillery,_16_Pounder,_1880.jpg

Richard Simkin was also prolific, and published beautifully illustrated works for both adults and children regarding the army's past and present, such as *Our Soldiers and Sailors in Egypt*.[58] The Boer War was an additional stepping stone, evoking greater interaction and interest between civilians and soldiers; interest in the fate of the ordinary soldier, and the

[55] Andrew Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-56*, 2nd edn (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p. 22; Alan Borg, *War Memorials: From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), pp. 104–24.
[56] J. W. M. Hichberger, *Images of the Army: The Military in British Art, 1815-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 63-64.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[58] Richard Simkin, *Our Soldiers and Sailors in Egypt* (London & New York: Geo: Routledge & Sons, 1882).

armed forces generally, was reinforced by the conflict.[59] This, in turn, further stresses the domestication, and appeal, of the army by the end of the nineteenth century. The ability to watch Private Ward on film presents a relatable hero—much like the children's novels to be discussed later—and offers glory (aside from the uniform) for the ordinary man. These scenes stir pride and martial spirit, and many more depict soldiers' marches through dozens of towns, physically portraying the intermingling between civilian and military spheres; importantly, they give audiences something to aspire and hold to as a representation of the

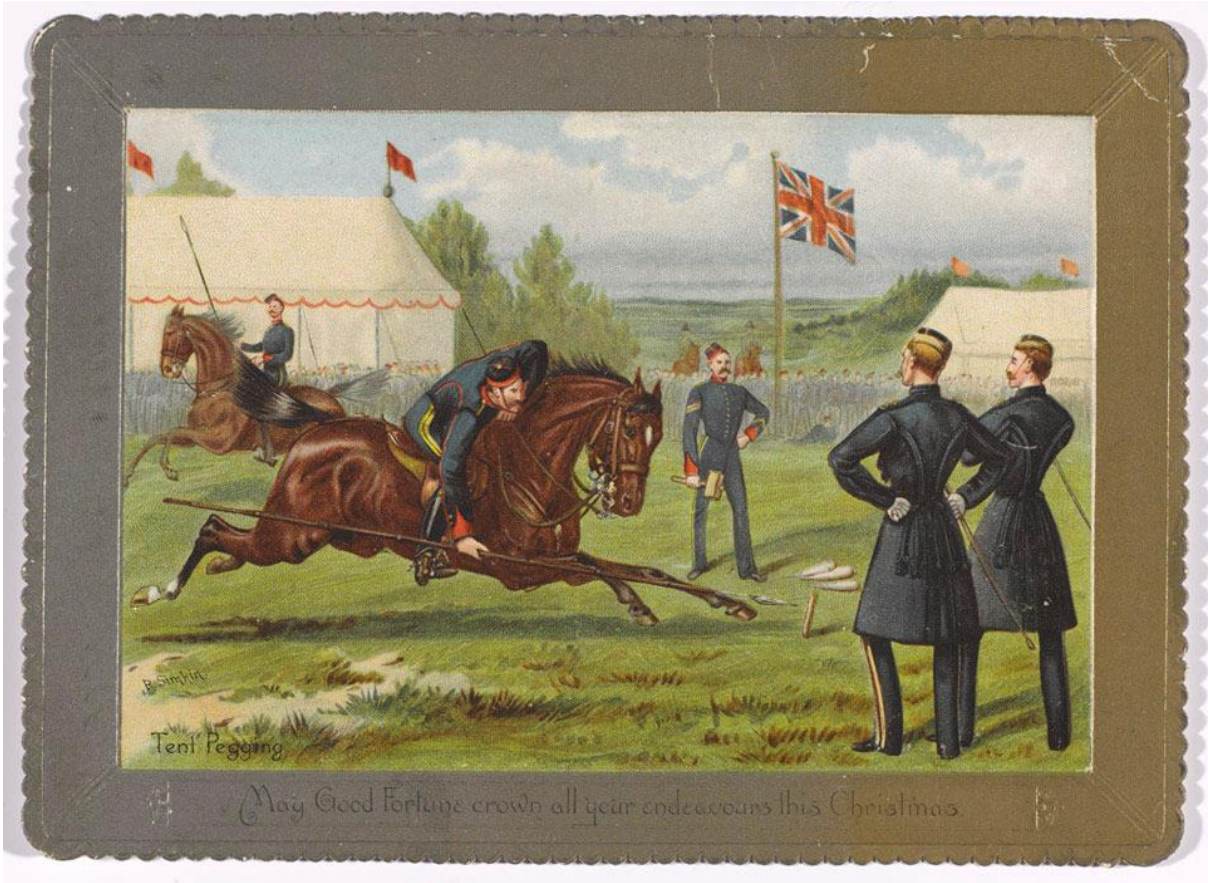


Figure 9: 'Tent Pegging May Good Fortune crown all your endeavours this Christmas', 1890 (c) Chromolithographic Christmas greetings card, after R Simkin NAM. 1982-04-512-35 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1982-04-512-35

nation's glory, embodied by the swathes of faultless soldiers. No more were soldiers presented as faultless than in films depicting state occasions, however. When Queen Victoria visited Sheffield in 1897, the Household Cavalry accompanied the royal procession in full regalia. On horseback and in full uniform, passing through a street full of decorations and

[59] Peter Donaldson, 'Commemorating the Crimean, South African and First World Wars: A Case-Study of the Royal Engineers, 1856–1922', *War & Society*, 39.2 (2020), 93–108 (pp. 94-95).

onlookers, the glamour of soldiering is displayed to an almost limitless audience; all the splendour of the event was no longer kept to those who were there on the day.

One of the most interesting and noteworthy films to consider of this period, however, is the two-hour epic *Army Life; Or, How Soldiers Are Made*. Created as a result of the contemporary interest in the Army and released in September 1900, and reflective of a number of films depicting military life, all that exists now is, unfortunately, a half-minute of footage—but the twenty-three seconds of surviving reel alone is awe-inspiring.[60] Showing The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment riding across a plain, it is evocative of romantic notions of soldiering, the likes of which survive (for better or worse) within the popular memory of the Great War: 'a succession of heroic cavalry charges.'[61] The repercussions of such imagery cannot be understated. The film, though, explored the process from enlistment to battle, and reviews give important insight into how impactful it must have been. Most telling is, again, the focus on the soldier's physicality: the recruit 'becomes a smart' soldier—'no better pictures could be imagined' than physical drill, vaulting the horse, etc.[62] Moreover, the pictures had a 'distinct educational value'; every Briton was urged to see the film.[63] Even if one did not watch the film, detailed reviews such as *The Era's* would still teach readers about the army process in a flattering light.[64] In the same way that the army knew uniforms could entice men to join up, the makers of the film intentionally produced a piece instructing viewers on that joining process, presenting it as enjoyable and beneficial, to both the individual and the nation. The War Office had supported the film's production with the belief that 'recruiting would be stimulated,' and this was stated on the first page of the accompanying booklet (illustrated with photographs that could be seen by those who did not see the film themselves, a fact also pointed out in the booklet).[65] This process is also given in 'Trooper Tommy Atkins'; so, it can reasonably be inferred that men of all classes were

---

[60] Paul, *Army Life; or, How Soldiers are Made*, p. 2; Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, p. 176; *Army Life; Or, How Soldiers Are Made – Infantry (1900)*, online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-army-life-or-how-soldiers-are-made-infantry-1900-online> [accessed 13 September 2023].

[61] Robert Graves, 'The Kaiser's War: A British Point of View', in *Promise of Greatness: The War of 1914-1918*, ed. by George A. Panichas (New York: The John Day Company, 1968), pp. 3-11 (p. 6).

[62] 'How Soldiers Are Made', *The Era*, 22 September 1900. British Library Newspapers.

[63] *Ibid*.

[64] *Ibid*.

[65] Paul, *Army Life; or, How Soldiers are Made*, p. 2

introduced to militaristic images and values embodying the martial masculinity increasingly encouraged in Englishmen from the 1890s through to 1914. Furthermore, though military-based films did not start with the Boer War, the conflict allowed filmmakers to capitalise on scenes of national pride; therefore, it is possible to suggest that the Boer War allowed for an increase in visual military representations for the wider British public.

The importance of film does not mean music and traditional music halls did not play their part, however. Penny Summerfield critically underlines nineteenth-century music halls as patriotic hotbeds, and they were quick to take advantage of the Boer War to bring the excitement of battle to the civilians of Britain, having already started to focus on private soldiers during the 1890s.[66] During the Boer War, the rank-and-file was particularly celebrated.[67] Quickly, for example, the Canterbury staged Mr. Cayley Calvert's 'thrilling' *Briton against Boer*, presenting 'British pluck and Boer treachery' to eager crowds.[68] This functions in much the same way as the films, bridging the divide between far-off battles and civilians, presenting the military man as enjoying excitement and danger. Many other music hall productions specifically focused on the soldier and his attributes—the allure of Tommy Atkins—giving an even deeper insight into the characteristics found attractive and praiseworthy by the public. 'Private Tommy Atkins' by Henry Hamilton and S. Potter is a good example. The song opens on an inclusive note, with the Tommy in question being taken 'from the city or the plough' and tidied up: 'once […] a uniform he's filling, We call him Tommy Atkins all the same.'[69] That this is at the start of the song highlights, again, the importance of a soldier's visual impression and the effect it had on those who saw him. The lyrics proceed, though, to praise him for fighting 'for his country and his Queen,' 'every inch of him a soldier and a man'; for this, the singer is proud and fond of their Tommy.[70] In an

---

[66] Penny Summerfield, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall entertainment, 1870-1914', in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 17-48 (p. 17); Richard Schellhammer, *How the Boer War Saved the Movies: The Depiction of the Boer War in Early British Cinema* <https://www.academia.edu/156106/How_the_Boer_War_Saved_the_Movies> [accessed 28 April 2023] (p. 2)

[67] Dave Russell, "We carved our way to glory': the British soldier in music hall song and sketch, c. 1880-1914', in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 50-79 (p. 59).

[68] 'Music-Hall Jottings', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 January 1900. British Library Newspapers.

[69] Henry Hamilton and S. Potter, *Private Tommy Atkins* (1893) <http://folksongandmusichall.com/index.php/private-tommy-atkins/> [accessed 13 September 2023].

[70] *Ibid*.

entertaining and popular way, audiences learned the value of military masculinity and the eminence it affords a man—working-class men, too, much like Private Ward. This song even became part of the musical comedy *A Gaiety Girl* in 1893.[71] These themes did not end with the war, either, and with the advent of wax cylinders and gramophones, they could be brought home, too. Soldier-based songs were popular up to 1914 and pressed the same glorious imagery, presenting Tommy Atkins as the man for others to envy. One 1911 tune was very tellingly named *The Girls All Dote On a Military Man*.[72] These songs stuck in the mind just as firmly as images of the war. Vera Brittain even attributed some of her first memories to strains of 'We're Soldiers of the Queen, me lads!', and 'Good-bye, Dolly, I must leave you.'[73] Not all were pleased with the influence of music hall, however. Some believed it to be symptomatic of 'cultural decadence […] polluting British cultural life'; the early 1890s had even seen the establishment of 'a system of moral surveillance' for theatres and music halls, reflecting the unease with which authorities viewed these popular locations.[74] Subsequently, there was an effort to make music hall establishments more respectable, with features such as the 'revue' being developed—allowing for a set piece to be scripted and censored as needed.[75] It is not unreasonable to suggest that music halls increasingly had the potential to propagate hegemonic ideology. It is contradictory, then, that places argued by some to be degenerate were the venues where the new, civilised image of the soldier was being put forward, and popular support was being drummed up for the very heart of hegemonic British masculinity—the brave and dutiful soldier.

---

[71] John Baxter, *Private Tommy Atkins* (2022) <http://folksongandmusichall.com/index.php/private-tommy-atkins/> [accessed 13 September 2023].

[72] A.J. Mills and Bennett Scott, *The Girls All Dote on a Military Man [music] / written by A.J. Mills; composed by Bennett Scott* <https://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn535501> [accessed 13 September 2023].

[73] Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925* (London: Phoenix, 2014), p. 7.

[74] Emma Hanna, *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 2, 43.

[75] Summerfield, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall entertainment, 1870-1914', pp. 21-22)

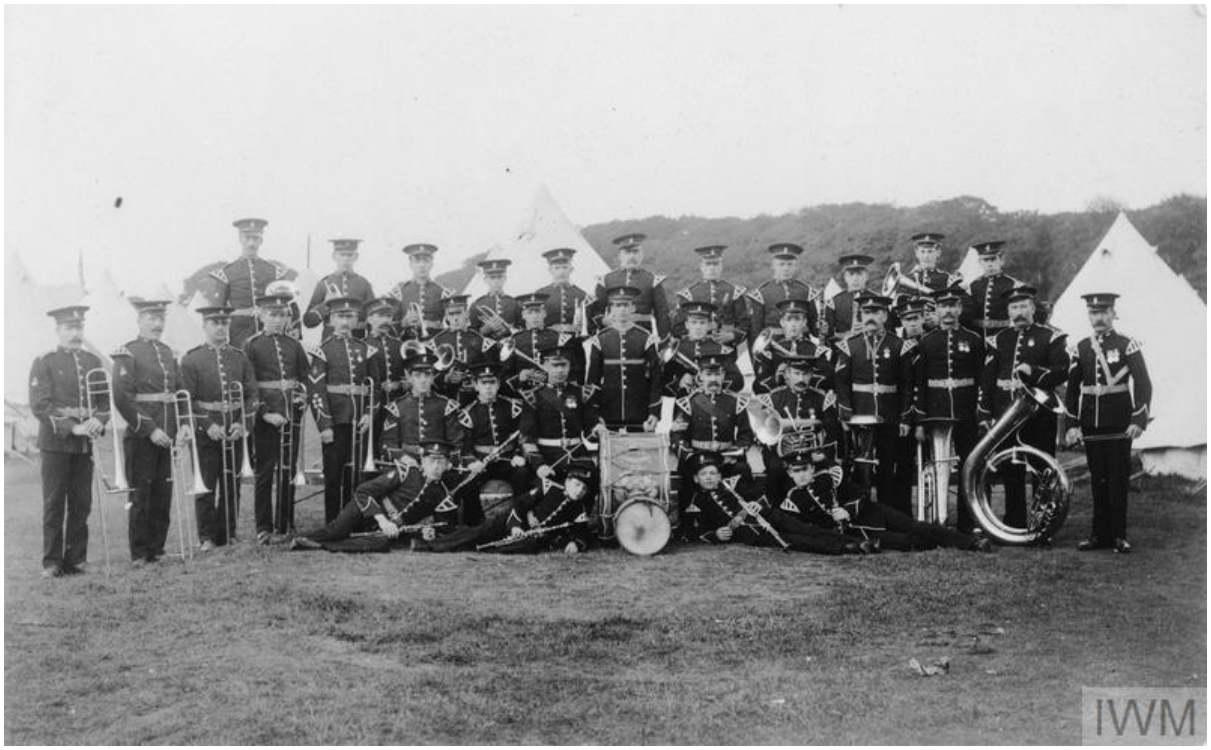


Figure 10: The 1/5th Royal Welsh Fusiliers band at a summer training camp in Camarvon, 1912 © IWM HU 110444

Despite criticism, music hall remained popular—and other military-based musical organisations only helped to fuel the spectacle of the soldier in association with music, allowing him to become a more familiar, domesticated figure. Tying heavily to the notion of spectacle demonstrated by soldiers themselves, for example, the Naval and Military Musical Union (NMMU) was formed, and in October 1909, the Chatham branch was the first to offer a public concert; it was not long before the NMMU enjoyed immense support from the Navy and the Army, and, in May 1914, Royal Patronage.[76] This is significant; by promoting singing within the services, and 'friendly co-operation in music between the army and navy,' a more civilised, unified, and ultimately appealing image of the forces was projected to the public, whilst men serving in all ranks and positions—thereby allowing for cross-class masculine characteristics to be nurtured—were moved away from violence to gentler and more productive forms of rivalry.[77] Popular music revolving around the soldier and his heroism, and performances given by military men themselves were, therefore, incredibly important in forming the public image of soldiers and martial masculinity.

[76] Hanna, *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War*, p. 24.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Figure 11: The Buffs off to manoeuvres, 1909 (from private collection)

The Literary Soldier

As exciting as films, parades, and music halls were, one form of media remained omnipresent throughout the period: the book. Just as Schellhammer has suggested for film, authors took advantage of shifting perceptions to include soldiers and military tales in many ways, though their message was often the same. Each gave instruction on how to be a good soldier—and, by extension, a worthwhile boy or man in British society. Courage, honesty, and kindness were propagated in both fiction and non-fiction texts. The importance of this influx of militaristic texts cannot be understated; Michael Paris rightfully posits that, especially for young people, the 'constant diet of propaganda' revolving around masculine, military duty and the inevitable threat of war helps to explain why the nation so easily slipped into war in 1914.[78]

[78] Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 109.

Military Fiction for Adults

One of the broadest and most fascinating aspects of this area is military-based fiction for adults—of which there was plenty. Some have already been mentioned. 'Trooper Tommy Atkins,' for example, ran for twenty-six weeks, in a cheap and accessible paper, before being followed by another series, 'Tommy Atkins Goes to War.'[79] As previously discussed, 'Trooper Tommy Atkins' followed the life of the soldier through enlistment to active service, a format reflected in films of the era. Memoirs from ex-soldiers bolstered this genre; the public was gaining an understanding of army life like never before.[80] A greater insight into army life—and the gap being bridged between soldiers and civilians—means that martial masculinity became increasingly present and pervasive for the ordinary man. 'Stories of a Military Character […] have become increasingly popular,' wrote the *Leicester Chronicle* in 1896, some years after the 'boom' began.[81] Certain themes became particularly popular, too.

One principally discernible theme interestingly tackles the notion of cowardice. At a time when the strongholds of elite power were collapsing—the Parliament Act of 1911 was only years away—anxieties surrounding the future of the long-established military traditions within these families were apparent in the fiction that arose. This more than coincides with fears surrounding degeneration and national efficiency. Henry James, in 1892, published *Owen Wingrave,* a tragic and supernaturally-tinged story of a young man who, despite his family's longstanding military associations, rejects the army as a career. Whether the tale is read as a criticism of Owen's decision, or of the obsession with maintaining a militaristic reputation, the responses Owen receives border on hostility.[82] Conversely, Owen finds relief in revealing his choice; he goes to read a book in the park, for 'it was characteristic of him that this deliverance should take the form of an intellectual pleasure.'[83] James explicitly sets the manly, military pursuits of an army career in opposition to the intellectual; arguably, he is

---

[79] Edward Gosling, "A Soldier's Life is a Merry One', or, 'A Certain Cure for Gout and Rheumatism': The Shift in Popular Perceptions of the Common Soldier in Late Victorian Britain, 1870-c.1910', in *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century,* ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021), pp. 169-191 (p. 186).
[80] *Ibid*.
[81] 'Fascinating Military Novel', *Leicester Chronicle,* 25 July 1896. British Library Newspapers.
[82] Henry James, *The Wheel of Time; Collaboration; Owen Wingrave* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1893), p. 148.
[83] *Ibid*., p. 153.

calling into question and complicating the rigid, idealised masculine standards, and highlighting the pressure on young men to conform. Owen himself is haunted by his family portraits: 'The very portraits glower at me on the walls.'[84] Read in the context of the wider body of work expressing the anxieties surrounding men in the 1890s—especially in the decade following—the fears and disgust expressed by James' characters may be read as a reaction to the intellectualism, aestheticism, and decadence at the *fin-de-siècle*. Owen's rejection is, additionally, symptomatic of the degeneracy society tried to move away from in the wake of the military failures and anxieties of the Boer War; his decision is disgraceful. The army is something to be adored; Miss Julian states that she '[adores] the army,' and has her heart set on Owen becoming a soldier.[85] Eventually, whilst proving that he is not a coward to Miss Julian—an indication of pressure—Owen is killed, and redeemed: 'he looked like a young soldier on a battle-field.'[86] Aside from the clear indications of what constituted soldierly behaviour—courage and duty—James illustrates how overpowering a field the realm of military masculinity had already become. The final simile—that he was, in death, like a soldier on a battlefield—alludes to this; he fought with a soldier's conviction for his views but was ostracised for it, and died when he was forced to comply. It is a symbolic subversion of expectations. His death re-conferred to him the status of a soldier; he had proven himself with his bravery, and, importantly, he had not died a coward. The realm of martial masculinity, then, was incredibly powerful, and James' work gives insight into its trappings; at a time of upheaval, young men were expected to do their duty and become the military heroes their forefathers had been. With the increased bleeding out of militaristic values in the wake of the Boer War, this is incredibly important to consider.

James was not alone in his depiction of a young man tortured by his unwillingness to follow family tradition; ten years later, A. E. W. Mason published *The Four Feathers*, whose protagonist Harry Feversham rejects military values before working to prove that he is not a coward. In an eerily similar situation, Harry finds himself tormented by the portraits of his successful military ancestors: 'the Fevershams had been soldiers from the very birth of the family.'[87] Moreover, Harry is overwhelmed by the shame that '[a]ll my life I have been afraid that some day I should play the coward.'[88] That this long-standing fear could be presented so

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 220.
[87] A. E. W. Mason, *The Four Feathers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 12.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

reasonably, without melodrama, gives insight into the pressure for a military man to show courage at all costs. When Harry eventually does leave the army, he is given white feathers by three of his fellow officers and his fiancée, Ethne, who calls off their engagement; like Miss Julian, she does not 'understand' Harry's choice.[89] Likewise, his father does not permit him to return home again. Harry becomes reclusive; when he is invited to enter the Army and Navy Club, he hides, so 'no light fell directly on his face.'[90] The imagery here is unmistakable; those who transgressed the code of military manliness were outsiders, overwrought by shame. Harry—though his only wrongdoing was that he left the army (a 'bad thing' which spread 'misery')—resolves to redeem himself, and undertakes daring acts which take him as far as Egypt and Sudan.[91] This is, he believes, the only way he can redeem himself in Ethne's eyes: 'had I fallen […] she would […] have surely known that she and I would see much of one another—afterwards.'[92] Cowardice, it seems, is transferrable beyond death—and, as seen elsewhere, it was better to be dead than to be a coward. The only way for Harry to redeem himself is by reinstating his military virtues: courage, duty, and honesty. Effectively, Mason presents a blueprint for masculine redemption, and, like James, highlights a preoccupation and gives insight into the shame of cowardice, just like newspaper reports and articles. Alongside his poetry, it is worth noting that Kipling wrote along similar lines in short stories such as *Thrown Away*. There, he criticised the 'sheltered life system' certain boys were raised under, which led to the death of a young officer.[93] Sensitive and unable to adapt to life in India, the Boy kills himself; when the protagonist and the Major write to his mother, they lie, saying that he was 'beloved by his regiment,' and died of cholera.[94] As Andrew Griffiths points out, the Boy finds himself unable to live up to a standard of masculinity laid out for him by class and family, and a hypermasculinity defined by stoicism,

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[93] Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1993), p. 14.
[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

cynicism and proportionality.[95] Importantly, however, the fault lies not so much with the Boy but with his sheltered upbringing, offering an alternate form of criticism meant to dissuade parents from preventing boys from developing masculine resilience and selflessness. As well as stressing the necessary qualities so present in work of this period, these stories offer invaluable observations of the pressures of society to conform to them, in pieces written both before and after the Boer War; it is important to note, subsequently, that the novels reflect fears of degeneracy which were, especially for men, closely linked to ideas of militarism and national efficiency.

FRONTISPIECE.

Finally, it would be erroneous to consider late nineteenth-century military fiction without paying attention to the exceptional work of John Strange Winter, the alias of Henrietta Stannard, a woman who—before Kipling had fully made his mark—presented 'the most finished and faithful rendering ever yet given of the character of the British soldier.'[96] There is immense irony in this statement; Stannard's contemporaries were convinced she was a male writer, due to the accuracy and success of her military portrayals. Whereas most women writers were too 'romantic

[95] Andrew Griffiths, 'Masculinity, Madness and Empire in Kipling's 'Thrown Away' and 'The Madness of Private Ortheris'', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 26.4 (2021), 552-567 (p. 560).
[96] John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1908), XXXIV, p. 615.

and sentimental' towards cavalry officers, 'Mr. Winter's authority is the most trustworthy'; '[t]he author […] seems to have been a cavalry officer'; *Cavalry Life* was considered 'a manly, even in a certain sense a noble book.'[97] A woman was not even considered capable of writing this calibre of manliness, yet her work was met with resounding approval by civilians and military men alike. They were the fictionalised ideal of martial masculinity.


"I TELL YOU IT IS A PLANT."

The fact that Stannard was a woman, makes her critical to examine. She was incredibly popular, and *Bootles' Baby* (1885), initially serialised in the *Graphic*, was her best-known work, going on to sell two million book-bound copies.[98] In 1889, a dramatised version was adapted for the stage, which ran for four years—so the importance of her work is twofold.[99] Firstly, it is important as a popular representation of a soldier; secondly, Bootles, as an ideal soldier, was the creation of a female author, giving insight into the expectations of military masculinity beyond the realm of male writers. Stannard aimed for verisimilitude in her work—*Cavalry Life* possessed '*portraits*

[97] The Morning Post, in J. S. Winter, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers*, 6th edn (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co, [n.d.]), p. 120; Scotsman, in J. S. Winter, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers*, 6th edn (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co, [n.d.]), p. 121; 'Literature', *Morning Post*, 12 April 1882. British Library Newspapers (p. 2).

[98] Eleanor Fitzsimons, *John Strange Winter (1856-1911) – What A Remarkable Woman!* (2016) <https://eafitzsimons.wordpress.com/2016/11/10/john-strange-winter-1856-1911-what-a-remarkable-woman/> [accessed 28 April 2023].

[99] *Ibid*.

from life of our British-born sons of Mars,' and her officers were 'real men,' some 'lovable,' 'not the usual military heroes.'[100] And yet, Bootles cannot be seen as anything but ideal. He has no discernible faults. A favourite of the regiment, friends with all but one of his fellow officers, he is handsome, compassionate, and respectful (it is worth noting that this again demonstrates the camaraderie between officers in a natural, realistic way, giving an appealing insight into army life, much like *Modern Man* soon will). When a mysterious baby arrives in his room, he cannot bear to see her sent to the workhouse, so takes her on himself, despite rumours and whispers. Ultimately, both male and female characters adore him: '[…] nobody blamed Bootles very much. It might be because he was so rich and so handsome and pleasant […].'[101] Impressively, adoration of the uniform and body makes its way into this story, much like *The Haunted Dingle* (soon to be discussed). Bootles' figure is 'resplendent […] his gold-laced scarlet jacket and gold embroidered waistcoat of white

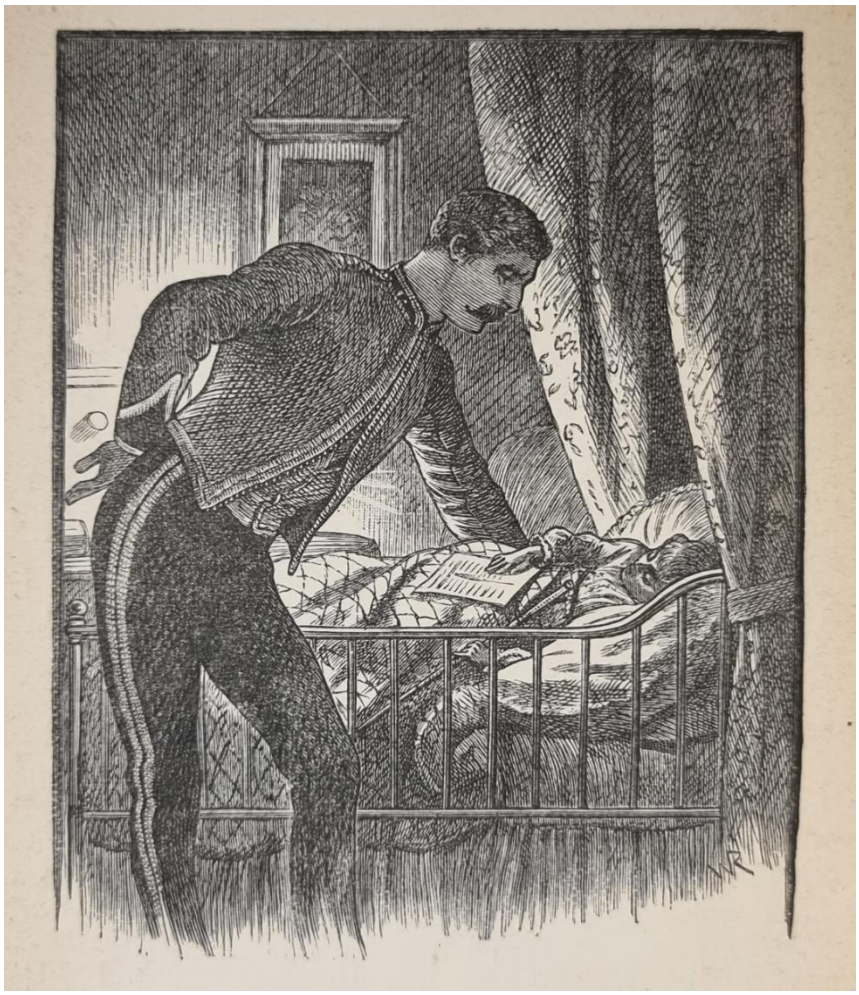
[100] John Strange Winter, *Cavalry Life, Or Sketches and Stories in Barracks and Out* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1884), preface; 'Literature', *Morning Post*, 12 April 1882. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[101] John Strange Winter, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers* (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co., 1891), p. 52.

velvet, his gold-laced overalls and jingling spurs […].'[102] Baby Mignon finds great amusement in touching the 'gold embroidery on his waistcoat,' and eventually makes off with his watch chain as a toy.[103] In addition, Bootles himself is aureate: 'blue eyes, golden hair, fair complexion.'[104] The language regarding his appearance is highly romanticised; he is a golden officer, resplendent (Stannard uses this adjective several times), perfect in appearance and personality. Alongside the novel's plentiful illustrations, emphasising the sumptuous descriptions, the reader is guided to imagine Bootles as the compassionate, handsome officer. Thus, there is moral instruction to be taken; Bootles is a blueprint for all that is good, and is introduced to the reader as such: a good sport, a good man, a good soldier. Whether Stannard intended this, when placed within the wider body of work extolling soldierly virtues and martial ideals, Bootles fits them all. Over two million readers were moved by his story; 'nearly everybody, young and old, […] laughed or cried' over it.[105] It is reasonable, therefore, to count Stannard's work among the barrage—however pleasant and enjoyable—of media that was stressing a particular kind of military-based masculinity, which evidently affected how women wrote and perceived their soldiers, too.

"OH, PLEASE DON'T, MRS. GREY."

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[105] 'The Author of "Bootles' Baby."', *Newcastle Courant (1803)*, 25 February 1893. British Library Newspapers.



Figures 12-17: Illustrations by W. Ralston for John Strange Winter, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers* (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co., 1891)

Poetry

Alongside fiction, poetry is incredibly important to consider. The written fiction covered previously has predominantly focused on the middle and upper classes, but, along with film and music hall, poetry tended to be centred around—and even written by—working-class soldiers. The most famous of these were those by Rudyard Kipling, and the impact they had on the British public cannot be understated. 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' did much for soldiers and their families during the Boer War, with countless souvenirs sold and Kipling even lifting the work's copyright.[106] It gives excellent insight into the perception of the ordinary British soldier and volunteer at the time, calling on the public to give support to soldiers' dependents instead of shallow displays of patriotism. It is also worth noting that, to Kipling, soldiers were representative of 'fully achieved masculinity'; before 1900, Kipling focused heavily on ordinary soldiers and their 'strong, active masculinity,' underlining their existence as the ideal and the cross-class potential for masculine perfection.[107] 'Tommy' is portrayed as dutiful and dependable: 'his reg'ment didn't need to send to find him.'[108] Accompanied by an illustration of 'A Gentleman in Khaki,' the ordinary soldier is a perfect vessel for protecting British interests.[109] Underlying the endurance and popularity of the poem and its values, Graves specifically quoted three lines to recall the atmosphere at the beginning of the Great War:

> Duke's son, cook's son, son of a hundred kings:
> Fifty-thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay—
> Each of them doing their country's work.[110]

---

[106] David Gilmour, *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), p. 143.
[107] Howard J. Booth, 'Kipling, 'beastliness' and Soldatenliebe', in *In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling*, ed. by Jan Montefiore (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 225-249 (pp. 226, 232).
[108] Rudyard Kipling, *The Absent-Minded Beggar* (England and the United States: Daily Mail Publishing Co., 1899), para 3 of 4, l. 6.
[109] John McGivering and John Radcliffe, *The Absent-Minded Beggar* (2009) <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/readers-guide/rg_absentminded1.htm> [accessed 10 September 2023] (para. 1).
[110] Rudyard Kipling, in Robert Graves, 'The Kaiser's War: A British Point of View', in *Promise of Greatness: The War of 1914-1918*, ed. by George A. Panichas (New York: The John Day Company, 1968), pp. 3-11 (p. 5).

With the accompaniment of the illustration of a worn-out but defiant soldier, there is the enduring sense that the dutiful British soldier, from every corner of the nation, can defy all odds—a theme common in work at this time, especially in boys' literature. Military men could overcome impossible obstacles. This defiant depiction can also be seen in Kipling's short stories, such as *The Comprehension of Private Copper*.[111] Notably, 'The Absent-Minded Beggar's' lines were concurrently taken up in the music hall, again underlining its significance; whilst attempting to unite different sections of society through the image of an ideal Tommy, Kipling advocated that 'their country's work' was, as Summerfield posits, 'uncritical participation in a coercive imperial policy.'[112] The song was quickly taken up by the public. In January 1900, the audience at the Alhambra joined in the chorus, followed by cheers, for the non-commissioned officers of the 17th Lancers there that night. This was followed by a sergeant-major standing and singing, 'with splendid vigour,' *The Soldiers of the Queen*.[113] This suggests soldiers themselves, as well as the public, found resonance in Kipling's words; they were approving of their message, and, with the image of the dependable Tommy in mind, were keen to show their support. A fact already reflected by the glorification of Private Ward, for example, ordinary soldiers—working-class men—could be lauded as magnificent heroes.

[111] Rudyard Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. by Andrew Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 183-193.
[112] Summerfield, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall entertainment, 1870-1914', p. 37.
[113] 'Music-Hall Jottings', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 January 1900. British Library Newspapers.

Figure 18: Saucer, 'The Absent-minded Beggar', 1900 (c) NAM. 1996-08-298-5 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1996-08-298-5

The values hinted at in 'The Absent-Minded Beggar,' however, found a more explicit place in 'If—', published in 1910 and inspired by Leander Starr Jameson, who led the failed Jameson Raid in 1895 but was seen as a British hero.[114] 'If—', which instructs a man on how to conduct himself, draws clearly on military values and remains popular to this day; in 1995, it was even voted the 'clear and unassailable winner' for the nation's favourite poem.[115] In the poem, Kipling touts the value of stoicism. 'Triumph and Disaster' are 'two imposters just the same':

> If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
> To serve your turn long after they are gone,
> And so hold on when there is nothing in you
> Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
> […]
> If you can fill the unforgiving minute
> With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
> Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
> And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son![116]

The influence of military ideology here is clear and can be seen reflected in the reactions to cowardice in *Owen Wingrave* and *The Four Feathers*; even after a man's nerve is gone, he is supposed to possess the sheer willpower to 'hold on.' To be a *'Man*', emphatically capitalised, is the ultimate aim; it is an uphill battle, and while Kipling does not suggest manliness is biological, it is something all men are capable of—with work, they ought to achieve it. Kipling's focus on this notion is perhaps not surprising, considering the 'cult of manliness' he subscribed to, which is also visible in his aforementioned short stories.[117] Similar advice was published in *The Boy's Own Paper*, which will be discussed shortly—but the fact only emphasises the wide-ranging pressure on men to hold fast to those values; that this was published at a time of national and international worry is no small coincidence

---

[114] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 200.
[115] Griff Rhys Jones, 'Foreword', in *The Nation's Favourite Poems* (London: BBC Worldwide Limited, 1998), pp. 5-7 (p. 5).
[116] Rudyard Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1910), pp. 175-176 (p. 176), ll. 21-32.
[117] Jan Montefiore, 'Introduction', in *In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling*, ed. by Jan Montefiore (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 1-21 (p. 7).

(recall the article, from 1908, comparing English men unfavourably to Germans). Kipling was not the only poet at the time espousing the virtues of martial masculinity; another incredibly famous poem, 'Vitaï Lampada,' was written in 1892 by Henry Newbolt, and invoked the Battle of Abu Klea to encourage the steadfastness of the British man and soldier.[118] Drawing on the well-known imagery of the public school playing fields, Newbolt equates the battlefield with the cricket pitch; the morals and values that maintained schoolboys would also serve them in wartime, lending to their indefatigable spirit:

> The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
> And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
> The river of death has brimmed his banks,
> And England's far, and Honour a name,
> But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
> 'Play up! play up! and play the game!'[119]

No Englishman was to forget these lines; an English soldier would defy all odds to carry on.

Poetry was not solely a game for upper-class writers, however. Corporal Harold Hanham caused a stir with his lines, and the *Daily Mail* eventually invited him to compose verses, printing his portrait beside them. An 'ambitious soldier' with 'exemplary conduct,' one poem by Hanham was addressed to Kipling himself, and he reaffirms the qualities stressed in his famous lines: 'when duty calls [Tommy] knows the right reply.'[120] He criticises Kipling for thinking that soldiers neglected 'the higher mind that helps to make the man,' but ultimately states that Tommies consider him 'the soldier's laureate and the soldier's friend.'[121] This lends further strength to the power of Kipling's influence, whilst demonstrating the way an ordinary soldier saw himself, or wanted to be presented—as intelligent, likeable, and dutiful. A later poem by Hanham (dubbed 'The Soldier Poet') is an explicit call for Britons to be brave and united: 'be not by the alien taunted, / Hand to hand fight / For your country's cause

---

[118] Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence: Britain 1880 to 1914* (London: Windmill Books, 2018), p. 492.
[119] Sir Henry Newbolt, *Poems: New and Old* (London: John Murray, 1912), pp. 78-79 (p. 78), ll. 11-16.
[120] Corporal Harold Hanham, 'Sword and Pen', *Daily Mail*, 13 January 1899. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 7).
[121] *Ibid*.

undaunted.'[122] This, coupled with the fact that it was published in the *Daily Mail*, gives an important (and typically much harder to measure) indication that lower-class men found truth and agreement in the popular beliefs commonly spread by the upper classes; ordinary Tommies believed in the importance of duty and stoicism just as much as their wealthier counterparts. This was, therefore, a phenomenon affecting all corners of society. The poetry arising from this period gives a huge and rare insight into the creation and interpretation of martial masculinities—popular masculinities—from the officers down to the regular ranker.

Representations of the Army for Children

Figure 19: A contemporary American postcard (from private collection)

Whilst military fiction for adults was popular, in the years preceding the Great War—when the military ideology of British men became of the utmost importance—it is especially necessary to examine the depictions of soldiering for children. It was at this time—from the late nineteenth century onwards—that children's authors seemed to collectively shift towards

[122] Corporal Harold Hanham, 'From "The Soldier Poet."', *Daily Mail*, 7 April 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 7).

depictions of war and soldiers which were glamorous, heroic, and appealing.[123] The 1890s in particular, linking to the adult genre of invasion literature, joined themes of what Paris dubs 'the great war of the future' with the classic fare of juvenile literature.[124] One of the most prolific authors to hone this genre was Henty, whose work is so significant to the formation of masculine identity that Paris argues he was likely the most influential writer in allowing war to be an 'acceptable literary subject'; for him, the warrior was—critically for this study—the masculine ideal, and it was through battle that boys became men.[125] His works spanned wars across centuries of history, but several characteristically took place within the Boer War. Wars were no longer confined to history or far-flung shores; for the first time, the war and its soldiers could be brought home on film and in photographs (often as sterilised as their literary companions)—and boys reading these stories did so knowing that those same battles were happening contemporaneously, which is critical to the formation of masculine identity. *With Buller in Natal*, for example, was published in 1901; *With Roberts to Pretoria* (note the repeated focus on heroic figures of the war) appeared by September of the same year. These stories he intentionally made relatable to the boys reading them, allowing them to imagine themselves into the narrative of the war. In *With Buller in Natal*, he writes that 'it is the heroes of my tale, the little band of lads from Johannesburg, rather than the leaders of the British troops, who are the most conspicuous characters.'[126] The preface to *With Roberts to Pretoria* even features a run-down of the 'three parts' of the war, giving boys a factual understanding of the events—and the 'extraordinary endurance' of British soldiers.[127]

Along with endurance, these stories stress the pluck and resourcefulness of their young heroes. Yorke, in *With Roberts to Pretoria*, is praised by the Major for intuitively '[fighting his] way' instead of idly waiting at home: 'Your expedition to Fauresmith shows that you have plenty of intelligence as well as pluck […].'[128] He is applauded for having learnt Dutch 'instead of contenting himself with sporting and amusement, as too many young fellows'

---

[123] Dorothea Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 66 (2007), in OpenEdition Journals <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.10404> [accessed 15 October 2022] (para. 5 of 33).
[124] Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*, p. 87.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[126] G. A. Henty, *With Buller in Natal, or, A Born Leader* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, 1901), preface.
[127] G. A. Henty, *With Roberts to Pretoria: A Tale of the South African War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901).
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

do.[129] He has 'plenty of pluck and decision'; 'at a younger age than most men,' Yorke had already distinguished himself highly.[130] As entertaining as Yorke's story is, the instruction to boys is only thinly veiled, especially considering contemporary anxieties; Henty is giving boys a roadmap to be useful, intelligent, and brave—in a word, soldierly. As Gail Clark points out, without the moral complexity of writers such as Kipling, Henty's heroes' success depended entirely on their 'ability to act'; Henty therefore 'exhorted his readers to act,' for this would preserve their empire and maintain British masculine superiority.[131] Explicitly, all of Henty's work carries the same didactic purpose, and Henty himself even claimed that 'very many boys [had] joined the cadets and afterwards gone into the army through reading my stories.'[132] And yet, children's authors offered a sanitised view of modern warfare; the horrors are simply 'glossed over'—they are negligible compared to the glory of each story's hero.[133] Pertinent to the approaching Great War, Paris further supports this suggestion, arguing that Henty romanticised war, inculcating a desire to defend the empire; it was through war that young men could demonstrate his masculinity and achieve success.[134] All the more beneficial in presenting the soldier's lifestyle as exciting. It is impossible to ignore, then, that these stories inculcated militaristic values at a time when militarism was increasingly all-encompassing within British society; more widely, Henty's words imply a fundamental level of influence such stories had on boys at this time.

---

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[130] *Ibid.*
[131] Gail S. Clark, 'Imperial Stereotypes: G. A. Henty and the Boys' Own Empire', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 18.4 (1985), 43-51 (p. 50).
[132] G. A. Henty, in Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', para. 2 of 33.
[133] Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', para. 17 of 33.
[134] Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 62.

Figure 20: Soldiers (c.1907), shared by pellethepoet, available at https://flic.kr/p/9BUznK (CC BY 2.0)

Authors such as John Finnemore and Hayens Herbert also utilised the Boer War as a setting for popular adventure stories aimed at boys, utilising similar rhetoric to present a further selection of young protagonists, such as Dan in *Two Boys in War Time*, who possesses exceptional prowess and soldier-like zeal (one of his exploits, for example, involves stubbornly carrying a wounded corporal in spite of smoke and bullets).[135] When a ruthless group of Boers take down a Union Jack, Dan is 'urged by the impulse which thrilled every fibre or [sic] his dauntless young English heart' to leap forward and seize it, despite the danger surrounding him.[136] The language used here is as explicit and telling as Henty's use of 'pluck'; Finnemore suggests a sort of biological instinct arising from his English boyhood, an instinct that is spirited and fearless in the face of invasion (biological Britishness and masculinity will become critical in chapter two). Furthermore, it cannot be stressed enough that these stories—and their messages—did not exist in an isolated vacuum. They were widely read, across society, and were significant for a generation's formative years. Even girls' publications were complicit in the propagation of this ideology. Notably, female characters in adult fiction—such as Ethne and Miss Julian—were depicted as motivators for

[135] John Finnemore, *Two Boys in War-time* (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1900), p. 49.
[136] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

cowardly men to redeem themselves and display their rightful, British bravery. Young girls were faced with the same rhetoric. *The Haunted Dingle* demonstrates this. The arrival of Captain Darley is fairytale-like. As ever, he had the 'bearing' of a 'brave soldier': 'he looked "every inch a man."'[137] Again, soldiers are defined by their looks and 'bearing,' a fact important to the ideal soldier-hero, and now stressed to young girls.

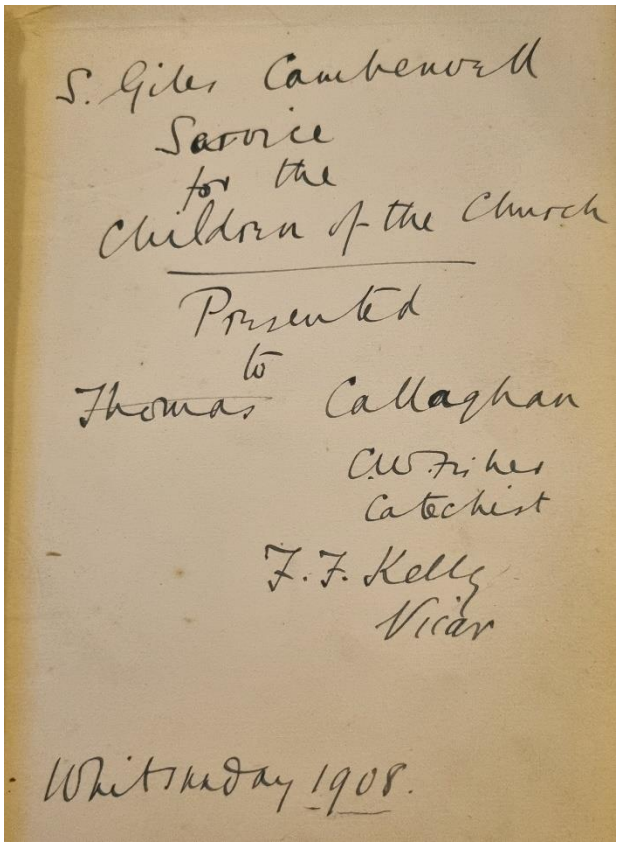
Without challenging them, the writer seems to be self-aware of common tropes surrounding soldiers in fiction; as a soldier, Dorothy 'invested in him with all the qualities of a hero of romance.'[138] The story serves to influence girls' imaginations just as Henty attempts to influence boys'; as with other depictions, illustrations help the reader to envision such a soldier. However, disaster strikes when Captain Darley shies away from travelling through the supposedly haunted dingle. In Dorothy's eyes, the poor Captain is stripped of his manhood.[139] It is only when he proves his bravery by visiting the dingle with Dorothy at night that she deems him worthy of her love once more. This is, essentially, a condensed narrative of *The Four Feathers*; a coward was not worthy of being loved. Cowardice is taught to be of huge importance to women; the extraordinary circumstances proffered in fiction emphasise this point. Dorothy is hugely concerned with the manliness of her potential husband; as previously mentioned, though the Boer War had not yet shaken British belief in their army, fears were already heightened throughout the 1890s surrounding the degenerate, sedentary man, especially in the wake of Oscar Wilde's 1895 trials. Like Miss Julian, Dorothy all but forces Captain Darley to confront his supernatural fears; thankfully, this does not result in his death like Owen Wingrave, but it similarly highlights the lofty expectations of masculine bravery. Just like the indomitable heroes of Kipling, Newbolt, and Henty flavour, young readers—including girls—were given romanticised tales of extraordinary feats, encouraging boys to suppress any signs of cowardice, and girls to enforce this view.

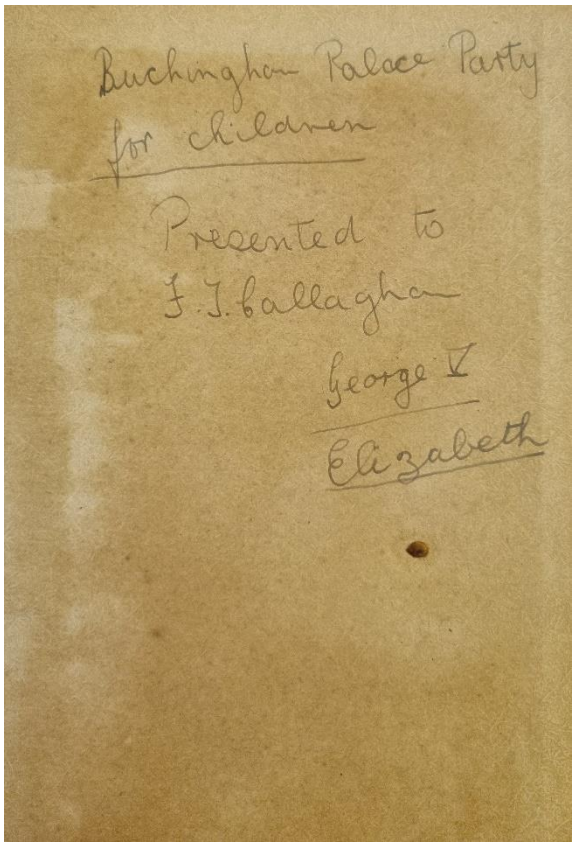
Compellingly, the tangible history of these books gives an insight into the value placed upon them; the popularity and longevity of these stories and messages can be attested to by the physical state of any such novel. Not only were print runs often extensive, but individual copies would be coveted and passed between family members. One copy of Herbert's *Scouting for Buller* is particularly noteworthy. Given in 1908 as a prize to Thomas Callaghan

---

[137] Eglanton Thorne, 'The Haunted Dingle. A Ghost Story', *Young Woman*, 7 July 1899. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[138] *Ibid*.
[139] *Ibid*.

by F. F. Kelly, vicar, the physical history of the book raises several important points. These books have colourful covers, often tinted gold, and are full of illustrations; in the case of this book, picture plates depicting scenes of war in full, vivid colour irresistibly draw the eye. As such, it is possible to suggest that they may not have been attainable for the poorest members of society; however, by being gifted as a prize—by a church, no less—it not only suggests such novels were seen as worthy of being given as prizes, but also that members of society who may not have been able to purchase such a book themselves would still have access to





Figures 21-22: Inscriptions at the front of *Scouting for Buller* (from private collection)

the work, even outside of libraries. According to the 1901 Census, one Thomas Callaghan was born in Camberwell in 1897; his father, Edward, was a scaffolder, and two older brothers, aged 12 and 14, already worked as hairdresser's lather boys.[140] Evidently, this was not a wealthy family, and yet Thomas acquired a copy of Herbert's work, and looked after it well enough that it was passed on in 1947, presumably to his son. It is not unreasonable to ponder whether Thomas' brothers may have borrowed the book, too. Thus, though much of the fiction produced was aimed at middle- and upper-class audiences—even *The Boy's Own*

[140] London, The National Archives, Class: RG13; Piece: 494; Folio: 23; Page: 32. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryui-content/view/3709127:7814> [accessed 13 September 2023].

Paper, to which Henty was a contributor, was not inclined towards the working classes—it was not entirely out of bounds. Working class boys had greater access to boys' papers and stories than ever before, facilitated by rising literacy, and cheaper prices—especially from Alfred Harmsworth, creator of the *Half-Penny Marvel*, the *Union Jack*, and, most fittingly named, *Pluck*.[141] Though Dorothea Flothow points out that it is difficult to gauge the specific influence of childhood literature, writers such as Paris and Roberts make compelling arguments to suggest that it did sway the young male population towards a militaristic outlook in the years leading up to the Great War; the 'pleasure culture of war,' Paris posits, was blatantly clear in 1914.[142]

It is not through fiction alone, however, that boys of this period were introduced to military values and traits. Cheap and easily accessible comics and story papers richly illustrated the 'visual excitement of war.'[143] The early twentieth century saw huge growth in this comic and story-paper industry, and the Boer War again took centre stage; intertwining fiction with and real-life heroism like Henty, the papers utilised ongoing 'patriotic fervour' to bring the excitement of war to children.[144] The well-known *Boy's Own Paper* (which possessed a circulation of over one million by the mid-1880s) similarly intermixed advice and factual episodes amidst its fictional offerings for memorable effect.[145] Founded to oppose the penny dreadfuls, the *BOP* was a vessel of imperialistic, manly virtue, with its heroes acting as agents of the 'correct' social order and ideologies for young men; contemporary critics praised them enthusiastically as patriotically masculine, tying to ideal notions of duty and selflessness.[146] To that end, one remarkable feature focuses on the tragedy of HMS *Birkenhead*, which sank off the coast of South Africa in 1852. Significantly, her passengers—soldiers—remained with the ship, giving up the few lifeboats for the women and children aboard. As Byron Farwell describes, 'no finer example could be found of the cool bravery,

---

[141] Rebecca Knuth, *Children's Literature and British Identity: Imagining a People and a Nation* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), p. 65.
[142] Flothow, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', para. 2 of 33; Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 9.
[143] Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*, p. 10.
[144] Adam Riches, Tim Parker, and Robert Frankland, *When the Comics Went to War* (Great Britain: Mainstream Publishing, 2009), p. 9.
[145] Patrick A. Dunae, 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 24.1 (1980), 105-121 (p. 108).
[146] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

chivalry and discipline of the Victorian army.'[147] It is no negligible occurrence, then, that this disaster was commemorated, with artwork, for boys half a century later. The paper insists that 'every English-speaking boy' ought to know the story, of how the soldiers formed up on deck, and even 'cheered the boats that bore away the women and children,' whilst they sank into 'the shark-crowded sea.'[148] The pathos and triumph this image depicts are plentiful, and the article goes on to quote from Sir Francis Hastings Doyle's equally-romanticised poem, where 'no murmur [rose] from the ranks' regarding dishonourable behaviour.[149] The soldiers on the *Birkenhead* are the pinnacle of masculinity; the boys are presented with an image of solemn, dutiful men going to their deaths, in 'shark-crowded' waters, without so much as a murmur of complaint. This is reminiscent of Kipling's stoic 'If—,' and Newbolt's 'Vitaï

Figure 23: 'The sinking of the "Birkenhead" February 25 1852 A Story That Will Never Die', 1899 (c) Photochromolithograph from the painting by Lance Calkin, 1899 (c). NAM. 1999-04-126-1 © National Army Museum, Out of Copyright; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1999-04-126-1

Lampada.' Such notions of cowardice and honourable death for one's country will be critical when considering the sinking of the *Titanic* in chapter three—and has become crucial within

[147] Byron Farwell, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), p. 243.

[148] 'The Loss of the "Birkenhead"', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 282 (p. 282).

[149] Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, 'The Loss of the Birkenhead', in 'The Loss of the "Birkenhead"', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 282 (p. 282), l. 25.

the understanding of men's behaviour during the Great War, both at the time and in more recent scholarship.

Figure 24: The Wreck of the 'Birkenhead' by Thomas Marie Madawaska Hemy (1852–1937), Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, BIKGM:1020; available at https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-wreck-of-the-birkenhead-68430; the large painting is now lost, this being a smaller version.

To add further veracity to the story, *The Boy's Own Paper*, included a full-colour reproduction of Thomas Hemy's painting, a romanticised representation of soldiers bravely going to their deaths. Whether it is accurate is of little consequence; what matters is that the

paper presents this story, and its glorious, visual depiction, as fact. It clearly holds 'this simple story of splendid heroism and devotion to duty' as a yardstick for boys to measure their behaviour against, that all boys should know.[150] If boys were to be faced with a similar situation—the threat of which was growing—this was how they were to respond. A competition was even established for readers to create verses 'in memory of the brave dead and their gallant deed', or a 'graphic prose description' of the story; boys and young men were actively encouraged to ruminate on disaster, focusing on the romanticised image of those British soldiers standing firm to the end.[151] It is worth mentioning here that Kipling also praised the stoic glory of the *Birkenhead* disaster, similarly presenting their behaviour as ideal: the *Birkenhead* drill 'is a damn tough bullet to chew, An' they done it […] soldier an' sailor too!'[152]

In conjunction with other features in *The Boy's Own Paper*, the instructive purpose of these pieces becomes increasingly clear. One author wrote pieces dedicated to 'Friendship,' 'Duty,' and 'Manliness.' In both 'Friendship' and 'Manliness', he draws on military examples; the former recalls a 'gallant sergeant' who takes care of a wounded private for 'three days and two nights', and despite being injured, drags the 'half-dead young soldier' to safety.[153] After further discussion surrounding friendship between boys, the author abruptly ends by stating that 'England's future rests with you boys of to-day. […] See that you do your duty. Be manly and strong in your friendship […].'[154] This would not be out of place in something written by Henty himself; more broadly, all these popular boy's fiction authors expressed the same fundamental themes of duty, heroism, bravery, and sacrifice. Compare this with adult fiction; there is a heavier focus on established soldiers, or instances of cowardice that must be rectified, whereas boy's literature is centred on stories of young men with a didactic undertone, suggesting children's authors saw their audience as a blank slate. Comics and story-papers were no exception; inspired by the same concept of patriotic duty, they acted as recruitment tools for young male readers, much like films such as *Army Life*.[155] Considering contemporary anxieties, this makes sense—especially as militarism for children increasingly

---

[150] 'The Loss of the "Birkenhead"', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 282 (p. 282).
[151] 'X.—Literary Competition.', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 287 (p. 287).
[152] Rudyard Kipling, *The Seven Seas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898), pp. 152-155 (p. 154), ll. 30-31.
[153] 'Friendship', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 25 (1902-03), 94 (p. 94).
[154] *Ibid*.
[155] Adam Riches, Tim Parker, and Robert Frankland, *When the Comics Went to War* (Great Britain: Mainstream Publishing, 2009), p. 9.

became an everyday reality through the creation of groups such as the Boy Scouts. By 1914, Britain's youth had been preparing for war for two decades; as Paris points out, after so much militaristic literature, the outbreak of war for young people was 'an end to uncertainty,' and a chance for the 'great adventure' to become true.[156]

Militarism in School Magazines and the Officer Training Corps

It is also worth mentioning the presence of militarism in school papers. A good example comes from the coverage of the Officer Training Corps, a network of divisions dedicated to training boys in public schools and universities, established in 1908 as part of the Haldane Reforms. *The Cantuarian* of The King's School, Canterbury, provides an interesting account of this time. Following the establishment of the OTC, the boys' 'duty is quite clear': 'Our aim is to do active and intelligent work […] Our privilege is to show an example worthy of our great traditions.'[157] Major H. Isacke made an additional speech, and the magazine recommended his words 'heartily.'[158] Isacke stressed the boys' place and 'responsibilities' in maintaining the 'greatest Empire,' and stated that the present, lacking state of Britain 'was a standing menace to [peace],' a suggestion relevant to people's fears following the failures of the Boer War, and heightened tensions with Germany, and reminiscent of invasion literature.[159] Isacke believed that 'a national army must be the greatest guarantee of peace, seeing that all classes are interested', and the Territorial Army (also formally established in 1908) would aid this.[160] Every British boy ought to 'fit himself to defend our position.'[161] Curiously, Isacke lays stress on the 'scientific' progression of war, emphasising the need to train the nation as a result; unexpectedly, in light of 'lions led by donkeys' view of the Great War, the upcoming generation of officers were taking a pragmatic view of modern warfare, going against the common misconception that junior officers were clueless—supporting John

---

[156] Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*, p. 109.
[157] C. W. B., 'Officers Training Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, 7.14 (1909), 346-347 (p. 347).
[158] *Ibid*.
[159] Major H. Isacke, in 'The following is the Address of Major H. Isacke referred to in the article on the Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, 7.14 (1909), 347-350 (pp. 347-348).
[160] 'The following is the Address of Major H. Isacke referred to in the article on the Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, 7.14 (1909), 347-350 (p.348).
[161] Major H. Isacke, in 'The following is the Address of Major H. Isacke referred to in the article on the Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, 7.14 (1909), 347-350 (p. 348).

Lewis-Stempel's more recent arguments to that tune.[162] It is also pertinent considering the belief that the Boer War was the last of the gentleman's wars. This is but a sliver of what is written in *The Cantuarian*, but it serves to demonstrate the pressure put on boys to maintain British security and stability; they already were being schooled in the ideologies that would make them military men. Just as children's authors did, the OTC and its coverage introduced boys to martial masculinity and its values: bravery, intelligence, and pluck.

The Marlburian offers a deeper insight into boyhood militarism. Marlborough provides a particularly pertinent case, having possessed a Rifle Corps since at least 1860.[163] During the Boer War, the school was heavily involved with events; in February 1901, for example, Lieutenant Kirk—a formal pupil and captain of the Shooting VIII. —gave a lecture on his experiences in South Africa. He was 'received with enthusiasm,' and did not fail to conclude that his school volunteering had been of 'enormous importance and help' to him in the army.[164] The following month, the operations of the 'Minor Field Day' were reported vividly enough that it could be compared to a real battle.[165] The April 1908 issue of *The Marlburian* provided a detailed run-down of what the new OTC entailed, stressing that their 'position will be very much improved': 'every cadet who wishes to do something for his country can feel that he will have facilities for making himself capable of serving as a useful officer […].'[166] Here, again, is the rhetoric of usefulness.

The scheme must have been successful. In October 1909, the magazine reported that during summer, the 'old camp at Aldershot had grown too large'; resultantly, 'three local public school camps were arranged.'[167] It was highly enjoyable; they even boasted a V.C. winner as a Brigadier.[168] The glories of army life must have seemed as exciting as those depicted in military-based novels. Adults experienced similar reports; military-focused publications remained fervent after the war, and one noteworthy publication is *Modern Man*, established

---

[162] John Lewis-Stempel, *Six Weeks: The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War* (London: Orion, 2011), pp. 6-10.
[163] Marlborough College, *Outdoor Learning* <https://www.marlboroughcollege.org/co-curricular/outdoor-learning/> [accessed 28 April 2023].
[164] 'R.V.C. Lecture by Lieut. J. W. C. Kirk, O.M.', *The Marlburian*, 27 February 1901, pp. 13-14.
[165] 'The Minor Field Day', *The Marlburian*, 20 March 1901, pp. 38-39.
[166] 'Rifle Corps.', *The Marlburian*, 2 April 1908, p. 52.
[167] 'O.T.C. Camp.', *The Marlburian*, 5 October 1909, p. 137.
[168] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

in 1908.[169] Aimed at a middle-class audience, the magazine published many articles involving army life, working—in the same way as 'Trooper Tommy Atkins'—to demystify soldiering. It made no secret of its beliefs, and encapsulates the premise of this chapter effectively: 'this paper has at all times been an ardent supporter of the Army […] the average soldier is in every sense a man and a gentleman […].'[170] One feature of note is a Christmas special, providing insight into Christmas at various establishments, the first of which is, most prominently, the army. Alongside illustrations, the men are happy, grinning at the table laden with treats; officers visit each room, and songs are sung; a veteran tells a story about a 'glorious scrap.'[171] The next day, regimental sports work off any lingering headaches.[172] The camaraderie and enjoyment of the festivities are wholesome and all-encompassing; again, the military lifestyle is incredibly appealing.

Returning to the same issue of *The Marlburian*, the magazine significantly includes a fictional dialogue between two brothers. Little Arthur questions why they were sought after as officers when they were only boys; 18-year-old Fred informs him, reminiscent of Isacke's speech, that the nation needed officers to be prepared. Most importantly, Arthur relays the words of his teacher to Fred: his form-master argued that they 'all ought to join, in case of a German invasion,' and 'anyone who didn't join the Corps was a parasite […].'[173] This a particularly harsh example of language to use against young boys, but it exemplifies the attitude towards the necessity of military masculinity—especially as fears of German invasion increased—excellently, and recalls the fiction of Finnemore and Wodehouse. With the threat of invasion, then, nurtured by invasion-scare stories, masculine duty became entangled with the notion of national defence, further facilitated by institutions such as the National Service League. It was not a rare demonstration of militaristic fervour, especially among public school circles. Vera Brittain attended Uppingham's Speech Day in 1914 and never forgot the Headmaster's final words: 'If a man cannot be useful to his country, he is

---

[169] Though I am unable to find specific readership figures, the magazine was evidently popular by the number of readers across the country regularly writing in, especially in the 'Physical Culture Answers' column.

[170] Godfrey Burwood, 'Another Oscar Wilde Case. A Sensational Exposure', *Modern Man*, 11 December 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[171] H. Gray-Reid, 'In the Army', *Modern Man*, 19 December 1908. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[172] *Ibid*.

[173] 'Little Arthur's Guide to Knowledge', *The Marlburian*, 5 October 1909, p. 139.

better dead.'[174] The pressure to maintain a courageous, manly disposition was constant, and undoubtedly had an effect. When war broke out in 1914, Charles Carrington observed his volunteering contemporaries as all being 'of one mind,' excluding some 'persistent individualists.'[175] By March 1915, it was estimated that the OTC had provided 20,577 officers, and a further 12,290 cadets served in the ranks.[176] The motivations—and pressures—behind these boys' decisions are, therefore, impossible to neglect; as reflected by Douglas Gillespie, who felt he 'must go in' if the country went in, the rhetoric of duty and stoic dedication to one's country before the self, touted by everyone from Kipling to *The Cantuarian*, was irrepressible and became all the more pronounced in the wake of the Boer War.[177]

Non-Fiction Publications

However blatant some authors could be in their fictional portrayals of ideal military heroes, non-fiction publications made no pretence in their efforts to guide British men through the worries of degeneration and effeminacy. When the Boer War had erupted, nowhere were audiences confronted with the conflict more inescapably than in newspapers and magazines. Siegfried Sassoon remembered that, when the war broke out, 'everybody began to read the newspapers with grave and anxious faces.'[178] Readers embraced the coverage, in the same way they craved military fiction. The war increased newspaper circulation substantially—an important fact to consider when examining the rhetoric and ideologies pushed by the press.[179] Amidst uncertainty surrounding Boer ethics and cultural identity (the British press often cast them as brutal savages), extensive attention was paid towards the physique of the Boers in comparison to modern, sedentary Britons—foreshadowing the comparisons made between

---

[174] Brittain, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925*, p. 67.
[175] Charles Carrington, *Soldiers from the Wars Returning* (Great Britain: Pen & Sword Military Classics, 2006), p. 260.
[176] Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, p. 60.
[177] Alexander Douglas Gillespie, *Letters from Flanders* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1916), p. 2.
[178] Siegfried Sassoon, *The Old Century and Seven More Years* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986), p. 188.
[179] Richard Maltby, 'Introduction', in John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England 1894-1901: Volume Five: 1900*, 5 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), V, pp. xi-xxxii (p.xxix).

British and German men.[180] Though they were ignorant of physical culture, they were often depicted as 'brave and athletic,' 'sturdy [sons] of the soil.'[181] Readers did not hesitate to offer their advice on how British boys may become equally fit and healthy, suggesting Boers were, physically, superior; like the aforementioned *Pall Mall Gazette* contribution, one reader in 1900—almost a year after Black Week, when British forces famously suffered a series of devastating defeats—suggested adopting the Swiss method, where scholars were 'also trained as soldiers,' learning shooting, drill, and camping.[182] Notably, the writer states that this makes them 'a most useful citizen'; boys were 'sons of the Empire,' again emphasising the notion and repetitive lexical field focusing on usefulness and defence—with boys necessarily adopting military attributes.[183] These suggestions are especially significant in conjunction with the depiction of the Boers; British men, in the army and beyond, were lacking these core skills required to be a defender of their nation, underlining fears surrounding national efficiency and the discourse caused by the conflict.

It is worth discussing here the popularity and idol-worship of Robert Baden-Powell during the Boer War: Baden-Powell's personality—the ideal of military manliness—was known 'from the Queen downwards to the schoolboy who proudly wears a medallion portrait of the hero of Mafeking as a badge of courage.'[184] Baden-Powell had gained fame through the Siege of Mafeking, and swiftly became the army's youngest Major-General.[185] Subsequently, Baden-Powell himself became heavily involved in the next generation of British boys. When a 'League of Health and Manliness' was formed in Runcorn, several members—mostly choir boys—wrote to him, asking him to be their patron. He agreed, and praised their 'recognition

---

[180] M. van Wyk Smith, 'The Boers and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) in the Twentieth-Century Moral Imaginary', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31.2 (2003), 429-446 (p. 430); Rose Staveley-Wadham, *Hot Off The Press – New Titles This Week* (2018) <https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2018/11/05/new-titles-5-november-2018/> [accessed 31 August 2023].

[181] 'The Physical Development of the Boer', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 31 October 1899. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[182] F. T. M. H., 'Scholar and Soldier Too', *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 4).

[183] *Ibid*.

[184] W. Francis Aitken, *Baden-Powell: The Hero of Mafeking* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1900), p. 5.

[185] J. O. Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2 (1971), 125-158 (p. 130-131).

of the good work being done by the soldiers out here in their devotion to their duty' as an indication that they knew 'the proper example of man to follow.'[186] To Baden-Powell, then—an idol for boys across Britain—the proper example of manhood was, again, the soldier, as Kipling and others suggested. Baden-Powell went on to draw from the ideology of national efficiency: 'if each does his duty […] the whole community moves prosperously and successfully.'[187] Just as other examples have invariably demonstrated, the future success of Britain and the empire was placed upon the shoulders of youth. Baden-Powell further reflected upon this notion in his handbook for the Boy Scouts, which he founded in 1908 (coinciding with the formalisation of OTCs and the Territorial Army, a further hint at the escalation of British militarism and its capacity to influence masculinity). Though he stressed that '[t]here is no military meaning attached to scouting,' he emphasised that the boys were 'taught that a citizen must be prepared to take his fair share' in defending their homeland—'he who shirks […] is neither playing a plucky nor a fair part.'[188] Militaristic ideology did, therefore, play a role within the Boy Scouts—and the second edition of *Scouting for Boys*, which laid out these views, sold over

Figures 25-26: Early scouting image #1, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/8MaYrU (public domain); Early scouting image #2, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/8M7VvM (public domain)

[186] Baden-Powell, R. S., '"B.-P.'s" Advice to Boys', *Cheshire Observer,* 20 October 1900. British Library Newspapers.
[187] *Ibid*.
[188] Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, 7th edn (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1915), p. 308.

60,000 copies in 1909 alone.[189] In the same year, in a satire of invasion literature, P. G. Wodehouse's *The Swoop!*, depicted a devoted Boy Scout, Clarence, saving the country from the invading armies of several countries (including Germany); clearly, whether Baden-Powell intended it or not, the values and skills taught to Boy Scouts impressed upon them a mindset perfectly suited to military idealism. Moreover, it is increasingly reasonable to argue that the Boer War provided a springboard for these ideas to develop, catalysing the blending of civilian and military spheres and allowing militaristic periodicals.

Conclusion

It is undeniable, then, that militarism had an immense effect on British masculinity. This was no doubt accommodated by the shifting attitudes towards the army in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and bolstered by the fears surrounding British masculinity and military efficiency as a result of the Boer War. The spectacle of the fit, glamourous soldier—the symbol of British glory and power—gave the public a visual ideal, which was keenly responded to in both writing and song. Moreover, in every form of media—from new-fangled films to poetry, to traditional literature—the values of heroism, pluck, and duty were touted, repeatedly, and often without much subtlety. This left little room for doubt. Boys' literature was especially guilty of this, which is critical; boys were increasingly encouraged, from childhood, to adopt a military bearing, a fact accommodated by the creation of OTCs and the Boy Scouts in 1908. At the same time, the formalisation of the Territorial Army and the experience of the Boer War meant more men than ever had first-hand military experience, with the conflict—even though discourse and representations existed beforehand—arguably catalysing the merging of military and civilian circles.

[189] John C. Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 175.

Chapter Two: Degeneracy, Physical Culture, and the Persistence of Transgressive Identities

Introduction

Having discussed masculine discourse concerning the military, it is important to consider how those concepts applied to wider society between 1890 and 1914. There came an almost obsessive focus on how a man was to conduct himself—how he dressed, how he interacted with others, how physically able he was. This is not surprising; at the same time, fears of physical degeneracy were mounting, and the seemingly sedentary middle- and upper-class male population were an easy target; just as the public feared for the efficiency of their soldiers, 'serious doubts' were being raised concerning the 'ability of the race to cope' with the future.[1] One extensive discussion undertaken by readers of the *Daily Mail* argued about 'Modern Vices'; everything from drink and tobacco to over-eating were posited as issues of the day, especially amongst men.[2] Some, highlighting how widespread and long-running this discourse was, complained that, in another comparison to the Germans and Austrians, the nation talked about sports more than it practised them.[3] Others, such as Dr. A. F. Tredgold, believed that the nation's 'biological fitness' was declining.[4] Many professionals believed that they were at least 'perilously close' to the race degenerating, and the reports of the Inter-Departmental Committee in 1904 and the 1909 Poor Law Commission did little to assuage fears.[5] Furthermore, male anxieties particularly grew as the 'New Woman' emerged, entering the workplace and shifting gender dynamics; as John Tosh points out, for example, as women entered offices, the polarisation of 'gender characteristics' became 'insupportable,' leading

---

[1] Richard Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17.1 (1982), 137-164 (p. 137).
[2] M.D., 'Modern Vices', *Daily Mail*, 5 October 1903. Daily Mail Historical Archive; Deweyite, 'Modern Vices', *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1903. Daily Mail Historical Archive.
[3] Bertram Robson, 'Military Training: What It Does for a Man', *Modern Man*, 23 January 1909. The British Newspaper Archives <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[4] A. F. Tredgold, 'The Study of Eugenics', *Quarterly Review*, 217 (1912), 44-48, cited in Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', p. 158.
[5] Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', p. 158.

male clerks in particular to lash out against their increasing association with effeminacy.[6] The references to effeminacy in periodicals and questions asked by uncertain men on how to avoid it are constant and all-encompassing throughout the 1900s; along with physical fitness, it seems to have become a prime concern and an extreme threat to the vitality of British manliness. Curiously, however, despite the drive for a more unified, coherent masculine identity, capable of maintaining national security and efficiency, transgressive identities did not cease to develop; in fact, the cohesive British masculine identity only seems to fracture further as new identities continued to find their footing, and hegemonic values failed to dominate the minds of all men. The stakes were, to many, incredibly high. On the eve of the Great War, with immense, lingering anxieties and a masculine ideology underpinned by inherent contradictions, it is important to understand how the press and contemporary literature attempted to engender certain principles, and how they, in turn, affected the boys and men who read them.

Physical Culture

In accordance with the adoption of militaristic attitudes by many in society, one key response to the fears of racial degeneracy was an agenda of physical culture which had been steadily mounting since the 1890s. This was not a new response to fears and uncertainty in Britain—which lends itself to the notion that the crisis at the turn of the century was part of a longer series of crises surrounding British masculinity and its capabilities. The concept of physical culture for men can be anchored to notions of muscular Christianity in the earlier nineteenth century, which itself can be interpreted as an attempt to control an increasingly unsettled and fragmented world.[7] Most pertinently, Muscular Christianity can be characterised by a belief that sports could help develop 'Christian morality, physical fitness, and "manly" character.'[8] By the late nineteenth century, this effort to exert control took different forms for both

[6] John Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 330-342 (p. 341).
[7] Donald E. Hall, 'Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body', in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. by Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 9.
[8] Nick J. Watson, Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', *Journal of Religion & Society*, 7 (2005), para. 2 of 45.

children and adults, but both groups had much aimed at them to influence their enthusiasm for athleticism. The craze was significant enough that even institutions such as the YMCA (which had until the 1880s devoted itself to mostly lower-middle-class intellectual and spiritual development) transformed to become a conveyor of 'Christian manliness' to working-class men and boys, allowing them even more opportunities to participate in fitness culture.[9] In some ways, this has been a highly recognised area of scholarship; J. A. Mangan leads the way in the examination of athleticism in public schools. Mangan argues that the 'secular trinity' of public schools was 'imperialism, militarism and athleticism,' which is unignorable, considering most of the country's policymakers would have attended these schools.[10] Furthermore, for Mangan, intellectualism seems to have been set aside in favour of physical culture.[11] It is perhaps a testament to the power of those sporting virtues, as opposed to intellectualism, that they remained a mainstay of masculine identity, especially in the upper classes and that this notion has stood the test of time, with the image of white-clothed, cricket-playing students endearing itself to the nation's memory throughout Great War historiography and beyond.

It is worth noting, however, that Mangan may overstate this sense of anti-intellectualism. The Clarendon Commission of 1861-4 had already come about as a response to criticism and Parliamentary demands regarding public education—which had led to further commissions, and the Public Schools Act of 1868.[12] Nevertheless, by 1900, complaints were still being made in newspapers as widely read as *The Times* about the 'genie of athleticism' having 'grown to an inordinate size.'[13] Even more significantly, this writer worried that: '[…] in the training of those who ought hereafter to be the leaders of the community […] the border line between usefulness and exaggeration is in danger of being […] overstepped.'[14] Another

---

[9] Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 203-204.
[10] J. A. Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 23.3 (1975), 324-335 (p. 324).
[11] J. A. Mangan, 'Lamentable Barbarians and Pitiful Sheep: Rhetoric of Protest and Pleasure in Late Victorian and Edwardian "Oxbridge"', *Victorian Studies*, 34.4 (1991), 473-489 (pp. 483-484).
[12] Colin Shrosbree, *Public Schools and Private Education: The Clarendon Commission 1861-64 and the Public Schools Acts* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 1, 215.
[13] 'Excessive Athleticism', *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 August 1900. British Library Newspapers.
[14] *Ibid*.

writer similarly criticised the institutions that allow 'young men of the governing classes' to enter life with only the ideals of cricket and football.[15] These young men would be the ones to shape 'national ideals,' and the higher education that moulded them was what 'the nation looks [towards] to set an example of all that is best and noblest and most patriotic in the English character.'[16] This is in direct opposition to the ethos of the public schools, and, rather than being seen as a catch-all solution to degeneration, was a crisis all on its own; British boys and men were either sedentary and weak, or they were over-athletic and dim. Even around the Boer War, the arena of physical culture was highly discursive and fraught with uncertainty, pointing, again, to a crisis in masculinity; whilst the majority of society did continue to stress sports and athletics as essential for boys and men, there remained loud voices criticising the rise in physical culture to an obsessive extent.

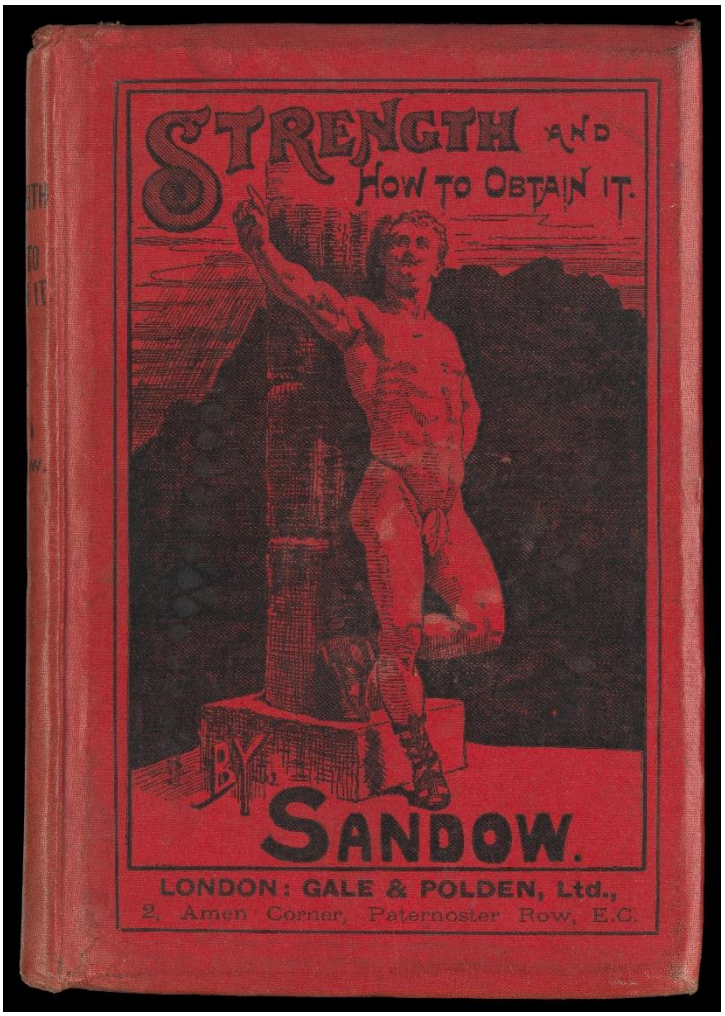


Figure 1: Strength, and how to obtain it / by Eugen Sandow […] L0070610 https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24788125 Image and original data provided by Wellcome Collection (CC BY 4.0)

Periodicals were also a catalyst, however, for the movement of physical culture beyond public schools. Few took better advantage of, and nurtured, the trend of physical culture than Eugen Sandow. At the turn of the twentieth century, he was 'internationally famous as the literal embodiment of masculine perfection,' working as a strongman, music-hall performer, and fitness coach from the 1890s through to the 1910s.[17] Understanding the popularity of Sandow and his effect on the fitness world is critical to understanding the development of masculine identity at this point. In 1897,

[15] 'Mr. Rudyard Kipling's Vigorous Indictment', *The Times*, 15 January 1902. The Times Digital Archive.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] David Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow, Victorian Strongman* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2011), pp. 7-8.

he published the best-selling *Strength and How to Obtain It*, which went into four further editions over the next twenty years, and between 1898 and 1907, he had a magazine, *Sandow's Magazine of Physical Culture*.[18] In other magazines, such as *Modern Man*—notably a magazine aimed at middle-class men—adverts for Sandow's products were rife.[19] In Sandow's own words, he took it 'as a commonplace that everyone […] wants to be strong. […] You can all be strong, all enjoy the heritage which was intended for you.'[20] Furthermore, he believed 'the cultivation of the body is a sacred and imperative duty.'[21] The language Sandow employs is subtle, but revealing; readers were told yet again that physical fitness was a 'duty'—mirroring the rhetoric of masculine selflessness and duty to defend their country—but also inherent. To be healthy and strong was the 'heritage' intrinsic to the British public. By 1901—coinciding with the Boer War—Sandow acknowledged a change in public opinion towards physical culture. When he first set out 'to preach the "gospel of health and strength" the general tendency was to make fun of me,' but now, people of all ages found physical culture 'the rage.'[22] This highlights a definite shift between the 1890s and 1900s; people had started to take their health and fitness more seriously, a significant development in understanding the characteristics of masculine identity. Sandow's prestige was soon recognised by society's elite, lending him an authority few others could compare to; in March 1911, he was appointed Professor of Scientific and Physical Culture to King George V—and he had already given demonstrations to the army—a testament to the reach of physical culture.[23] Sandow's power was, furthermore, acknowledged by contemporaries; in 1911, *Modern Man*, publishing another photograph of him, considered it to show 'the beautiful physical development of one who has done more than any other man to encourage others to emulate his example.'[24]

---

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[19] 'Most Amazing Offer Made!', *Modern Man*, 17 February 1912. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[20] Eugen Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, revised edition (London: Gale & Polden, Ltd., 1901), Introduction.
[21] *Ibid.*, Note to the Second Edition.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[23] Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow, Victorian Strongman*, pp. 11, 52-53.
[24] 'Grand New Competition', *Modern Man*, 22 April 1911. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

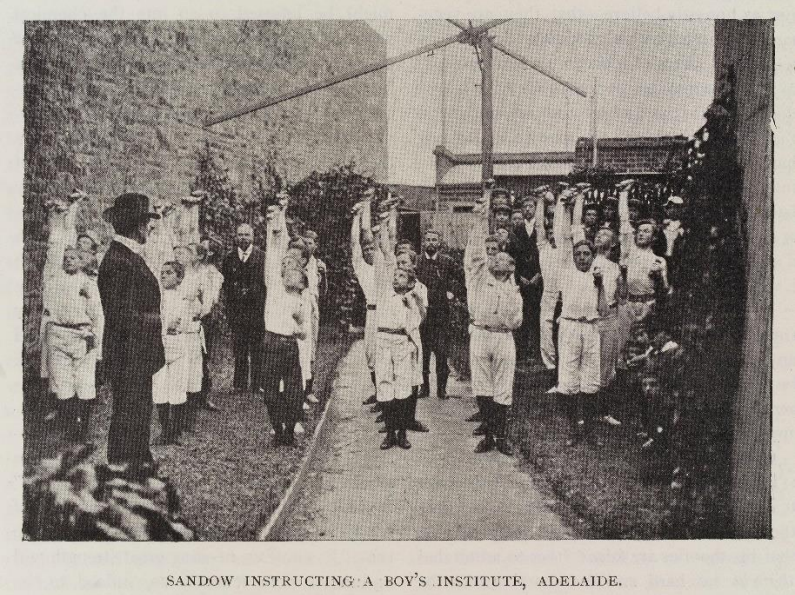


Figure 2: Sandow instructing a boy's institute, Adelaide

L0035266
https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24749565

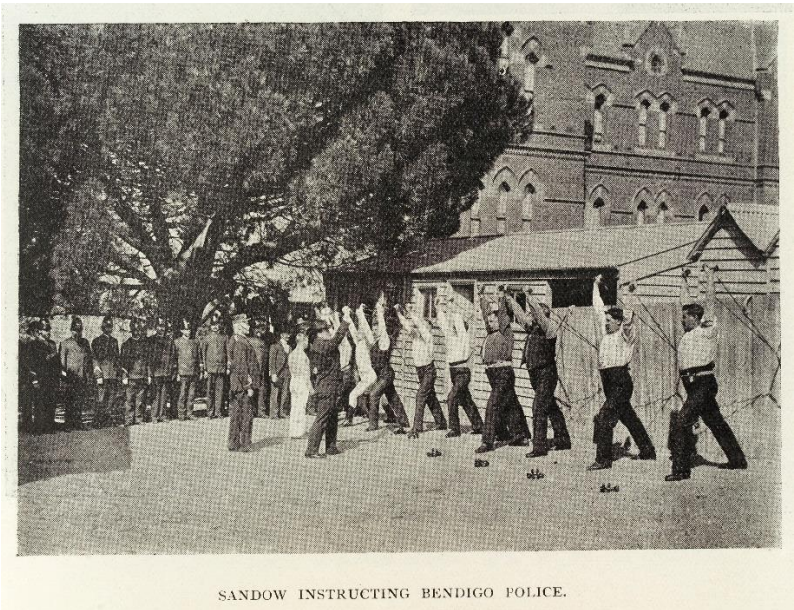


Figure 3: Photograph of Eugen Sandow instructing Bendigo police

L0035268
https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24749566

Figure 4: Sandow and fire brigade fitness drill

L0035265
https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24749564

And many did emulate his example, stressing the importance of the physical culture craze in the formation of masculine identity. The trend was inescapable. Alongside a regular feature dedicated to physical culture (written by their 'Physical Culture Expert,' with answers being offered to readers who seemed to write in in their droves), in 1909, one enthusiastic article appeared in *Modern Man* lauding the sportsmanship of the Englishman—an all-encompassing matter of lifestyle and mentality, an important notion to consider.[25] Playing the game, as seen in chapter one, was a biological trait distinctly afforded to the English. Englishmen, Kennedy Watson asserts—with no consideration of class differences— '[play] the game all the time'; 'he has inherited sporting instincts from generations of sporting ancestors.'[26] This harkens back to Sandow's notion of 'heritage.' Conversely, foreigners were 'inconsiderate to women, unkind to animals, excitable and liable to all excesses.'[27] Again, foreigners are used as a measuring stick for British masculinity—but now, they are bolstering Englishmen. In a way, this is, again, drawing upon the past to encourage the upcoming generation of men to pay proper homage to their genetic disposition. According to Watson, there is a biological manliness bred amongst Englishmen which made them inherently superior, and this is partially due to their strong, sporting ancestry. On this note, it is a curious byproduct of this culture of gentlemanly sportsmanship that professional athletes were

[25] Kennedy Watson, 'Our Love of Sport. A Defence of a National Characteristic', *Modern Man*, 8 May 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[26] *Ibid*.
[27] *Ibid*.

Figure 5: Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs. […] L0033344 https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24748282 Image and original data provided by Wellcome Collection (CC BY 4.0)

disparaged in comparison to amateurs. Paul Christesen underlines the continued influence of Muscular Christianity in this regard.[28] Whilst professional football became increasingly popular, amateur sports remained the principal concern of the middle and upper classes; for them, sports were a means for character-building and the propagation of a 'specific identity'—that of the ideal English gentlemen.[29] In this way, amateur sport specifically fulfilled a moral function, encouraging the same virtues of duty and selflessness as so many other texts.[30] As Peter Donaldson points out, the fixation on amateur sporting ideals also underlines how the public-

[28] Paul Christesen, *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 233.
[29] Peter Donaldson, *Sport, War and the British: 1850 to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 11; Saverio Battente, *The Idea of Sport in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Contemporary Era* ([n.p.]: Vernon Press, 2020), p. 60.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

school games ethic was entrenched in public consciousness, which is reflected elsewhere—such as in the desire to teach lower classes 'manly' sports, soon to be discussed.[31] This, in turn, emphasises how much was geared towards fashioning young English men, across society, into a certain, virtuous image. However, it also demonstrates the way public school ideals disseminated out into wider society, and affected the way masculine sportsmanship was understood and idealised; the perfect gentleman embodied the correct mindset, cultivated by upper-class principles. Physical culture is linked not only to fitness, but moral integrity—and was a huge part of masculine identity at this time.

Figures 6-7: Clothes and no clothes – John Hook, 1905, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/aHECVV (public domain); also in this album is a photograph of Sandow, highlighting his influence further: Identified! Eugen Sandow, pioneer bodybuilder, shared by whatsthatpicture, available at https://flic.kr/p/b3YpB6 (public domain)

Perhaps even more significantly, reports started to address the exclusion of the working classes from the recreations of their wealthier counterparts. The Bishop of Salford, for example, complained about the cult of athleticism—but only because there were 'strapping lads playing football or some sort of game practically under the wheels of vehicles' in the streets; how could they 'go in for manly sports and play themselves,' if there was no place to do so?[32] Sir Frederick Cawley, in the same manner, 'spoke of the desirability' of lower class

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[32] 'Playing Fields. Trend of Athleticism, Bishop of Salford's Lament', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10 December 1909. British Library Newspapers (p. 18).

boys having 'playing fields [like] the boys at the great public schools.'[33] Likewise, Bertram Robson in 1909 commented that only public schools properly taught boys to play games like cricket.[34] This is important, for it indicates a concerted effort to widen the boundaries of physical culture, and strengthens the ties between masculinity and sports. In the same year, the British Medical Association discussed athleticism generally; Sir James Barr suggested that it was the 'duty of medical men […] to instil into the young men of the nation a love of athletics. The more hazardous the game the better for the development of the character […].'[35] Again, this demonstrates a clear seepage of public-school athleticism into the wider public, suggesting efforts were being made at this time from all corners of society to encourage boys and men to become physically fit and develop character through sport. This, in turn, gives further credence to the suggestion that there was a crisis in masculinity around the turn of the century, for this fitness craze and fears surrounding national failure and racial degeneracy hugely coincide. Other publications also took up the discussions surrounding physical culture wholeheartedly. Even military newspapers published far from home emphasised sport and athleticism. The Buffs, for example, celebrated their 328th anniversary in 1900 by holding athletic events, which were reported in much the same way as public-school magazines, as will be seen; 'Miss Price (as usual) had a very nice show with the children,' which included 'physical drill with singing.'[36] Even during the Great War, the Royal Engineers similarly found time for a band race, highlighting the continued prevalence of sporting events.[37] Harkening back to chapter one, in a military context, sports were encouraged across both age and class boundaries, a fact increasingly reflected in wider society.

---

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] Bertram Robson, 'Military Training. What It Does For a Man', *Modern Man*, 23 January 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[35] 'Benefits of Athletics Are Discussed by British Medical Association', *Dundee Courier*, 30 July 1909. British Library Newspapers (p. 4).

[36] 'Athletic Sports', *The Dragon*, 28 February 1900, p. 8.

[37] London, Imperial War Museum, Royal Engineers Collection Q 29429. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205269357> [accessed 14 September 2023].

Figures 8: R. E. Signals Wireless Sports, G. H. Q; band race, 12th May, 1917 © IWM Q 29429

Building on the point of class, it is worth noting that historians such as Mangan have focused disproportionately on the upper and middle classes without discussing how athleticism filtered down to the lower classes. Michael Brown stresses the lack of opportunities afforded to working-class children, who endured much less intervention before the twentieth century.[38] The different needs of the classes are also rarely discussed; for example, unlike wealthier sportsmen, the working classes led generally active lifestyles through their work. It could be subsequently suggested that an attitude of sportsmanship and athleticism was not fostered, and therefore not inherent, in the working classes. This may have been the clear-cut case (and upper-class enthusiasm for games was always in a league of its own) had it not been for the concurrent rise in literacy. With new legislation catering to the provision of elementary

[38] Michael Brown, 'Cold Steel, Weak Flesh: Mechanism, Masculinity and the Anxieties of Late Victorian Empire', *Cultural and Social History*, 14.2 (2017), 155-181 (p. 160).

education, such as the 1870 Education Act, male literacy rose from 69.3% to 97.2%, and.[39] From 1880, working-class children between the ages of five and ten had to attend school, and 1902 saw the establishment of a system of secondary education.[40] Military drill became widespread in Britain's elementary schools, and despite opposition, the Boer War was a reminder of why it was necessary; it subsequently remained on the curriculum throughout the 1900s.[41] By the early twentieth century, in most types of British schools games drill and gymnastics were integral to physical education, and were intended to cultivate character, discipline, and *esprit de corps*—just as in public schools.[42] Boys across the classes were thus increasingly able to attend school and encounter hegemonic masculine ideology, even participating in militaristic procedures such as drill; furthermore, with this growth in literacy came better access to literature and periodicals catered specifically to these new and expanding audiences.

Critical to examine here, then, are the abundance of magazines featuring stories with a public-school setting, and their propagation of the sporting, public-school ethos alongside the physical school curriculum. As previously suggested, public schools are intrinsically linked with physical culture and athleticism, so the effect of public-school stories on other classes is critical. *The Magnet* is one such example. Launched in February 1908, audiences were introduced to Harry Wharton and Greyfriars, his idyllic Kentish school; with maps, a school prospectus, and a school song, the exclusive world was well-developed.[43] Importantly, *The Magnet* reflected the school year, its holidays, and its traditions: football was played in winter, and cricket in summer, for example.[44] Jeffrey Richards convincingly posits that it was writer Frank Richards (alias of Charles Hamilton) who brought the 'public school story to its mythic apotheosis,' and the impact of his work would suggest so; he took the idealised values

---

[39] Matthew Ingleby, *Charles Dickens and the Push for Literacy in Victorian Britain* (2020) <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2020/hss/charles-dickens-and-the-push-for-literacy-in-victorian-britain.html> [accessed 28 August 2023].
[40] Christesen, *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds*, p. 233; Anne West and Hazel Pennell, *Underachievement in Schools* (London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), p. 28.
[41] 'Physical Education in State and Private Schools in Britain in the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries: Elementary Schools and Other Schools', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27.5 (2010), 872-904 (p. 895).
[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 895-896.
[43] Jeffrey Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 268-271.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

and 'essence' of the public school and gave it to non-public-school boys.[45] Consequentially—and testifying to its appeal for the lower classes—it was the upper classes who chiefly criticised Richards' work; Arthur Marshall stated that Greyfriars stories were rarely read by public school boys.[46] Compton Mackenzie believed the *Boy's Own Paper* to be far superior over 'wretched papers like the *Magnet*.'[47] Regardless, by the Great War, *The Magnet* sold over 200,000 copies a week, which were likely shared around—expanding its audience further.[48] Perhaps Richards' focus on this lower-class audience can be further supported by the fact that there are no houses, chapel, or cadet corps; the students even play Association football instead of rugby, making the public school experience, especially in terms of sports, more relatable for those outside of its sphere and allowing the values such institutions prescribed to be easily nurtured.[49]

This was undoubtedly influential when examining the text itself. Much like the heroes described in soldier stories, Harry is introduced as a 'handsome, well-built lad, finely-formed, strong and active.'[50] Immediately, an ideal image is painted. Soon, Harry learns that he is going to be sent to public school to curb his wilfulness and obstinacy; these, then, are not desirable traits in a boy, and a public school is established as the institution in which such errors are rectified. Follow the lessons here, and the reader may also possess the traits of a young gentleman. If a reader was left in any doubt after this, they would soon be put right by the introduction of Nugent, who explicitly lays down the values of the school. Nugent is described as similarly 'well built,' with a 'frank, open face and honest, blue eyes.'[51] This emphasis on honesty is no slip of the pen. He dutifully informs Harry that the Lower Fourth would 'soon knock the sullenness out of you.'[52] When Harry calls Greyfriars 'rotten' and 'beastly,' Nugent takes it personally and tells 'mammy's darling' that 'anybody who calls Greyfriars a rotten place and a beastly school stands in need of correction.'[53] This thinly

---

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave One, 1883-1891* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p. 240.
[48] Eric Midwinter, *'His Captain's Hand on His Shoulder Smote': The Incidence and Influence of Cricket in Schoolboy Stories* (Great Britain: Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, 2019), p. 73.
[49] Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction*, p. 277.
[50] Frank Richards, 'The Making of Harry Wharton', *The Magnet*, 15 February 1908, p.1.
[51] *Ibid.*, p.2.
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

veiled instruction appears elsewhere in popular literature, and will be seen again later in the chapter. For the first issue, the story makes no pretences; straight away, the reader is introduced to the values and mentality that would come to shape Harry's life—honour, respect, loyalty, sportsmanship. It is engaging, too; even today, the writing is fast-paced, and the characters are vivid and likeable. It is reasonable to believe that a working-class boy would be drawn into this exciting world and start to emulate the characteristics he finds there.

Without exhausting an area of scholarship already well-trodden, it remains important to acknowledge, especially considering Mackenzie's exclamation, periodicals more appealing to public school boys; these were the boys who would grow up to dominate public life, so it is crucial to understand their formative years when discussing British masculinity. Furthermore, for all the reasons given in chapter one, with the arrival of the Great War, it becomes doubly important; these readers became the NCOs who would form a large part of its historiography, and understanding their mentality and behaviour is important beyond the scope of this study. As in the first chapter, the *Boy's Own Paper* is invaluable here. The mid-1900s, again, saw the publication of an article written by Warwick M. Vardon, discussing physical culture and exercise for boys. It is interesting to note that physical culture is directly addressed for upper-class boys, whereas it is not introduced to working-class readers by name. The article is, tellingly, opened with an illustration of a public-school boy half-dressed in uniform, and half-dressed in sports kit. The reader is told to 'cover half the figure and watch the face'—and, of course, the half dressed in uniform is miserable, whereas the boy in sports kit is smiling.[54] Proceeding on, like in *Modern Man*, Vardon comments on the difference between a 'sedentary' man, and a man 'who habitually uses his muscles rationally'; 'the object of bodily training is not to make athletes, but men; to prepare the body for the fatigue of the ordinary duties of life.'[55] Physical fitness is, therefore, necessary for manliness and masculine duty; the readers, in their formative years, are encouraged to understand the importance of fitness for both health and appearance. Again linking the cultivation of the body with the formation of the character necessary to succeed in a public school and beyond, the fit body possesses 'agility, confidence, and fearlessness.'[56] The existence of this article in a boy's magazine is a

[54] Warwick M. Vardon, 'How and Why to Exercise: A Chat on Physical Culture', *The Boy's Own Paper*, 29 (1906-1907), 110-111 (p. 110).
[55] *Ibid*.
[56] *Ibid*.

clear demonstration of the inextricable link between physical strength, manly character, and usefulness with degeneracy, sedentarism, and effeminacy.

Unsurprisingly, then, nearly all issues of public school magazines seem to feature some reference to sports, especially cricket; it was omnipresent—and serves to support the common perception, as per Mangan's suggestion, that sport was the primary focus of these institutions. Many magazines such as *The Cantuarian* of The King's School, Canterbury, for instance, dedicated the first pages of their March 1899 issue to their first paper-chase, football, and other sports at the school.[57] Sincere commentary is given to the state of each discipline; there was, apparently, a preference for squash, though this was unsatisfactory.[58] Readers were encouraged to take up Fives, which needed more support—though there was happiness that the Boat Club had arranged races for that term, so they would not interfere with Cricket in the summer term.[59] The reports conclude with congratulations on 'the progress made and the prosperity we have enjoyed in every department.'[60] This offers a glimpse into the priorities and the values placed upon the public-school boy's shoulders; that more than one magazine immediately jumps into sporting coverage is significant. There was also external pressure on public school boys in these magazines, however, underlining the omnipresence of the sporting, masculine ideal and its place even in children's lives; one correspondent wrote to the editor of *The Marlburian* to complain that reports of Marlborough in public school cricket matches were lacking: 'I have only seen one Marlborough match reported this year, […] and, judging from experience, I should say it must have been sent in by the Cheltenham boys.'[61]

And, as previously mentioned, it was not only public schools that encouraged these mentalities; grammar schools also mimicked their more famous relatives. *The Oldham Hulmeian* displays remarkably similar characteristics to the periodicals of Eton and Marlborough. In the same way that Frank Richards worked to emulate a mythical public-school ethos for the lower classes, middle-class publications and institutions strove to emulate their social superiors, further disseminating, in a practical manner, those exact values of honour, discipline and sportsmanship to a wider audience. Just like them, sporting

---

[57] 'Editorial', *The Cantuarian*, 5.1 (1899), 1-2.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] *Ibid*., p. 2.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] A. G. Watson, 'Correspondence', *The Marlburian*, 30 July 1900, p. 308.

proceedings took pride of place, with in-depth commentary echoing the same rhetoric of duty and preparation commonplace in public schools. In May 1912, for example, the Athletic Sports were 'highly satisfactory,' the Obstacle Races were 'much appreciated,' and two Old Boys' Teams fought in a 'keenly contested' Tug-of-War.[62] However, another common theme that emerges, which was also evident in the public school magazines, is the constant emphasis on improvement: 'The Cricket Ball Throwing was rather poor,' the Junior High Jump was 'average,' and the new Hurdle Race 'was satisfactory, though we are looking out for an improvement next year.'[63] Coupled with the constant rhetoric surrounding the ideal state of masculinity, and the values associated with military success, there is the unmistakable sense that most publications wanted to see British boys performing better. Even more tellingly, and reminiscent of both the headmaster recalled by Vera Brittain at Uppingham's Speech Day and the sentiments shared in *The Boy's Own Paper*, the magazine praises Miss Denniss, who 'made a very interesting and appropriate speech.'[64] She 'congratulated' those who partook in the events, and 'expressed the belief that the healthy pursuit of games would fit the boys to take their part well in the work of life.'[65] It scarcely needs to be pointed out by now that not only was this a reflection of wider fears in society that British men were, essentially, unfit for purpose, but also part of a wider web of intermingling messages encouraging a boy to see his worth as founded on the principle of how useful he could be for the defence of his country and empire. It has also become clear that no class could fully escape from such mentalities, either, though upper-class media more frequently stressed the importance of duty; the literary media consumed by upper-, middle-, and working-class boys all possessed guidance on staying fit and manly, working to shape what would become British masculine identity.

Effeminate Behaviour and Transgressions

Another particularly distinct and common manifestation of the anxiety over British masculinity came as a sustained attack on any behaviour deemed transgressive or effeminate.

---

[62] S. Y., 'The Athletic Sports', *The Oldham Hulmeian*, June 1912, pp. 2-4.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[65] *Ibid.*

This is a challenging notion to define, as will soon become clear; whilst the boundaries of masculine behaviour grew increasingly stringent, what was or was not effeminate was constantly being redefined. This has already been seen in military circles, especially concerning soldiers' appearances, from their hair to their use of mufflers. This is reflected even more plainly in wider society and was the topic of many debates in popular newspapers and magazines. It is important to note that it was in this period that the accusation of effeminacy truly became loaded with darker undertones, signalling an important shift from the early nineteenth century and beyond—crucial to consider when trying to understand masculinity, and especially transgressive masculinity. The charge of effeminacy had, of course, always existed, usually with negative connotations; Tony McEnery and Helen Baker, based on extensive readings of seventeenth-century texts, point out that contemporary English definitions of homosexuality were already becoming entangled with effeminacy, and this association was reasserted in the early eighteenth century—specifically causing men who did not want this negative connotation to simplify their clothing and stop publicly greeting each other with kisses.[66] It was not yet a permanent archetype, however; Alan Sinfield argues that the effeminate dandy before the trials of Oscar Wilde was not necessarily seen as a homosexual, suggesting the strength of feeling against effeminate men ebbed and flowed.[67] The mid-1890s were, therefore, a turning point; Julie Anne Taddeo rightfully posits that 'even playful attempts' to subvert masculine expectations of dress and behaviour were now met with 'suspicious glances and hints of perversion.'[68] Joseph Bristow encapsulates the dichotomy well: whilst a 'specific ideal' was being propagated for the service of the empire— 'physically and morally robust'—the antithesis could clearly be seen in the effeminate 'weakling.'[69] This contrast was not unacknowledged at the time, further highlighting its importance for understanding masculine identity. 'Peace' by Rupert Brooke (1915), for example, suggests the Great War would deliver society from the 'half-men, and

---

[66] Tony McEnery and Helen Baker, 'The Public Representation of Homosexual Men in Seventeenth-Century England – A Corpus Based View', *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*, 3.2 (2017), 197–217 (p. 210-212).

[67] Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 70-71.

[68] Julie Anne Taddeo, 'Plato's Apostles: Edwardian Cambridge and the "New Style of Love"', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 8.2 (1997), 196-228 (p. 212).

[69] Joseph Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 9.

their dirty songs and dreary.'[70] The reference to 'half-men' is critical; Brooke staunchly separates the dishonourable, effeminate men of England's recent past with the good, true men fighting for their country, representing those ideal characteristics. Mirroring the discourse repeated over the previous two decades, unmanly men are portrayed as something to be rooted out and destroyed. Thus, along with contemporary arguments and associations with much-feared racial degeneracy, especially after the Boer War, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the effeminate man was now seen as a threat to national strength and stability, a notion that underpins many of the articles in the years before the Great War.

Subsequently, it is not hard to understand why there was an almost obsessive focus on what was or was not going to make a man appear effeminate, even in the most innocuous of circumstances; the stakes were, or they must have seemed, incredibly high. *Modern Man* once again comes to the fore in proffering examples of this constant and imposing discourse, though it is not always as straightforward as may be assumed from the arguments of Taddeo and Sinfield. The only thing of certainty, in the wake of the aesthetic, decadent 1890s, was that effeminacy (and, by extension, transgressive masculinities), were wrong. Many published references to effeminacy are the result of men writing in and asking for advice, testifying to the difficulty of navigating the complex and ever-shifting landscape of masculinity. Many of these enquiries were sent to Captain L. H. Saunders, who managed a weekly feature in *Modern Man*, 'The Outer Man.' Saunders endeavours to guide his male readers through the shifting standards of acceptability. One correspondent, for example, worried that longer gloves were 'effeminate,' and needed reassurance that 'an extra inch or so' would not 'lead any man to accuse you of effeminacy'.[71] The uncertainty and concern demonstrated by both the man writing in, and Saunders' response, signals a pervasive preoccupation with wanting to avoid being deemed effeminate at all costs. And such assurances appeared week after week. For example, colour schemes were no longer the preserve of women: though 'it may sound effeminate,' it is 'a man's duty to society not to offend the eye of everyone he meets.'[72] Whilst encouraging men to engage in a traditionally 'feminine' pastime, Saunders cleverly, and characteristically, utilises the rhetoric of duty to

---

[70] Rupert Brooke, 'Peace', in *The Poems of Rupert Brooke: A Centenary Edition*, ed. by Timothy Rogers (Great Britain: Black Swan, 1987), p. 129, l. 7.

[71] Captain L. H. Saunders, 'The Wrists of Gloves', *The Modern Man*, 11 June 1910. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[72] Captain L. H. Saunders, 'The Outer Man: A Weekly Feature', *Modern Man*, 11 September 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

society to make it masculine; men, even concerning fashion, were encouraged to act for the collective. Likewise, whilst in recent history a man 'would have been branded as effeminate' for wearing a wristlet watch, they now gave 'a sort of finish to a man's wrist'; echoing the army's distaste for mufflers, goloshes were still slightly 'effeminate' but were now good enough for 'town wear on muddy days.'[73] It is possible to suggest, especially with the latter example, that what was seen as effeminate for soldiers bled out into the civilian sphere. And yet, Saunders' advice offers further proof of the contentiousness of this area; more than once, he presents the rehabilitation of the reputation of something associated with effeminacy. These ideas of effeminacy, as evidenced by the article on goloshes, were not brand new—but many men writing into a new newspaper and opening space for discourse and advice is important, reflecting Sinfield's assertion. Evidently, the understanding of masculinity and effeminacy was at the forefront of the public mind, which, after the failures of the Boer War and the decadence of recent years, is justifiable; logically, too, the more people thought about the issue, the more it was discussed, leading to further discourse and reconfiguration. Magazines such as *Modern Man*, as already mentioned in chapter one, were incredibly important in the creation of British masculine identity as trusted authorities on the matter. The *Penny Illustrated Paper* similarly stated bluntly that 'tying shoes with ribbons is effeminate' in response to a similar inquiry made by a reader.[74] This is, of course, not an exhaustive list; there are so many examples of instruction concerning effeminate characteristics.

The justification of female attraction could even be utilised to bolster the argument against effeminacy: women were attracted to 'manly [men],' not 'the effeminate youth with perfect features and nothing behind them.'[75] Curiously, this article goes on to criticise the appearance of 'Men's Beauty Shows,' where 'effeminate features' were commonplace; the popularity of such shows was a 'sign of decadence', furthermore, linking effeminacy again with contemporary ideas surrounding the degeneration of the race.[76] The inclusion of such

---

[73] Captain L. H. Saunders, 'Wristlet Watches', *The Modern Man*, 14 October 1911. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>; Captain L. H. Saunders, 'Goloshes', *The Modern Man*, 25 December 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[74] Burlington. R. Cade., 'Answers to Correspondents', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 29 June 1912. British Library Newspapers (p. 828).

[75] Alan Hamer, 'The Man Beautiful', *Modern Man*, 23 October 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[76] *Ibid*.

criticism, though, is contradictory; Alan Hamer argues that women prefer masculine men, but then criticises popular shows featuring effeminate men, which must have been watched by women. This provides insight into the manipulation of the press, described by J. L. Cranfield; much like the pages of the *Strand* described by Cranfield, where depictions of soldiers were tightly controlled, Hamer holds 'Greek statues' as the pinnacle of manhood.[77] In much the same vein, *The Gentlewoman* condemns colourful straw hats:

> the green and heliotrope mixture in straw hats is an effeminate and far too fanciful a thing for Englishmen, and I take leave to say that they are not likely to appeal to the men who count—the manly men.[78]

The same advice and rhetoric were being given to female readers, then; women were encouraged to see only manly men as worthy, whilst men were told that women would only find 'manly' men attractive, a mindset reflective of the agenda of military and national usefulness, and fears of degeneracy. This leaves little room for doubt, and demonstrates, again, the all-encompassing nature of such rhetoric; *The Gentlewoman* even goes on to accuse these colourfully-behatted men as being 'ill at home with the sporting side of proceedings, and far too conversant with the art of dozing […].'[79] The derision in the tone of the writer is unignorable; there is a clear link between men dressed 'effeminately,' and men who are useless to society. The same sentiment unfortunately, but curiously, can be observed in school magazines; even schoolboys were confronted with these rigid notions of masculinity and effeminacy. One reader who wrote in to *The Shiburnian*, for example, regarding boxing, wonders whether the boys have 'become too effeminate to have our complexions spoilt by another's fist.'[80] Written in 1901, the issue is topical. There is a marked discrepancy between effeminacy and the national ideal; an effeminate man, or boy, cannot be good at sport, the principal marker of English manhood—and, in this case, is even a threat to the school. With such language being peddled, an association between effeminacy

---

[77] J. L. Cranfield, 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40.2 (2012), 549-573 (p. 570); Alan Hamer, 'The Man Beautiful', *Modern Man*, 23 October 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

[78] The Gentlewoman, 'Coloured Straw Hats', *Hull Daily Mail*, 18 July 1907. British Library Newspapers (p. 4).

[79] *Ibid*.

[80] Pux, 'Correspondence', *The Shiburnian*, July 1901, p. 134.

and national degeneration was being pushed onto public minds in a definite attempt to shape perceptions of British masculinity.

This was not ineffective. The life of Cyril Holland, eldest son of Oscar Wilde, encapsulates this well; how ideas of effeminacy and masculine redemption shaped his life offers an excellent, if tragic, insight into the pervasive, even damaging, effect they could have during this period. Born in 1885, Cyril had the misfortune of discovering the nature of his father's scandal at only nine years old; his younger brother, Vyvyan, later recalled how he had 'shield[ed]' him, 'so that I should not suffer as he did.'[81] Fleeing abroad, their surnames were changed, and after the death of their mother—a testament to the horror with which many received his scandal—her family led Cyril and Vyvyan to believe Wilde had died. It was stressed that 'we must never mention our father's name to anyone, particularly in connection with ourselves.'[82] This experience would in many ways define his conduct for the rest of his life, eventually attending the Royal Military Academy and joining the army as a 2nd lieutenant in 1905 (this itself notably reaffirms the assertions of the first chapter). In his own words, his 'settled object in life' was to 'retrieve what had been lost':

> The more I thought of this, the more convinced I became that […] I must be a *man*. There was to be no cry of decadent artist, of effeminate aesthete, of weak-kneed degenerate. […] I am no wild, passionate, irresponsible hero. I live by thought, not emotion. I ask nothing better than to end in honourable battle for my King and Country.[83]

Vyvyan remarked that 'how well he succeeded in avoiding the accusation of effeminacy is shown by his school record,' where he was an exceptional sportsman.[84] Again, the dichotomy between manliness—characterised by honour, bravery, and sportsmanship—and effeminacy is extreme, reflecting Brooke and Bristow's words. They are fundamentally incompatible. Interestingly, Cyril echoes the rhetoric of the rampant articles already mentioned, reflecting the wider fears and prejudices of the period: decadency, effeminacy, degeneracy. All of these were the key threats against British masculinity—and, for Cyril, his father had become the symbol of this. The letter above was written in June 1914; it is no mean feat to suggest that he had been influenced by the rhetoric propagated relentlessly by the press, especially after the

---

[81] Vyvyan Holland, *Son of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999), p. 63.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[84] *Ibid.*

Boer War. When the Great War broke out, he ‘pull[ed] every string upon which he could lay his hands’ to transfer from his Field Artillery brigade, which was to remain in India, to a cavalry regiment on its way to fight in France. Sadly, Cyril was killed by a German sniper on May 9th, 1915, achieving that honourable, redemptive death he had written about less than a year before.

‘A Dream of Decadence on the Cherwell’:
Wilde and Douglas caricatured
in *The New Rattle*, Oxford, May 1893

Figure 9: 'A Dream of Decadence on the Cherwell': Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas caricatured in 'The New Rattle' (1893) Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oscar_Wilde_and_lord_Douglas_caricature_the_new_rattle_1893.jpg

As already discussed, the trials of Oscar Wilde undoubtedly marked a turning point in the perception of effeminacy, and homosexuality. As Matt Cook points out, the crime received a

recognisable face.[85] Effeminate men and their relationships with other men were, as Taddeo posits, under more scrutiny than ever. Correspondingly, Michael Hattersley argues that 'the results of Wilde's trial […] reversed the halting movement toward greater tolerance and made any progress on the legal front politically impossible.'[86] There needs to be greater nuance here; there are some particularly contradictory examples of literature which complicate the boundaries of acceptability in masculine behaviour and relationships. Historians such as Mª Ángeles Toda suggest that the homosocial environments of public schools, whilst being the 'centres of ideological production,' were also 'hotbeds of homosexual initiation.'[87] Most pertinently to this study, Toda applies this to the popular genre of public school fiction, underlining the complexity in understanding the Edwardian idealisation of romantic, male-male friendships; they can either be dangerous, or innocent and ideal.[88] *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* is critical to consider in this regard, for several reasons. Firstly, it was an immensely popular book, going through nine editions in 1905; for every one letter Horace Vachell received about his first best-seller, *Brothers*, he received ten about *The Hill*.[89] The book remained a bestseller for the entirety of a decade.[90] Secondly, it belonged to a genre which was, according to Toda, 'essentially propagandistic'; throughout the novel, the reader is inducted into the traditions of Harrow, with extensive footnotes drawing them into the world of Harrovian schoolboys. For example, early in the novel, Vachell explains that 'at Harrow "er" is a favourite termination of many substantives'—a colloquial insight into the unique Harrovian language.[91] Similarly, Vachell explains sporting terms such as the 'fez,' a 'cap of honour worn by the House Football Eleven.'[92] It is important to note that the book is still giving important instructions on hegemonic manliness, particularly concerning sports and sportsmanship. This is hugely significant on its own, for, just as Frank Richards' work

---

[85] Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 61.
[86] Michael Hattersley, *How Gay Was Dorian Gray?* <https://glreview.org/article/how-gay-was-dorian-gray/> [accessed 31 August 2023].
[87] Mª Ángeles Toda, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', *Atlantis*, 23.2 (2001), 133-145 (p. 134).
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[89] Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction*, p. 195.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[91] Horace A. Vachell, *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1910), p. 8.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

did, it allows public school values to seep into wider society, narrowing the margin of difference between class boundaries and their interpretations of masculine identity. The fiercely class-conscious Wilfred Owen, for instance, was unable to attend public school, but found solace in 'the hills on which I never lay, nor shall lie'; 'Lovely and melancholy reading it is for me,' he wrote to his mother in 1918.[93]

Furthermore, as Jeffrey Richards points out, literature such as this before the Great War tended to attempt to 'define and channel' emotional relationships, especially between boys, into 'acceptable directions.'[94] And yet, with all its influence, *The Hill* portrays and encourages an adolescent relationship which teeters on the boundary between platonic and outright romantic, complicating the extent of acceptability in male-male relationships, especially from a modern perspective. It can be difficult to understand where the line was drawn; what a man may be criticised for in the newspapers is praised within the pages of boyhood public-school fiction. Almost instantly, the protagonist of the novel, John Verney, nephew of a courageous hero, is enraptured by Henry Desmond; he even has nightmares that his older roommate, Scaife—inescapably lesser by way of his 'breeding'—would '[drag] off the beloved Caesar [Desmond], to plunge with him into fathomless pools of Scotch whisky.'[95] In these nightmares, Scaife and John would '[fight] for his body,' whilst Desmond merely 'looked on.'[96] Indeed, John's growing resentment of Scaife over his intimacy with Desmond culminates in an intense encounter after a match, lost partially due to Scaife's unsportsmanlike behaviour. 'I don't like him because—because he likes—you,' John 'nervously' declares to Desmond; 'he's not half good enough for you.'[97] Likewise, John sings 'like a lark' for the school, and Desmond finds spiritual vindication in the moment; he 'loved the singer,' who 'called to him out of heaven.'[98] When their eyes meet, 'joyfully,' John knows he was 'at last […] singing to his friend—*and his friend knew it*'; he is uplifted by Desmond's 'radiant smile.'[99] The moment peaks when John, bolstered by Desmond's

---

[93] Dominic Hibberd, *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography* (Great Britain: Phoenix, 2003), p. 418; Wilfred Owen, *Selected Letters of Wilfred Owen*, ed. by Jane Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 358.
[94] Richards, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction*, p. 195.
[95] Horace A. Vachell, *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1910), pp. 111, 53.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] *Ibid*., p. 94.
[98] *Ibid*., pp. 130-131.
[99] *Ibid*., p. 131.

attention, sings the final part of the song perfectly; the whole time, 'he was smiling and staring at Desmond.'[100]

And yet, Vachell still manages to echo conventional rhetoric. When the Headmaster addresses the school after the discovery of gambling parties, he makes the curious declaration that at least 'this is not one of those cases from which every clean, manly boy must recoil in disgust.'[101] Herein lies the contradictions. Whilst these institutions represented the cornerstones of English masculinity and power, even in literature, the ideology contradicts itself; boys were encouraged to grow close, but not too close. To a modern reader, this opens questions as to how differently an ideal, romantic friendship could be perceived against an explicitly homosexual one. Ernest Raymond, a popular writer of similar stories such as *Tell England* (1922), highlighted this contradiction in definition and underlines how difficult it is to delineate such boundaries: forty-five years after *Tell England* was published, Raymond reread his book—which possessed the same kind of romantic friendship—and was awestruck by the 'indubitable but wholly unconscious homosexuality in it.'[102] Much more famous writers such as Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves would tread similar lines in their post-war, biographically-inspired works. Sassoon, for example, would create the fictional Dick Tiltwood to represent the ill-fated David Thomas, with whom he had fallen in love during the war, whilst Graves confessed to '[falling] in love with a boy three years younger' at Charterhouse, also named Dick in *Good-bye To All That*.[103] Highlighting the importance of these contradictory relationships further, and suggesting romantic, public-school inspired friendship between men was more central to (upper-class) masculine identity than may be assumed, Paul Fussell relates the 'idealistic' infatuations of pre-war schoolboys to those experienced by officers during the Great War towards their men, positioning the notion of 'temporary homosexuality' as an '[antidote] against loneliness and terror.'[104] This was, then,

---

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

[102] Ernest Raymond, *The Story of My Days: An Autobiography 1888-1922* (London: Cassell, 1968), p. 180.

[103] Siegfried Sassoon, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 241; Adrian Caesar, *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 73-74; Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*, revised 2nd edn (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 48.

[104] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 272.

a fundamental (but transgressive, in the eyes of adult masculinity) lesson learnt from the public school experience, and the stress and all-male environment of the war facilitated such intimate bonds beyond adolescence, despite convention suggesting boys would grow out of it. Recalling Fussell's assertions, Adrian Caesar similarly relates Sassoon's representation of this relationship to the 'idealised love' of the public school, complicating the interplay between homosexuality, perceptions of homosexuality, and 'pure' schoolboy love all the more.[105]

The impact of such a relationship is not, therefore, negligible; Alec Waugh later remarked that '[t]he schoolboy has read *The Hill*. He expects every Verney to find a Desmond. […] Every boy must have his 'special friend'.'[106] Thus, whilst a boy reading *The Hill* in 1905 may not have any sense of the homosexual undertones now acknowledged within it, he is being drawn into an ideology surrounding male-male friendship which is highly fraught with contradictions and, as Toda suggests, 'dangers.' Whilst a loving relationship between two schoolboys is accepted, even sought after, these same sentiments could land an adult man in trouble, indicating that standards of masculinity and acceptability shifted as a boy grew older; like Fussell's 'temporary homosexuality,' Toda argues that love between men was often fixed 'in the realm of youth.'[107] When the war came along in 1914, these boundaries were complicated all the more. It is no wonder that uncertainties over what was appropriate were rife. Additionally, as will soon be discussed more fully, there was a desire to keep the knowledge of homosexuality away from young men—and yet, here is an intense male-male relationship within one of the most popular public-school books of the period. This must have influenced the identity and self-understanding of some readers. In his study of homosexuality in London from 1885 to 1914, Cook makes the compelling argument that newspaper coverage of scandals such as Wilde's, whilst condemning the culprit, may also have 'provided solace and reassurance, and perhaps a role model and map' for those who related to the particular transgression being criticised.[108] This further highlights the importance of studying the press regarding the formation of masculine identity, but is also hugely pertinent

---

[105] Caesar, *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves*, p. 74.
[106] Alec Waugh, *Public School Life: Boys Parents Masters* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1922), pp. 249-250.
[107] Toda, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', p. 141.
[108] Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, p. 4.

to public-school novels such as *The Hill*; whilst aiding in the formation of a hegemonic ideal, they also allowed alternative identities to take hold. As Cook points out, the newspapers' loud proclamations of illicit behaviour also proclaimed that illicit behaviour was possible, and indicated where it was happening and with whom: the writer—crucially—could not control interpretations of their work, exposing contradictory meanings and 'inconsistencies in prevailing norms and values.'[109] Once again, it is obvious that there are immense uncertainties and contradictions within masculine ideology and expectations at this time, and even childhood fiction did little to help.

Even more ambivalent were certain topics within the press—such as the discourse surrounding male corsetry. As early as 1895, it was being reported that 'a London corset maker makes hundreds of pairs of stays for men every year,' referencing the utilisation of the garment by army officers.[110] Another writer told the *Telegraph* that the practice was 'on the increase, especially among army officers, who wear them to enable their uniforms to fit more accurately.'[111] It is curious that these writers single out army officers as a justification; the fact lends further credence to soldiers being held as the pinnacle of masculinity—and if they could wear corsets (a contradictory concept), all other men should be able to as well. Nevertheless, many prejudices remained against the corset, and the typical arguments revolved around its unmanliness—though many corset-wearing men counterattacked, arguing that they could enhance men's ability to fulfil their masculine duties. Across the period of this study, several long-running discourses existed; within the *Daily Mail*, a back-and-forth series of letters was published throughout December 1900 solely on the topic of male corsetry. One Percy Roberts worries that tight-lacing will 'make [his sons] less manly.'[112] Again, there is a sense of unease about what is considered proper for men, especially with the introduction of garments considered feminine. Interestingly, 'Cantab.' responded by reassuring him that many athletes and 'many of our most distinguished officers habitually wear corsets.'[113] Again, officers are grouped with athletes as the pinnacle of manliness to reassure Roberts that his children will not be unmanly. Surprisingly, the consensus seems to have swayed towards

---

[109] *Ibid*.

[110] 'Corsets for Men', *Leeds Times*, 25 May 1895. British Library Newspapers (p. 7).

[111] A Male Wearer of Corsets, 'Men in Corsets', *Tamworth Herald*, 13 June 1896. British Library Newspapers (p. 8).

[112] Percy M. B. Roberts, 'Tight Lacing for Smart Boys', *Daily Mail*, 3 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 4).

[113] Cantab., 'Tight-Lacing for Smart Boys', *Daily Mail*, 5 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 4).

the use of corsets; Conway argued that there was 'no reason why man or boy should not sit or walk as upright as woman or girl,' and again argued against Roberts' fears.[114] Much like 'Croppie' in chapter one, Conway draws upon historical example (another interesting inversion of the more commonplace invocation of history to enforce hegemonic manliness, and pertinent to chapter three) to posit that 'stays were introduced and first worn by men.'[115] Markedly, the matter was a contentious one.

By 1913 the editor of the 'Clothes and the Man' column in *The Sunday Times* was almost desperate for correspondents to cease writing in on the subject—and yet, more than once, corsetry discourse took pride of place at the top of the column, suggesting it was known to catch readers' attention. And, despite his conspicuous position, the editor does not seem prejudiced against men's use of the garment. In January 1913, he dealt with one reader who 'objected to the word corsets on the score that it was not English'; to this, Discerner consulted his 1852 thesaurus, and assured the disgruntled reader that 'corset' was not italicised.[116] Furthermore, the correspondent asked whether another corset-wearing reader would even be able to play cricket, football, or golf. Much as was seen in chapter one, the correspondent is attempting to establish a dichotomy between the foreign 'other'—in this

[114] Conway, 'Tight-Lacing for Smart Boys', *Daily Mail*, 6 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 4).
[115] *Ibid*.
[116] Discerner, 'Clothes and the Man', *The Sunday Times*, 26 January 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive (p. 14).

case, the ineffectual, corset-wearing man—and the true Englishman, who could play English games and was not defined by French vocabulary. This is an unmistakable reflection of the wider discourse occurring contemporaneously; that debates concerning physical culture, national efficiency and degeneration could extend to the simple wearing of corsets—which is made to seem like a world-ending affair by some accounts—is both impressive and insightful in terms of what it offers about the fragile state of British masculinity before the Great War. Effeminacy went beyond being an annoyance; it is, again, painted as a threat. Discerner, unperturbed, goes on to quote from another correspondent who finds the wearing of corsets beneficial, for he was 'troubled by rheumatism in the left shoulder'; corsets gave him the ability to exercise without pain and discomfort.[117] By the end of the year, in October 1913, Discerner refers to 'the great corset question,' and suggests a man is not effeminate for wearing a corset—though 'some of the men who wear corsets are undoubtedly effeminate men.'[118] Discerner does not noticeably speak or judge with the disdain so clear in other articles, though he confesses to preferring a 'good belt'; his openness and light-heartedness on the subject, in so public a forum, entirely juxtaposes the attitude of writers such as those in *The Gentlewoman*

Figure 10: Reast's Patent Invicorator Belt, from an advertisement in from *The Queen*, circa 1893; Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Invicorator_belt.png

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] Discerner, 'Clothes and the Man', *The Sunday Times*, 19 October 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive (p. 14).

just several years prior, and complicates the subject further. After reading so many letters on the subject, Discerner announced that 'so far, I have not had one letter to say that the writer had taken to wearing corsets and had given them up again.'[119] Interestingly, and most pertinently, he goes on to address men who believe men in corsets to be effeminate by quoting from one such letter: 'I hunt twice a week, shoot, and generally lead an active outdoor life, which tends to show that I do not wear corsets for effeminate reasons.'[120] After all the discourse previously offered, this is particularly interesting. Whilst newspapers gave critics and those who favoured hegemonic interpretations of masculinity a voice, they also gave a voice to their opponents—the men who did not entirely fit acceptable public standards. In this way, then, whilst the press gave a wider audience to the standards of masculinity sought after in the face of degeneration and military failure, it also taught men alternate ways of expression. Even more significantly, these debates were taking place in well-read newspapers of the day. Thus, newspapers and periodicals were, undoubtedly, some of the most prominent arenas in which masculine identity was constructed, dismantled, and reconstructed, supporting Cook's assertion that the press was also critical in developing alternative identities.

If the discourse surrounding male corsetry provoked ambivalent responses from contemporaries, what was more clear-cut—but more complex for modern historians—was the treatment of those who transgressed the boundaries of mere effeminacy: those who cross-dressed, or were homosexual, for example. Though effeminate characteristics and the men who possessed them received little positive attention, the discussion around them was, clearly, open; men were constantly seeking advice and actively shifting and shaping perceptions of masculinity in the process. Cross-dressers and homosexuals had no such leniency—they were the absolute, undisputed antithesis to the useful, manly man, often associated with criminality. They were warnings to the rest of society, as will come to be seen. Interestingly, Tosh suggests, consolidating previous assertions, that as hostility towards homosexuality increased, the focus on such a minority reflects the 'embattled quality of hegemonic masculinity'; transgressors were a threat to the 'domestic ideal,' rejecting 'bourgeois masculinity' and placing personal pleasure above duty, all whilst additionally

---

[119] Discerner, 'Clothes and the Man', *The Sunday Times*, 2 November 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive (p. 19).
[120] *Ibid.*

complicating the 'conventional polarization between the sexes.'[121] Tosh's claim reaffirms the theme already established throughout this chapter: that an obsession with both effeminacy and the physical state of British masculinity suggested an underlying lack of foundational stability within the concept of British manliness. The fragility displayed at this time evidently went beyond the failures of the Boer War and fears over degeneracy alone; there was a deep-rooted and increasingly prevalent fear of masculine inadequacy, lending to the sense that there was a definite period of crisis, or at least immense disorder. The fracturing of masculine identity, as transgressive identities developed, did not help. Tosh posits that homosexuality was a 'powerful metaphor of decadence and subversion,' supported by Cook, who explores the association of homosexuality with neurasthenia and degeneracy; it is clear that anyone who did not reside within traditional masculine expectations was seen as a threat to national prosperity.[122]

If *The Hill* and its genre of romantic public-school friendship possessed allusions to homosexuality, other mediums were not so reticent when it came to condemning it. Perhaps unexpectedly, *Modern Man*—ever the vehicle of ideal masculinity—directly alludes to homosexuality in a 1909 article about 'Another Oscar Wilde Case.'[123] Here, Godfrey Burwood states that the subject's two choices are either to 'quit the country or commit suicide.'[124] This slots into the rhetoric of English superiority and the fears surrounding degeneracy already established throughout this chapter; homosexuality is incompatible with English masculinity. It is, furthermore, the 'blackest and most abominable offence,' and Burwood wonders whether the perpetrator can even be considered a man; in a curious reference to the magazine's support of the army, Burwood also draws upon the 'average soldier'—'a man and a gentleman'—to bolster his condemnation.[125] Remarkably, though, Burwood seems to be aware of the contradiction proposed by Cook, and stresses that it is 'of supreme importance […] that the young men of to-day should not have presented before them an example of foul and unnatural crime'; depraved public men have 'a dangerous effect,' and for the sake of the community, it is best to keep details of this crime out of the paper.[126]

---

[121] Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', p. 338.
[122] *Ibid*.; Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, p. 81.
[123] Godfrey Burwood, 'Another Oscar Wilde Case. A Sensational Exposure', *Modern Man*, 11 December 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[124] *Ibid*.
[125] *Ibid*.
[126] *Ibid*.

Ignoring the fact that Burwood is, himself, exposing the crime to his readers—he even makes a direct reference to Wilde—he is drawing upon the masculine rhetoric of duty to his country in an attempt to shield young men from being corrupted. That he is so concerned raises questions over whether the immense publicity surrounding Wilde, and the subsequent cases featured periodically in the papers, did have a notable effect on contemporaries and their understanding of homosexuality—as Cook suggests it did. This is, of course, statistically hard to gauge—but it would feed into the heightened intolerance of homosexuality in this period. Most disturbingly, Burwood even suggests that those who meet 'such degenerates take the law into their own hands.'[127]

Likewise, accounts of cross-dressing were treated warily. Some articles attempted to, once again, distance the crime Englishmen by specifying the nationality of the criminal. Ernest Cole, for example, 'attired in female dress [and] effeminate in bearing, voice, and countenance,' was stated as being of 'German nationality.'[128] This likely did not help fears of invasion and racial degeneration. Other articles could not use nationality as a barrier, however. 1910 saw the arrest of Peter Roberts for 'loitering in female attire with intent to commit a felony'; dressed as a woman, he attempted to give two shillings to the witness to let him go.[129] The Stipendiary, after 'a number of convictions for similar offences were proved,' stated that he believed 'under the new Act he would be kept in prison without any limitation'—an important link between the transgression of masculine boundaries, crime, and new, official measures being taken against degenerative behaviour .[130] Throughout all of these articles, though there is a sense of curiosity and novelty not present in reports on homosexuals—the act of cross-dressing is consistently linked with criminal activity. Significantly, and in the same vein, incidents in both 1906 and 1907 saw the story of William Thomas Rowlands being reported across the country. Having just served 'six months with hard labour for false pretences,' Rowlands again found himself in trouble in Llandudno for convincing shopkeepers to give him female garments, which he would later be arrested whilst

---

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] 'Rogue Dressed in Female Attire', *Aberdeen Journal*, 16 January 1901. British Library Newspapers (p. 6).

[129] 'Dressed as a Woman', *Cornishman*, 14 April 1910. British Library Newspapers (p. 3).

[130] *Ibid.*

wearing.[131] Apparently, the boy 'was a sharp lad, but took silly notions,' revealing a condescending attitude towards his behaviour.[132] Ultimately, once more, he was sentenced.

It is worth mentioning here that, if historical figures were drawn from the past to create new ideals for men—a concept to be fully explored in chapter three—they were utilised as warnings, too. One excellent example of questionable scholarship comes in the form of *A Prince of Pleasure* by Hugh Stokes, a 1913 biography of Philippe d'Orléans. Brother to the famous Sun King, Louis XIV, Philippe was known to have male lovers—chiefly the ('evil,' according to Stokes) Chevalier de Lorraine; additionally, it was not uncommon for him to appear in women's attire.[133] He has, consequently, not been treated well by history. Elisabetta Lurgo argues that few have been so unfairly treated, as Philippe's homosexuality has caused contempt among scholars and, as in Stokes' case, has facilitated their moralising.[134] Interestingly, this links to Mangan's argument regarding public-school rhetoric functioning as 'an instrument of moral instruction.'[135] This is exactly why it is important to consider why an Edwardian historian would study such an unlikely figure, and what those reasons may reveal about insecurities and fears surrounding masculinity at this time. Stokes himself states, in his preface, that Philippe was 'in most respects a contemptible character,' and his intention is 'to show how personal motives and private hates were allowed to influence […] European policy,' a pertinent topic in 1913.[136] He possessed an 'innate predisposition towards effeminacy,' 'unfortunately' encouraged by his mother; he 'inherited the weaknesses of his Italian ancestors,' and 'he detested all sports.'[137] The primary positive remark Stokes has to offer in almost 400 pages is that he 'was never a coward'—Philippe's war record makes this unnegotiable.[138] That this is singled out as his one positive trait is significant, considering its military ties. Regardless, it is not enough; in a clear reflection of the rhetoric surrounding

---

[131] 'In Female Attire', *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, 27 August 1907. British Library Newspapers (p. 2).
[132] *Ibid*.
[133] Hugh Stokes, *A Prince of Pleasure: Philip of France and His Court, 1640-1701* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1913), p. 83.
[134] Elisabetta Lurgo, *Philippe d'Orléans: Frère de Louis XIV* (Paris: Perrin, 2018) pp. 7-8.
[135] J. A. Mangan, 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 23.3 (1975), 324-335 (p. 326).
[136] Hugh Stokes, *A Prince of Pleasure: Philip of France and His Court, 1640-1701* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1913), p. v.
[137] *Ibid*., pp. 68-70.
[138] *Ibid*., p. 70.

national efficiency, Stokes amazingly goes so far as to describe the 'worthlessness' of Philippe.[139] Compare this to depictions of Wilde, and other men on trial for homosexuality. As Cook underlines, newspapers 'noisily rearticulated' criticism of homosexual behaviour; effeminacy and femininity in appearance was emphasised—fashionable dress, no facial hair, a symbol of degeneracy.[140] The press created 'a version of the 'homosexual',' and Stokes' depiction of Philippe fits neatly into this rhetoric of setting homosexual identity—recognisable by its degenerate characteristics—in opposition to virile, English masculinity.[141] Stokes additionally emphasises the depravity of those who were effeminate—just as they weakened the nation, they inflicted misery upon those around them, too. Though he blindly refutes the claim that Philippe's first wife was disloyal, Stokes has no qualms about repeating the rumour that Lorraine poisoned her.[142] In a remarkable display of scholarship, he draws upon contemporary sources without any thought to their biases. Reviews at the time of publication did not think anything of Stokes' methods; one advert review in the *Pall Mall Gazette* echoes Stokes directly, referring to Philippe as a 'contemptible character.'[143] So, though it seems unusual for an Edwardian to write about such a character, just as Lurgo points out, there is no doubt that the intent was to moralise—illustrating how the obsession with effeminacy and masculinity managed to colour even historical scholarship. Correlating with newspaper discourse at the time, such an example of popular scholarship for the general public could lead to a much wider argument illustrating how the prejudices and intentions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have shaped, and continue to shape, our understanding of events and historical figures—especially those who have been much maligned, such as Philippe. In any case, Stokes' work effectively serves here, especially in conjunction with coverage of cross-dressers and homosexuals, to demonstrate the strength and persistence of the desire to manipulate masculine identity, especially following the Boer War—even in the most unsuspecting of places. On an occasion when a figure's homosexuality was recognised, he was utilised as a warning to other men, his image almost entirely made up by unfavourable tropes propagated by the press from the 1890s onwards.

---

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 271.
[140] Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, pp. 4, 61.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[142] Stokes, *A Prince of Pleasure: Philip of France and His Court, 1640-1701*, p. 295.
[143] 'Books Received', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 October 1912. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.

Despite this, though, it remains clear that those outside the expectations of hegemonic masculinity were not entirely defeated in their determination to be themselves—suggesting, unlike Hattersley's earlier assertion, that this period was not entirely one of setbacks. This relates to Alice Bonzom, Karen Harvey, and Alexandra Shepard's need for further insight into transgressive identities.[144] More intimate accounts of cross-dressing appeared in publications such as *New Photo Fun*, which Peter Farrer has been critical in collating. Importantly, Farrer points out that the masculine hegemony, though omnipresent, was not all-powerful.[145] One such account is particularly interesting. 'Grateful,' subverting his 'petticoat punishment,' takes pride in his 'dainty clothes,' adopting skirts and corsets willingly; when his mother suggested, at eighteen, that he should 'resume masculine attire,' they came to the agreement that he could 'continue wearing girls' clothing and corsets, but [his] outer clothes' would be masculine.[146] This is an explicit and interesting bending of societal expectations; the correspondent and his mother were obviously aware of the repercussions of wearing women's clothing, but cared enough to come to a compromise. Similarly, another boy was encouraged in his 'girlishness' by his governess; eventually, he was allowed to 'be brought up as a girl.'[147] There is no indication that the correspondent is ashamed of his lifestyle; perhaps most tellingly, this correspondent signed himself as 'A Boy Who is a Girl.'[148] In the same vein, cases of this nature appeared in Havelock Ellis' 1928 study, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. Drawing upon Cook's argument of literary visibility, one of Ellis' subjects recalled, as a boy, reading about 'a young man dressed as a girl' in *Modern Society*; when he had the paper to himself, he read 'a page or two of readers' correspondence on 'effeminate men'.'[149] Most notably, he had, up to then, believed he was 'unique in [his]

---

[144] Alice Bonzom, '"Human Derelicts" and the Deterioration of the Nation: Discourses of Identity and Otherness in Victorian and Edwardian Britain (1860s-1910s)', *French Journal of British Studies*, XXVII-2 (2022), (para. 45 of 46) in <http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/9360> [accessed 19 October 2022]; Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 274-280 (pp. 277-278.).

[145] Peter Farrer, 'In Female Attire: Male Experiences of Cross-Dressing—Some Historical Fragments', in *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-Dressing and Sex-Changing*, ed. by Richard Ekins and Dave King (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 9-26 (p. 17).

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[147] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[148] *Ibid.*

[149] D. S., in Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 7 vols (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, Publishers, 1928), VII, p. 54.

thoughts'; from that point his 'inner desire was to live as a girl.'[150] This, then, highlights the importance of these discussions in the press; though there may be scornful reactions, at their core, the stories and articles conveyed real, transgressive identities to their readers—allowing nonconformist men to find their own identity. The sheer number of cases, too, indicates a level of flexibility in the interpretation of British masculinity at this time; many continued to dress as women despite what was expected of them, highlighting that hegemonic masculinity was not an inherent attribute, and plenty of men across society were able to reject the pressure to conform—along with the women who supported them—even if it was only in private.

Popular writer E. M. Forster displayed the same stubborn defiance as the cross-dressing correspondents in his 1913-1914 novel *Maurice*, criticising the attitude towards homosexuality in England; though the book would not be able to be published until 1971, it gives important insight into the hopes and anger of transgressive men at the start of the century. Just as significantly, it also suggests the Wilde scandal did not bring everything to a standstill; though the arguments of Sinfield and Taddeo cannot be disputed, as seen with the myriad of examples of cross-dressers, a transgressive network of alternative identities clearly continued to flourish out of sight right up to the outbreak of the Great War. Stressing the prevalence of the hegemonic rhetoric, Forster utilises it in his work. Toda makes the particularly pertinent point that a great deal of Forster's criticism was levelled at the hypocrisy of the public school system, in one instance even parodying the rhetoric of 'effort, Englishness and male bonding' during a cricket match, of all sports, to accommodate the blossoming affair between Maurice and Alec.[151] The reversal of public school discourse, Toda convincingly posits, is used to 'validate' their relationship—and highlights an astute awareness of the contradictions underpinning masculine ideology which further lends to the notion that masculinity was a fragile concept.[152] Furthermore, despite the assertion of those such as Burwood that homosexuality is fundamentally incompatible with English masculinity, Forster cleverly subverts this argument, establishing an identity that is not at odds with English manliness. Alec, deciding not to leave England, gives Forster the ability to characterise what Tosh argues society feared. When Maurice learns that Alec stayed, he

---

[150] *Ibid*.
[151] Toda, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', p. 142.
[152] *Ibid*.

realises that they 'must live outside class, without relations or money.'[153] Already, Forster is drawing a clear line between the rhetoric of duty and selflessness, and the ability to live for oneself and to love freely without societal judgement; the relationship, moreover, crossed class boundaries, another subversive concept. He goes on to state that 'England belonged to them. That, besides companionship, was their reward. Her air and sky were theirs, not the timorous millions' […].'[154] In an atmosphere terrified of degeneracy, looking to recreate England's glorious past, this is particularly damning for those who believed hegemonic masculinity would restore it; to Forster, it was they who chose to live as themselves outside of society who would strip back England to its fundamental heart. They had no thought to be useful for national defences, nor for gaining international prestige; their existence is entirely at odds with what men were being told to embody at that time, underlining Forster's awareness of his position and his criticism of the ideologies and institutions in place to entrap them. Still, in giving Maurice and Alec a happy ending—which he saw as 'imperative'—Forster suggests transgressive identities at this point were not without hope; they did not see themselves as entirely limited by convention, nor did they see their position as entirely futile.[155] Evidently, in so many ways, masculinity was no clear-cut concept. Encompassing these alternative identities developing against adversity among the shadows, it was constantly evolving and redeveloping throughout the period.

Conclusion

It is clear, then, that between 1890 and 1914 there was an increasing obsession with the state of British masculinity and the degeneracy of men—both physically and morally. As such, efforts were redoubled to enforce the public-school ethos developed throughout the nineteenth century; significantly, the reach of athleticism was made more accessible for the working classes, symbolising a desire to create a coherent type of masculine physical culture across society. Rising literacy rates and the publication of new magazines such as *The Magnet* aided this venture; working-class boys could now be drawn into an idealised public school world they would have never been able to experience otherwise, learning the values

[153] E. M. Forster, *Maurice* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 208.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 209.
[155] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

propagated there without physically attending. Simultaneously, incredibly popular fiction books such as *The Hill* worked to the same end, explicitly giving guidance to boys and young men—whilst contradictorily inducting them into the romantic values of friendship and sportsmanship critical to public schools at this point. Despite criticism within the popular press, transgressive masculine identities continued to develop, signalling a challenge to the hegemony, and underlining fundamental fragilities within the ideologies underpinning English manliness. It is, therefore, impossible to suggest that masculine identity was stationary at the turn of the century; instead, it was constantly shifting and possessed innumerable uncertainties and complexities, suggesting once more that there was a specific period of change, and making it possible to suggest that there was some kind of ongoing crisis.

Chapter Three: King Arthur, Medievalism, and the Romanticisation of the Glorious Past

Introduction

When, in 1917, Siegfried Sassoon criticised women for believing 'that chivalry redeems the war's disgrace,' his choice of language associated with martial masculinity was no accident.[1] Over the twenty years before the Great War, the notion of chivalry—reinvigorated for the modern age—had become a focal point of British masculine identity, and especially so after the Boer War, when figures such as Robert Baden-Powell launched campaigns to transform the nation's boys into dutiful 'knights.' Throughout the nineteenth century, a focus on medievalism and classicism culminated in a wave of works for every age group and class; for Victorians, the Middle Ages represented an 'antidote' against the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution.[2] Significantly, the key figure to subsequently emerge as a role model for boys and men was none other than King Arthur. In 1895, it was declared that 'no character in fiction or history is nobler'—and since Tennyson's *Idylls*, 'none has been more universally popular.'[3] Contemporaneously, the 1890s saw an academic reappraisal of Arthur; he was, once more, revived as a historically true figure, heightening his appeal for a nation longing for military success and stability.[4] As numerous scholars, such as Nicholas Higham points out, 'how we view King Arthur has long reflected how we feel about the past'—an argument that can be applied to medievalism and classicism more broadly; though this was no new phenomena, by the turn of the century—when fears of degeneration and military failure were rife—romanticised episodes from England's glorious past subsequently served a dual purpose as both a preventative and a salve. The impact of this seemed to pay off when, in 1912, the sinking of the *Titanic* allowed the press to praise the uniquely 'British' form of

---

[1] Siegfried Sassoon, 'Glory of Women', in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1983), p. 100, 4.
[2] Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 40.
[3] '"King Arthur" At The Lyceum', *The Standard*, 14 January 1895. British Library Newspapers (p. 3).
[4] Nicholas J. Higham, *King Arthur: The Making of the Legend* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 4.

chivalry notably demonstrated across the classes during the disaster, bolstering the importance of the concept and giving a glimpse into how chivalry—encapsulated by the ideal of dying like a gentleman—was critical to contemporaries. What also emerges throughout this chapter is the deliberate manipulation and selectivity which influenced the work, and therefore the values, available to the British public, especially young boys, consequently suggesting the specific aim—of reshaping British masculine identity to fit a chivalric mould—was a conscious one, and seen as necessary for the age. Like Higham, Richard Howells crucially argues that 'myth frequently incorporates the wishful rewriting of history,' and this can be seen everywhere, from the reinterpretation of Arthurian legends to the press coverage of the *Titanic* disaster. Pertinently, the notion of chivalry slots neatly beside notions of physical culture and militarism; ultimately, it is the ideology underpinning British masculine identity at this time.

Arthurian Revival

Though his appearance in popular consciousness was not new by the end of the nineteenth century, one of the most significant, and interesting, figures to emerge as an ideal of British masculinity was that of King Arthur, along with his knights. Media of all kinds, and for all ages and classes, reinterpreted his story for the modern audience; books, poems, plays—even films. It is in children's literature, however, that the Arthurian legends are most critical, for they actively worked to produce a romanticised image of knighthood for boys to emulate. Whilst we have seen dozens of examples of the physical development of masculinity from childhood, the introduction of Arthurian literature to children plays on their moral and intellectual growth. Velma Bourgeois Richmond, in her excellent study of the Edwardian use of Arthurian stories for children, argues that these retold tales were 'preliminary to reading the original literature as adults, inspired by early experiences of fine storytelling, chivalric ideals, and national awareness.'[5] As will become increasingly obvious, both chivalry and nationalism were heavily intertwined, and made up an important part of British masculinity. However, Richmond's argument is also critical, for it suggests the development of the masculine ideal was not confined to childhood; Edwardians purposefully chose material that

[5] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, 'King Arthur and His Knights for Edwardian Children', *Arthuriana*, 23.3 (2013), 55-78 (p. 55).

would encourage constant growth and learning into adulthood, establishing a long-standing narrative of chivalric influences that would adapt to each new stage of life, offering appropriate lessons for the maintenance of national strength.

Thus, by the 1910s, a boy could find these works everywhere. Much like the finely-made books mentioned in the first chapter, beautiful volumes of work focusing on Arthur and his knights appeared as prizes for children.[6] Alternatively, social reformer W. T. Stead established a cheap, accessible series of books called 'Books for Bairns.' The first of these books arrived in 1896, and all would, crucially for this study, pertain to contemporary moral principles.[7] It is unsurprising, then, that King Arthur appeared in several numbers. Explicitly, Stead wrote in one introduction that 'when you come to pass hence, you may have been like King Arthur, tender, brave and chivalrous, loving-hearted and just.'[8] There is no ambiguity here; children are instructed to be like Arthur, with all his manly, chivalrous virtues. The stories were, furthermore, accompanied by illustrations, allowing children to follow and understand the values of the narrative, even if they were very young—and making it all the more visually appealing for every age.[9] Critically, even poorer children were encouraged to read the original works, accommodated by juxtaposing 'a simplified prose retelling with long passages of poetry.'[10] A focus on specifically guiding boys' behaviour to emulate that of the Arthurian hero was commonplace across the classes; that there are so many publications focused on doing so, even under the guise of entertainment, heightens the pressure to conform to the chivalric standard of masculinity considerably.

The widespread access to these works and their subsequent importance, therefore, is indisputable; even after the Great War, it was found in schools that Arthurian books were third in the category of 'great and steady demand,' behind Shakespearean stories and *Robinson Crusoe*.[11] Boys from all backgrounds were exposed to the great King and his knights, cementing their chivalric manner as a firm influence on children growing up during

---

[6] *Ibid*., p. 56.
[7] Sally Wood Lamont, *W.T. Stead's Books for the Bairns* (2022) <https://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/w-t-steads-books-for-the-bairns/> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, 'King Arthur and His Knights for Edwardian Children', *Arthuriana*, 23.3 (2013), 55-78 (p. 58).
[10] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[11] *The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to Inquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926), p. 375.

this period. This links, moreover, with notions of classless nobility developed throughout the nineteenth century, underlined by Elly McCausland; the wider trend of medievalism suggested that, as chivalry depended on morality, Arthur's knights could be emulated by anyone—including children.[12] Even more importantly in the interests of relatability, and, subsequently, influence, King Arthur's origins often feature a rise from obscurity, and *Little Folks* published this tale for children in 1896. Loyal and selfless, Arthur faithfully seeks a sword for his foster brother, Sir Kaye: 'My dear brother Kaye shall *not* be without a sword to-day.'[13] It is due to this that he finds the sword in the stone, and is crowned king, but the story pointedly demonstrates that the virtues he would come to be famed for were no accident of his class, but were inherent long before he knew of his royal heritage. Thus, young readers are instructed, as per McCausland's argument, that neither class nor age is an obstacle to them achieving chivalric greatness, which would later be mirrored by Baden-Powell; enforcing such a strong message during boyhood makes it impossible to understate the impact of Arthurian stories on masculinity.

Collections of similar stories appeared for children, too, and were popular and praised by the press. Mary MacGregor's collection of Arthurian stories—richly illustrated—is one example; it was considered 'certain to find great favour with the little folks.'[14] Within it, MacGregor draws from Sir Thomas Malory and 'the old Welsh tales'—linking with the continuity young readers were supposed to follow as they grew—to lend a sense of authenticity to her work.[15] All the 'right' principles can be found within its pages, as in the works of Stead and countless others. Harkening back once more to the influence of women on men's capacity to be brave (and to women-writers and their influence on literature imbued with masculine instruction), alongside the shame of cowardice, Geraint establishes himself as 'Geraint the Brave' when he comes back 'a true knight' to save his love, Enid, 'the old whispers that he was a coward [fading] away.'[16] Sir Lancelot is 'gallant', the 'noblest knight' in Camelot.[17] By contrast,

---

[12] Elly McCausland, *Malory's Magic Book: King Arthur and the Child, 1862-1980* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2019), pp. 20-21.
[13] L. Agnes Talbot, 'How King Arthur Came to His Kingdom', *Little Folks: The Magazine for Boys and Girls; a Magazine for the Young*, 1896. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals
[14] 'For the Children', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 16 June 1905. British Library Newspapers.
[15] Mary MacGregor, *Stories of King Arthur's Knights* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, n.d.), preface.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

Gawaine is not a 'true knight,' and is thus a less sympathetic character; he is 'idle' and selfish.[18] The moral contrast here is defined, and along with the depicted shame associated with being a coward, fits neatly into the suggestion that such work sought to influence moral character. Thus, a consistent series of images and themes emerge, and it is impossible to suggest this did not influence British masculinity with generations of boys eagerly consuming them as they grew.

With the emphasis on 'correct' values, however, came purposeful manipulation. Richmond points out how certain details in stories were deemed 'unsuitable'; each selection of stories involved purposeful choice, and the 'avoidance of disturbing sexuality,' regardless of the original tales, was rife.[19] More recently, Andrew Lynch has similarly studied how nineteenth-century writing and censorship changed the Arthurian legends, especially with moral purpose. Even writers for adults were 'antipathetic' to both sexual content, and fight scenes; underlining, crucially, how the modern form of chivalry came about, they 'abridged and misleadingly moralized' them to suit the Victorian standard.[20] Few did not believe Arthur could provide a useful morale example to the modern audience, emphasising how, as Christabel Coleridge explores, people believed Arthur had been adapted to suit the time perfectly well with moral intention and effectiveness.[21] There was, however, an awareness of the changes made to Arthur and his legends—a recognition of the manipulation undertaken to make Arthur most useful to the age he found himself in. Coleridge, in a series of articles written for a younger audience, articulately explores this concept in consideration of Arthur as the 'English Ideal.' This is an insightful series, despite being a publication with a predominantly female audience, for it reveals much about the attitudes of the period towards Arthur and his legacy. Most memorable is, perhaps, the way Coleridge describes Arthur, who 'came earthwards on the long rays of the rising sun'; even in an analytical piece, his image is romanticised and markedly golden.[22] He is dutiful, selfless, and encourages the glory of all of those around him, rather than keeping it to himself. He is the English ideal, situated in a time

---

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
[19] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, 'King Arthur and His Knights for Edwardian Children', *Arthuriana*, 23.3 (2013), 55-78 (pp. 56-57).
[20] Andrew Lynch, '"Malory Moralisé": The Disarming of "Le Morte Darthur", 1800–1918', *Arthuriana*, 9.4 (1999), 81-93 (p. 81).
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[22] Christabel R. Coleridge, 'King Arthur as an English Ideal', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, 1 February 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.

of immense upheaval. However, it is also critical to consider how Coleridge, utilising original source material despite her young readers, considers the development of Arthur from the Middle Ages to her present—whether or not the 'ideal of heroism has risen between the sixth and nineteenth centuries.'[23] The 'heroic type,' she argues, 'develops, and Arthur has learned much and suffered much before he shines out on the present generation.'[24] The ideal, shifting from the 'gentleman' of the early nineteenth century, 'has broadened,' and he 'stands for something more than himself.'[25] This is significant, for it highlights the awareness that, just as Arthur had before been influenced by the gentleman of the Byronic age, he now stood as a figure who had been specifically reinterpreted for the modern day; he was not Malory's Arthur. This, in turn, is important to consider in light of Higham's aforementioned argument that Arthur was a reflection of how society viewed the past; with the distinct ability to adapt to each age, Arthur could be important on a national scale, as the model of duty and selflessness, reflecting the glorious, romanticised ideals of the chivalric past. This was what boys at the *fin-de-siècle* could aspire to be. Across the years, many, such as Lord Lytton, had attempted to specifically depict Arthur as the 'ideal hero,' and each had left their mark; by the end of the century, that was what he stood for in English consciousness.[26]

Interestingly, Coleridge also remarks upon Arthur's visual development; it was in the nineteenth century that a 'much more definite personal description of the ideal hero' arises.[27] This is critical for both his relatability, especially to the youth, and his influence on the public imagination. Not only was he glorious in deed, but now he appears 'golden haired and bright faced' in 'the midst of battle'; the description of his 'frank and azure eyes' is vivid, and can be seen reflected in publications such as *The Magnet*, where virtues are often visible through the eyes and face.[28] Lynch points out that it was in the nineteenth century that the association between chivalry and boyhood delineated a shift from its medieval counterpart, which is especially relevant when considering how chivalry and the Arthurian corpus was utilised to

---

[23] *Ibid*.
[24] Christabel R. Coleridge, 'King Arthur, as an English Ideal', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, 1 March 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] *Ibid*.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] *Ibid*.

shape boyhood masculinity.[29] This was, then, a more recent phenomenon. Cementing his place as the 'English ideal,' Coleridge calls to mind the legend of his return and, though she writes in 1892, the prescience of her words for the next two decades is remarkable in consideration of how popular a figure Arthur remained throughout years of immense upheaval and uncertainty. 'As his mystic story is touched by successive hands,' as though proving the legend of the Once and Future King to be true, 'he comes again to shine upon the world and to light it for a little space. So doubtless he, or that Ideal which he embodies, will come, again and yet again […].'[30] This is perhaps the most important sentiment of Coleridge's work; Arthur, without returning physically, stands at the right moment with the ideals Britain feels its men are lacking—chivalry, selflessness, duty. As Coleridge posits, 'each succeeding Arthur should teach the next one to surpass himself'; again, there is the rhetoric of masculine improvement.[31] He, with so many writers across the years shaping him, is the culmination of all British, masculine success and wisdom to that point, and embodies the lessons needed to ensure prosperity can be regained. It is impossible to see the obsession with King Arthur during this difficult period as insignificant for British masculine identity; adapted as he was for the Victorian age, by the time of the Boer War he was a perfectly placed curative.

All this serves, therefore, to build up a deliberate, heavily romanticised image of the medieval world—but chivalry did not exist only in the abstract. Efforts were made to bring King Arthur and his knights to life in a multitude of ways. Underlining the importance of this period as one with new and immensely popular means of conveying ideologies, numerous films appeared based on Arthurian legends. Though many have not survived, the offerings included aptly-focused features such as *King Arthur; or, The Knights of the Round Table* (1910); even within newfangled mediums, the idyllic spectacle of Arthur and his court was

---

[29] Andrew Lynch, '"Malory Moralisé": The Disarming of "Le Morte Darthur", 1800–1918', *Arthuriana,* 9.4 (1999), 81-93 (p. 83).

[30] Christabel R. Coleridge, 'King Arthur, as an English Ideal', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church,* 1 March 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.

[31] Christabel R. Coleridge, 'King Arthur as an English Ideal', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church,* 1 February 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.

omnipresent.[32] On the stage, just months before Oscar Wilde's trials dominated public consciousness in 1895, the successful J. Comyns Carr play (accompanied by music by Arthur Sullivan) about Arthur made its debut, with the script swiftly appearing in book-form the same year.[33] Curiously, one writer assumed 'most thoughtful playgoers and players' would be 'impelled' to pick up the classics after seeing the play, hinting at the cyclical nature of all these various forms of media.[34] Written in almost Shakespearean English, the play was a spectacle, and presents similar notions remarked upon by Coleridge: Arthur is 'the light of all the world.'[35] When he dies, the wise Merlin assures that hope is not lost, and a distinctly patriotic image is evoked: Arthur's 'spirit, borne along from age to age, / Is England's to the end.'[36] Again, Arthur's immortality lies in his ability, not only to rise again, but to be carried through the ages as a shining moral example; his 'spirit'—the English, masculine ideal—stands for all the necessary values of duty, selflessness, and honesty. These are, usefully, the exact values stressed by the public-school ideology dominating hegemonic English masculinity at the time—underlining Arthur's immense, sustained relevance and capacity to influence, for he is precisely the figure for all boys to aspire to be, moulded into exactly what was needed at that time.

Visually, too, the play was admirable; with Henry Irving and Ellen Terry as Arthur and Guinevere, dramatic, illustrated pages were printed for the wider public, reminiscent of the illustrations in books.[37] Further highlighting the appeal of both Arthur and the values he represented, Arthurian scenes were also chosen for local pageants, with photographs of impressive, medieval creations appearing in newspapers nationwide. This reflected a much broader trend for spectacular pageantry across the country, with 1905 seeing the grand vision of Louis Napoleon Parker come to life at Sherborne's Norman castle, achieving 2000 ticket

---

[32] Kevin J. Harty, *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films About Medieval Europe* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999), p. 221.

[33] J. Comyns Carr, *King Arthur, A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895).

[34] '"King Arthur."', *The Era*, 12 January 1895. British Library Newspapers.

[35] Carr, *King Arthur, A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts*, p. 66.

[36] *Ibid*.

[37] '"King Arthur" at The Lyceum', *Graphic*, 19 January 1895. British Library Newspapers.

sales signalling the birth of the 'Edwardian historical pageant'; naturally, this captured the public's imagination and national press coverage.[38] Parker was, subsequently, commissioned to arrange pageants in Warwick in 1906, and then Dover in 1908, with dozens more materialising by 1910.[39] Notably, Parker already had experience in producing morale-boosting spectacles. *The Masque of War and Peace*, for example, was first performed in 1900 during the siege of Mafeking, in aid of widows and orphans of the household troops.[40] Presenting a contemporary, allegorical treatment of the Boer War, Parker's work highlights the British troops favourably, and imagines the outcome of peace; as Meghan Lau posits, whilst consoling audiences at a time when British victory was not guaranteed, 'history is interpreted in the light of a future victory.'[41] It is not surprising, then, that Parker's later work similarly works to strengthen the nation's confidence, especially regarding its men, by utilising triumphant scenes from British history. Dover appeared to have a particular penchant for Arthurian legends; the opening scene of 'the great Dover Pageant' was of King Arthur.[42] Resplendent in shiny armour in a historical setting, both the scene taking place and the photographs published in the press highlight the dissemination of grand Arthurian imagery, reminding the public of their glorious past—and, again, allowing ordinary people of all ages to take part in recreating it. It moreover demonstrates the enthusiastic taste the British public had for such stories and the efforts they would make to recreate them—as well as how the notion of spectacle, as with soldiers, can be applied to medieval knights to present them as appealing to the public. A different article wrote of 2,100 performers, and 5,000 children being specifically invited to witness the dress rehearsal, noteworthy in itself; emphasising the scale of the scenes, when Arthur marches away to fight Mordred, the battle is 'alight with the steel and gold of chivalry.'[43] Just like Coleridge, the writer utilises a lexical field of gold to associate chivalry and the past with splendour and glory; like the amateur play critic, the

---

[38] Michael Dobson, 'The Pageant of History: Staging the Local Past, 1905–39', in *Filming and Performing Renaissance History*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett and Adrian Streete (Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 163-177 (pp. 163-164).
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[40] Meghan Lau, 'Performing History: The War-Time Pageants of Louis Napoleon Parker', *Modern Drama*, 54.3 (2011), 265-286 (pp. 273-274).
[41] *Ibid*.
[42] 'The March of Events (Continued)', *The Graphic*, 25 July 1908. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
[43] 'Topical News Pictures', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 20 July 1908. British Library Newspapers (p. 5).

main focus remains on chivalry and the excellence of its display, particularly in association with battle—a pertinent image for a time of increased militarism and fears of invasion.

Robert Baden-Powell left no doubt as to his focus on chivalry when he established the Boy Scouts, also in 1908. Perhaps the most notable implementation of real-life chivalric practice, he aspired to create a new wave of young knights; in *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell dedicated a section to chivalry. It is worth noting here that fears existed over the British Empire falling as Rome had over a thousand years before; in the eighteenth century, Edward Gibbon attributed Rome's decline to 'immoderate greatness,' with 'prosperity [ripening] the principle of decay.'[44] Baden-Powell was particularly alert to this threat: 'Don't be disgraced like the young Romans,' he ordered, 'who lost the Empire of their forefathers by being wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them.'[45] Again, Arthurian chivalry was the go-to preventative for a generation scared of masculine ineptitude. Whilst romanticising the image of 'steel-clad horsemen' with their 'gallant' war-horses, Baden-Powell holds Arthur (as a real, historical figure) as an example of masculine, chivalric righteousness.[46] Linking to ideas of English gentlemanliness, he 'who made the rules of chivalry' was 'chivalrous to women of whatever class.'[47] Likewise, 'a knight (or scout) is at all times a gentleman'—and, linking to the notion of all boys being capable of chivalry, he states that a gentleman does not need money but 'is anyone who carries out the rules of chivalry of the knights.'[48] The basis of chivalry is, therefore, intended to be appealing for all classes. Appropriately, Baden-Powell lays down the 'laws of the knights' as a doctrine to follow, which boils down to the key characteristics seen countless times thus far: duty, bravery, honour, selflessness.[49] Alongside every other piece of popular media for boys, this ideology cannot be undervalued; a conscious effort was being made to shape England's boys in a mould dedicated to chivalric duty and the defence of their country. The propagation of this ideology by figures such as Baden-Powell, moreover, highlights that the crisis of the Boer War did influence the strength of these ideas; throughout the 1900s, the access to and creation

---

[44] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abr. by D. M. Low (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), P. 524.
[45] Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, 7th edn (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1915), p. 269.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 217.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[49] *Ibid.*

of chivalric, Arthurian content became a staple of boyhood masculinity; it was transformed into a moral learning tool for Edwardian boys.

More broadly, even the simple act of playing games—integral to English manliness—was associated with chivalric duty, as highlighted by Mark Girouard.[50] The code of chivalry was easily intertwined with the code of sportsmanship, and made for an even more potent ideology; as Alfred Austin declared: 'Why mourn ye the age of bright chivalry fled / While each knight of the bat has a fair one to win?'[51] In 1915, Newbolt believed the public-school 'love of games' stemmed 'from tournaments and the chivalric rules of war,' again connecting the modern generation of boys with the knights of old; as Girouard posits, reflecting further selectivity, the Victorians specifically chose 'the qualities which they admired in chivalry and remodelled games in the light of them.'[52] The knight, developed throughout the nineteenth century, was henceforth the figure to be. Everything was being geared, especially by the 1900s, to influence boys to act chivalrously. We come full circle from the first chapter; notions of militarism, physical culture, and national duty combine with the ideology of Arthurian legends to make a stronger, more authoritative narrative and ideology, underlining how potent a force in English society hegemonic masculinity was during this period. Though these concepts were, evidently, not new—particularly regarding Arthur—there is an obvious, concerted effort, in the aftermath of

Figure 1: Charles Ernest Butler's *King Arthur*
Charles Ernest Butler, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Ernest_Butler_-_King_Arthur.jpg

[50] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 235-236.
[51] Alfred Austin, 'Song', in *The Book of Cricket Verse*, ed. by Gerald Brodribb (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 22, ll. 7-8.
[52] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, pp. 235.

the Boer War, to mould boys and young men in his chivalric image, a fact supported by the increased militarism and physical culture as expressed through new organisations such as the Boy Scouts. Thus, though modern chivalry did not emerge because of the Boer War, it no doubt became more desirable due to the panic that followed it.

Having mentioned the inclusion of illustrations alongside many Arthurian texts, it is pertinent to note the legends also formed the basis for much grander pieces of art, reflecting the important and influential visual construction of Arthur and his stories. One of the most impressive is Charles Ernest Butler's painting of the King himself. Richard Barber dubs this painting 'the Edwardian view of Arthur,' and—completed in 1903—it is hard to disagree.[53] Glimpses of the poetry and prose which worked to develop and highlight Arthur's radiant appearance throughout the nineteenth century can be seen culminated in the golden curl of his hair, his noble face, flushed with youth—the 'signal of hope and comfort,' 'golden haired and bright faced,' which Coleridge so eloquently spoke of to her young readers.[54] The painting draws the reader to observe his physiognomy first, before leading the eyes to the bejewelled crown practically glowing above his head (the glint of his elaborate armour and even the vivid red of his cape are secondary considerations), depicting a glorious story without words. In the darkness of the battlefield, an almost heavenly light shines down upon Arthur, linking him and England's triumphant past to the religious righteousness stressed within accompanying texts, as well as highlighting the purity of both him and his cause. Depicted here just as he is written about in the texts so many were familiar with, Butler's work is nothing short of awe-inspiring, and underlines the impact of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on Arthur's memory and the ferocity with which Victorians and Edwardians invoked and romanticised his influential image.

Though paintings such as Butler's tell powerful stories through their composition alone, others went further—chiefly through the production of huge and elaborate tapestries. This stresses the all-encompassing nature of medieval and classical revivalism at this time; whilst architects sought to recreate the grand exteriors of the past, some such as William Morris sought to reinvigorate Britain's historical textile production, reintroducing the medieval style

---

[53] Richard Barber, *King Arthur: Hero and Legend* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986) p. 182.
[54] Christabel R. Coleridge, 'King Arthur, as an English Ideal', *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, 1 March 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.

high-warp method of weaving.[55] The Arts and Crafts Movement, spearheaded by Morris and John Ruskin, significantly—and pertinently—opposed the 'degeneracy of much mass-produced industrial design.'[56] Again, modernity was linked with the notion of degeneracy and being 'lesser'; it is symptomatic of a wider sense of dissatisfaction with the present and a yearning for history. That there was wider unhappiness suggests modern men were perhaps more predisposed to be seen as unmanly in an increasingly industrialised world, compared with an idealised past; with the re-introduction of medieval iconography and narratives, such as those of Arthur, this broader dissatisfaction with the degenerate present was crucial, as it allowed for chivalric concepts of masculinity and romantic images of knights and warrior-kings to come to the fore along with them, even if they were not intended to sway masculine ideals. This, therefore, makes the ideas even more omnipresent—and potent. Fittingly, William Knox D'Arcy commissioned a set of tapestries based on *Le Morte d'Arthur* which were completed throughout the 1890s; yet another testament to the popularity and desirability of this chivalric imagery, Laurence Hodson commissioned three tapestries for himself in 1895, and the full set was repeated for D'Arcy's colleague George McCulloch between 1898 and 1899.[57] A further order was made by Mary Middleton in 1900.[58] These, of course, prominently featured depictions of medieval knights undertaking their chivalrous deeds. Produced by Morris & Co, ten tapestries were designed by Edward Burne-Jones, with John Henry Dearle and Morris designing the decorative detail and heraldry respectively, underlining the effort and detail that went into the production of these pieces, and the investment certain people—notably, men—were willing to make for this type of imagery, suggesting it was both a statement and a demonstration of taste according to the principles of

---

[55] Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, *Holy Grail Tapestries - The Knights of the Round Table Summoned to the Quest by a Strange Damsel (The Summons) McCulloch* (2023) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTY2> [accessed 5 August 2023].

[56] Elizabeth A. Fleming, *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham, 2 vols (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), I, p. 185.

[57] Burne-Jones Catalogue Raisonne, *The Holy Grail Tapestries: Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine at the Chapel of the Sangreal, the Failure of Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine. A Morris & Co. Merton Abbey Tapestry from the Quest of the Holy Grail Series (Hodson)* (2019) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTcy> [accessed 5 August 2023]; Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, *Holy Grail Tapestries - The Knights of the Round Table Summoned to the Quest by a Strange Damsel (The Summons) McCulloch* (2023) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTY2> [accessed 5 August 2023].

[58] Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, *Holy Grail Tapestries - The Knights of the Round Table Summoned to the Quest by a Strange Damsel (The Summons) McCulloch* (2023) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTY2> [accessed 5 August 2023].

the day.[59] The finished pieces were evocative, colourful, and inspiring, the scenes chosen portraying the romanticised episodes of medieval chivalry and valour. In one panel depicting Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine, the visual strength of the knights is prominent; their armour and chainmail, despite being woven, are bright and reminiscent of metal; their shields and clothing are brightly coloured and eye-catching, and their horses are large and ornamented.[60] Similarly, another, depicting the arming and departure of the knights, is highly idealised and romantic; set in a natural, blooming landscape, the noble knights are bid farewell by a group of beautiful women adorned with flowers, engendering a poignant and appealing moment in time; importantly, this is reflective of a much wider body of medieval-style artwork, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Notably, though these were privately owned, the first completed panel, *The Attainment*, was exhibited at the 1893 Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and a reporter from *The Daily Chronicle* interviewed Morris himself; additionally, a feature in *The Studio* appeared dedicated to the tapestries at Stanmore Hall, alongside photographs of the works in situ.[61] These incredible depictions of one of the most notable, chivalric quests, undertaken in a period-appropriate medium, were therefore not entirely restricted from public view; underlining their significance, Linda Parry argues that they are undoubtedly 'the most significant tapestry series woven in the nineteenth century.'[62] These stories, and the values they conveyed, must have been important and held in high esteem for such effort to go into presenting and distributing them, especially in such an authentic manner. By the end of the nineteenth century, Arthurian tales and the attractiveness of medieval knights were firmly entrenched within British cultural consciousness, shaped, as Coleridge and Lynch point out, by the specific needs of the time, making these depictions more important in understanding contemporary masculinity. Alongside the literary depictions of King Arthur and his knights, these visual depictions underline the strength and significance of Arthurian chivalry and

---

[59] *Ibid*.

[60] Burne-Jones Catalogue Raisonne, *The Holy Grail Tapestries: Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine at the Chapel of the Sangreal, the Failure of Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine. A Morris & Co. Merton Abbey Tapestry from the Quest of the Holy Grail Series (Hodson)* (2019) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTcy> [accessed 5 August 2023].

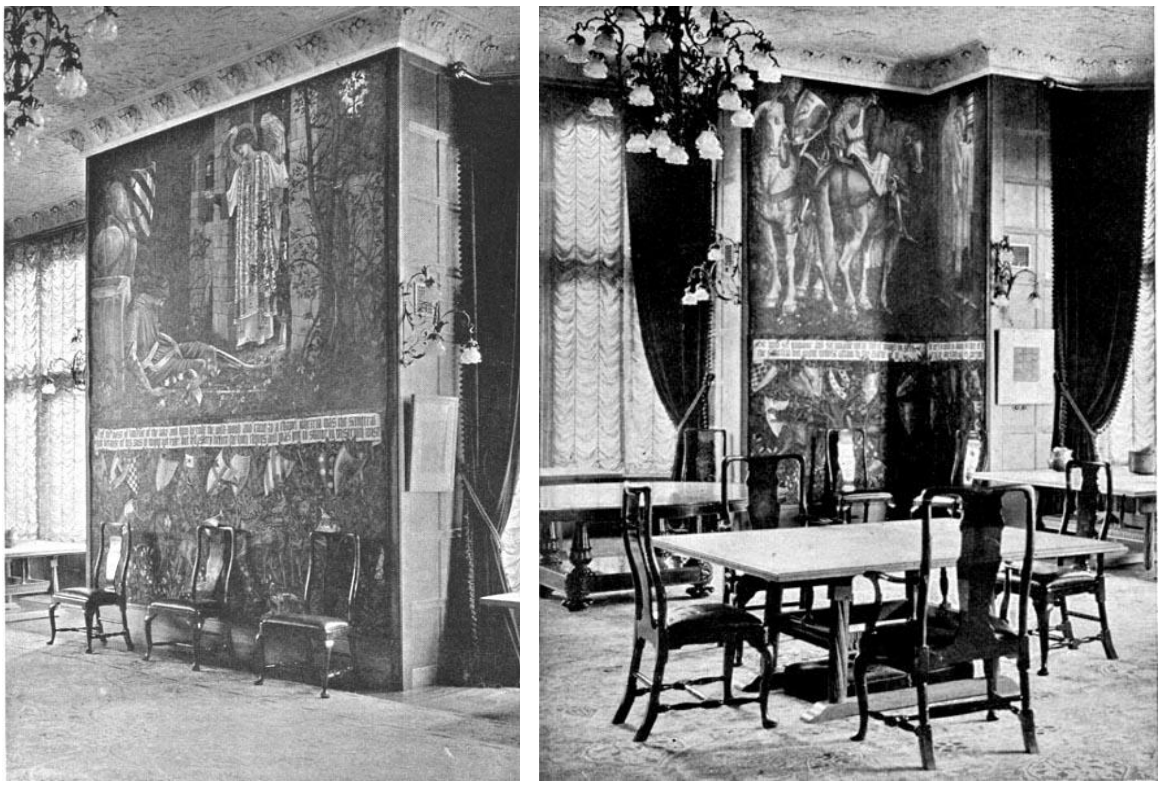
[61] Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (New York: The Viking Press, 1983), pp. 117; 'The Arras Tapestries of the San Graal at Stanmore Hall', *The Studio*, 15 (1898), 98-104 <https://victorianweb.org/painting/bj/series/stanmore.html> [accessed 14 September 2023].

[62] Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (New York: The Viking Press, 1983), pp. 116.

morality; furthermore, as well as highlighting—as in the case of Butler's painting—the interplay and immense influence between nineteenth and twentieth-century literature and the popular memory and visual depictions of the stories, they suggest a sense of omnipresence, with literary and visual media appearing across society in a variety of accessible, even innovative, ways.

Wider Medievalism and British History

The revival of medievalism was not confined to Arthurian legends, however. Alongside renewed academic fascination, the public was keen to consume other content pertaining to Britain's noble past; importantly, an influential interest in medievalism existed throughout most of the nineteenth century.[63] As with Arthurian media, this came in all kinds of forms.



Figures 2-3: The Arras Tapestries of the San Graal at Stanmore Hall (*The Failure of Lancelot* and *The Vision of the Holy Graal*), taken from 'The Arras Tapestries of the San Graal at Stanmore Hall', *The Studio*, 15 (1898), 98-104 <https://victorianweb.org/painting/bj/series/stanmore.html> [accessed 14 September 2023]

[63] Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1-19 (p. 2).

Adult literature could be as keen as children's to escape to the past, and Ford Madox Ford ran with this concept in his 1911 novel *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*. Received well (*The Times Literary Supplement* considered it 'spirited and amusing'), the book follows Mr. Sorrell, a typical businessman of the age, who travels to 1326 after a railway accident.[64] Sorrell considered himself 'a typical representative of the Homo-Sapiens-Europæus,' but when he finds himself in the past and ends up as a knight, he considers that he has 'none of the arts of chivalry.'[65] Conveniently for the readers, the old knight had explained the code of chivalry beforehand: 'to draw your sword only in high quarrels, not to oppress the poor, but to succour them and all good knights and gentle ladies such as may be in distress […].'[66] Baden-Powell would hardly have found fault with this. Appropriately, and admirably, Sorrell, despite believing himself 'too old,' makes an effort to take lessons in chivalry—a literary exemplification of Sandow and Baden-Powell's belief that historical manliness was achievable with effort.[67] Perhaps most tellingly, when Sorrell (now Sir William) returns to the present, despite all his business success, he struggles with the modern world, suggesting he found true value in the chivalric past:

> It isn't a man's work, this. It doesn't need brains, courage, intelligence, or even common honesty. Nothing does here. The place is vulgar, the time is vulgar. The language we speak is vulgar. So are the thoughts we think. Everything is vulgar. Even the air![68]

According to Sorrell, then, the modern world is degenerate to the core. The work and opportunities afforded men in the mechanised, money-oriented world are not conducive to ideal, noble masculinity, and the juxtaposition is severe. This is not surprising, considering Ford's belief that the 'inhumane commercial mentality' had taken over society; his protagonist, therefore, is intended to '[rediscover] the traditional basis of honour.'[69]

---

[64] 'List of New Books and Reprints', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 3 August 1911. The Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive.
[65] Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes: A Romance* (London: Constable & Company Limited, 1919), pp. 12-13, p. 282.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 280.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 344.
[69] Richard A. Cassell, 'The Two Sorrells of Ford Madox Ford', *Modern Philology*, 59.2 (1961), 114-121 (p. 114).

Subsequently, in a damning but not unusual condemnation of modernity, Ford effectively demonstrates the difficulty with which a modern man would adapt to the chivalrous code of knighthood in the past, and then vice versa; he holds a mirror up to the 'typical' man and his conduct in the fast-paced world of the 1900s and gives instruction on what defined a knight in the fourteenth century.

Pertinently and usefully, however, something akin to 'lessons' in chivalry did appear in reality and were publicised within periodicals; on a grand scale, the Earl's Court Tournament is the most prominent example, and will soon be discussed, but there were smaller-scale events where adults could experience something of the past. The Actors' Sword Club, for example, '[fostered] the growing interest in modern swordsmanship by presenting […] a series of combats illustrating the history and romance of the sword.'[70] Advertised in *The Times*, such a performance is significant; whilst interpreting the past, they are reintroducing the skills and values necessary to recreate chivalry in the present, legitimising and lending authority to the art. That there was a growing interest in swordsmanship by 1912 is significant, for, at the eve of the Great War, amongst all the developments in modern warfare, it suggests the notions of knighthood and chivalry had taken hold strongly enough that people were actively seeking to replicate the martial arts of the past, however romanticised they might be. This, in turn, underlines how critical medievalism is in the understanding of British masculinity at this time, for, perfectly corresponding with the military and national values of duty and bravery, it was actively being reinterpreted and absorbed into the manly identity.

Also on the stage, family-friendly plays emerged, such as *Where the Rainbow Ends*, which made its debut during Christmas 1911 and continued to be performed until the 1950s.[71] By 1912, the play had been adapted into a book, which, considering its subject matter, makes it all the more important for the extended audience it could thus reach. The two young protagonists, Rosamund and Crispian, are protected by the venerable St. George himself. Like King Arthur, he declares that 'quick as in the days of old,' he will 'defend the Right'; so, when Rosamund—'having read in several books of your splendid chivalry' (the influence of literature is exalted within the literature)—requests his help, St. George transforms into 'a noble knight in shining armour. Tall, slender and muscular, yellow-haired—English of the English […].'[72] Easily, he recalls Butler's painting of Arthur, which suggests, again, that this

[70] '"The Duel Throughout the Ages"', *The Times*, 1 April 1912. The Times Digital Archive (p. 12).
[71] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 2.
[72] Clifford Mills, *Where the Rainbow Ends* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, n.d.), pp. 63-64.

was the ideal image of specifically-English masculinity. He projects an image of glory, of both kindness and power—and when boys were constantly being told of their duty to defend their country, his appearance here is no mistake. This becomes more significant considering parallel depictions of soldier-heroes in chapter one, such as Bootles, who is similarly golden and compassionate. At the end of the play, St. George directly addresses the 'Youth of England,' which was followed by the National Anthem.[73] On the point of patriotic musical performance, it is worth noting that this period coincides with the peak of Edward Elgar's career; significantly, Elgar frequently utilised 'knightly themes and chivalric legend' in his work.[74] That he was popular, especially between 1902 and 1914, is important in understanding the development and reach of patriotic and chivalric concepts, even in music, and works to further tangle the two notions together in British consciousness—which is highly significant for understanding knightly and defensive masculine identity.[75] Even in a children's play, the notion of selfless duty is extolled; escapist fairytales brought to life on stage still enforced the hegemonic view of English, masculine patriotism, just as was seen in earlier chapters. Newspapers were quick to take up this patriotic note—again linking medievalism with modern patriotism. The play 'combines so happily a vein of fantasy, and an appeal to patriotic sentiment,' *The Illustrated London News* praised; for *The Times*, this patriotism was a 'virtue.'[76] Clearly, there was a consensus at this point, no doubt stemming from fears of degeneration and military failure, that children ought to be inculcated with notions of patriotism and chivalry; for boys, specifically, this was their duty, evidenced by the fact that so much in their lives—books, plays, scouting—introduced them to heroic, masculine figures revolving around this principle.

Children's literature more broadly—and especially that of G. A. Henty—becomes incredibly important once more. Henty drew from historical tales of heroism and bravery in the face of

---

[73] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 2.
[74] Lucy Corinne O'Brien, 'Edward Elgar and English Nationalism: imperial, chivalrous and pastoral visions' (doctoral thesis, University of Lancaster, 1998), p. 101.
[75] Michael Kennedy, *Elgar, Sir Edward William, baronet* (2015) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32988> [accessed 14 September 2023].
[76] '"Where the Rainbow Ends," at the Garrick', *The Illustrated London News*, 28 December 1912. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003 (p. 974); 'Patriotism as a Virtue', *The Times*, 28 December 1911. The Times Digital Archive (p. 5).

adversity to create an image of the medieval age, capable of fostering ideal, masculine virtues, for children to aspire to. Much like before, Henty made this purpose clear. In the preface to *Saint George for England* (evidently a popular figure), Henty stresses that it was at the time of his story that England was at its peak, when 'a chivalrous king and an even more chivalrous prince had infected the whole people with their martial spirit'—a concept extremely relevant for boys in this increasingly militarised period. Furthermore, building upon this martial focus and reflecting Baden-Powell's fears surrounding the lost Roman Empire, Henty declares that the 'courage of our forefathers created the greatest empire in the world,' and if it is lost, 'it will be by the cowardice of their descendants.'[77] This is a rather harsh statement for a young male audience, but it speaks volumes about Henty's motivations—and the parameters of acceptability in wider society, which accommodated such repetitive messages in popular literature. It is critical to note that Henty, like MacGregor, stresses the historical accuracy of his work, stating that the facts had been 'drawn from Froissart and other contemporary historians,' lending authority to his text and the values within it.[78] Just as Henty's war stories do, these historical pieces offer a protagonist modern boys could relate to. *The Dragon and the Raven*, for example, features Edmund—a plucky, inquisitive Saxon. Rachel Johnson has recognised that it is 'partially through the creation of an exemplary protagonist' that Henty inspired his readers to act with nobility.[79] Amidst the threat of the Danish invaders, Edmund commits acts of extraordinary intelligence and courage (not unlike Dan in *Two Boys in War Time*), which is recognised by older characters. To Count Eudes, for example, he is 'the saviour of our town, my brave young Saxon […] If Paris is saved it will be thanks to the valiant deed that you have accomplished this night."'[80] The language used by the Count is unflinchingly adulatory; acts of bravery and unprovoked chivalry were, then, worthy of praise, an appealing notion for young readers. The impact of this is, undoubtedly, multiplied, when considering that this exact sense is fostered in Arthurian children's literature, encouraging boys to act as medieval knights—which they could, in practice, with the creation of the Boy Scouts in 1908. With such a popular author as Henty espousing the same values to boys seen elsewhere, and in

---

[77] G. A. Henty, *St. George for England: A Tale of Cressy and Poitiers* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, [n.d.]), p. v.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. vi.
[79] Rachel Johnson, 'The Past and Future Hero: the Henty boy in the Twenty-first Century?', *The Henty Society Bulletin*, (2006), (p. 5).
[80] G. A. Henty, *The Dragon and the Raven: or, The Days of King Alfred* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, [n.d.]), p. 252.

previous chapters, the picture is a vivid one: boys were told, repeatedly and without question, to act selflessly, dutifully, and courageously, for these were the traits of a true man, confirmed by highly selective, romanticised tales of the past. It is clear that children's literature only further nurtured the attitudes prevailing in wider culture, in that the glorious and masculine past was a curative—or preventative—for moral and physical degeneracy, and no efforts were spared to ensure the glorified worlds of warrior-kings and swordsmanship, so conducive to the 'correct' traits of manhood, would seem as inspiring to young minds as possible.

Having discussed the tangible, chivalry-tinged experiences of the Boy Scouts and local pageants, it would be pertinent here to examine the physical world of knighthood engendered for adults—more specifically, that of the Earl's Court Tournament of 1912. As early as 1904, talks were held to replicate the Eglinton Tournament of 1839—the existence of which again hints at the longevity of the British public's fascination and envy of the chivalric past, and suggests there was no individual moment of crisis.[81] When it did happen, it was a vast affair. The social elite came out in their droves, giving the event an influential air of authority and spectacle. Queen Alexandra, Lord Rosebery, and Winston Churchill, among many others, were in attendance.[82] As will be discussed further, class and adult masculinity had a complicated and contradictory relationship; children's stories, more accessible to working-class children than ever, made no effort to exclude those children from the knightly narrative. And yet, here, all the knights were aristocrats, solidifying the historical link between the nobility and the masculine elite. Yet another foundational instability appears in the concept of Edwardian masculinity – working-class men were expected to possess gentlemanly virtues when appropriate or necessary (such as on the *Titanic*, or even in the recent glorification of ordinary soldiers such as Private Ward), but when it came to dazzling spectacles such as these, the lower classes were excluded, however much they were still exposed to the event and its values through the widespread coverage it provoked.

This was, then, the epitome of romantic, glamourous medievalism. Further emphasising a sense of continuity from the early nineteenth century and beyond, at least four of the participating knights descended from those who had taken part in the Eglinton Tournament,

---

[81] 'The Great Tournament', *Daily Mail*, 9 March 1904. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 3).
[82] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 7.

heightening the sensation, exclusivity, and authority of the undertaking.[83] Lord Craven even wore the same suit of armour his grandfather had in 1839, and a photograph of him wearing it appeared in the press; the wider public still had the opportunity to marvel at the shiny, impressive armour.[84] Crucially—again—the point of historical accuracy was stressed months in advance, especially regarding the accoutrements associated with chivalry: 'the costumes and the armour […] and the trappings of their horses will be historically accurate in their minutest detail.'[85] Lord Craven's suit was even presented to his ancestor by the King of Spain, etched and gold inlaid.[86] Readers were told to expect a veracious spectacle to capture their imagination. Amusingly, though, in an obvious counterpoint to modern degeneracy, it was noted that several suits have needed enlargement, as 'the modern Peer is a bigger man than his forefathers.'[87] The past was, for the Victorians and Edwardians, a comfortable place to be; at a time when traditional military manliness was struggling against the relatively new invention of rifles and machine guns, to witness feats of arms dating back hundreds of years, was hugely significant.

Alongside local pageants and plays, then, men across society were getting involved with reenactments, bringing the past to life and giving them the thrill of being princes and knights. Just months after the *Titanic*'s sinking, men were, again, getting the chance to put their masculinity on display, and after years of manipulative and influential media, the timing was no mistake. Girouard posits that the sinking of the *Titanic* (soon to be discussed), with its gallant gentlemen, and the appearance of 'knights in armour' during this time were not unrelated; he argues that 'how gentlemen lived and died was partly determined by how they believed knights had lived and died,' and this 'code' was taught to them largely through example.[88] The 1912 tournament was a hugely-publicised, highly-romanticised example—with news reports, even a souvenir album; every effort was made to ensure it was impactful, and left its mark on the cultural landscape. It was the culmination of the obsession with chivalry and masculinity, especially as a curative to modern degeneracy, resulting in a

---

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[84] 'Practising for the Justes Royal and Tourney', *Western Gazette*, 12 July 1912. British Library Newspapers (p. 8).
[85] 'Queen of Beauty', *Daily Mail*, 22 February 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 5).
[86] 'Queen of Beauty', *Daily Mail*, 10 July 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 5).
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 7.

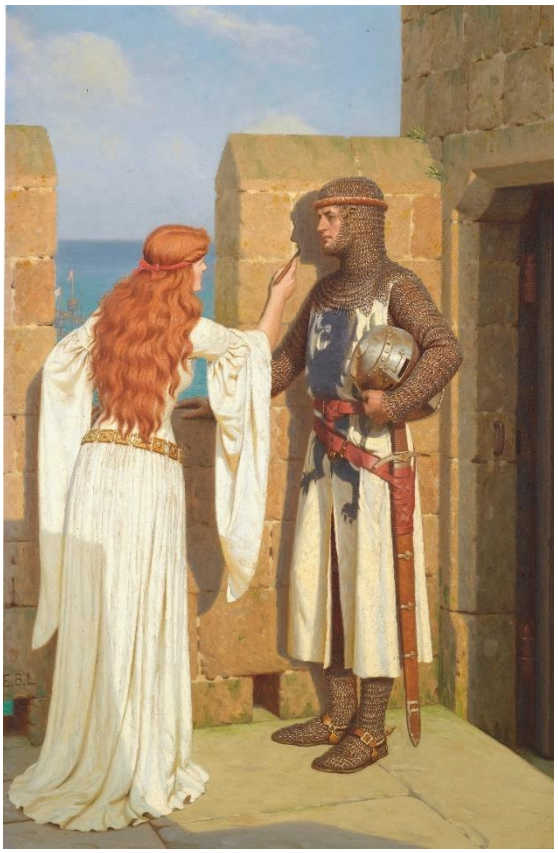
display to justify the heroism of those long-lost days. For the boys who read their stories of King Arthur and the medieval knights, this was historical fantasy come true, proving, as Sandow and Baden-Powell argued, that it could be done. Everything interlinks—the romanticised narratives, the events and pageants, the obsession with bringing medieval chivalry back in a burgeoning age of modern warfare, making the message to be chivalric all the more influential; from all corners, imagery and referencing the gallantry of a bygone age sought to shape boys and men into the ideal, stalwart defenders of home and empire.[89]

Figures 4-5: Edmund Blair Leighton, *The Accolade* and *The Shadow*, Public Doman via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edmund_blair_leighton_accolade.jpg / https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edmund_Blair_Leighton_-_The_Shadow.jpg

Returning to the topic of medieval-inspired art, it is necessary to consider the genre more broadly, for chivalry was an extremely popular subject in art, especially for the Pre-Raphaelites.[90] Edmund Blair Leighton's work is particularly noteworthy. For forty-two years, he exhibited at the Royal Academy, and his paintings were widely praised and reproduced; by 1900, a critical year to note when considering that the Boer War was now underway, his work was incredibly popular.[91] Even more importantly, photogravures of his work allowed more people to access and display it in their own homes, keeping both him and the ideals he painted in popular consciousness.[92] Importantly, the 1900s saw a series of paintings dedicated to the chivalric ideal, testifying again to the popular strength of its ideology, which included *God Speed* (1900), *The Accolade*

[89] Michael Lacy, *Chapter 6: Arms and Armour Study in Edwardian Britain* (1999) <http://www.vikingsword.com/lacy/laking.html> [accessed 14 September 2023].
[90] Clare Simmons, 'Chivalric Medievalism', in *A Companion to Chivalry*, ed. by Robert W. Jones and Peter Coss (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 301-322 (p. 304).
[91] Christie's, *Edmund Blair Leighton (British, 1852-1922) To Arms! 'Sweet bridal hymn, that issuing through the porch is rudely challenged with the cry 'to arms''* (2013) <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5728948> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[92] 'Death of Mr. Blair Leighton', *The Times*, 5 September 1922. The Times Digital Archive (p. 7).

(1901), and *The Dedication* (1908).[93] Pertinently, Blair Leighton chose subjects that would be relatable to his audience; his medievalist paintings 'cloaked contemporary life under the guise of the past.'[94] This is significant, for it suggests people were being actively encouraged to see their lives through the lens of the medieval, chivalric ideal; as in stories, the knight is presented as the man all contemporaries ought to be. The gravity of these works only increases when considering that Blair Leighton displayed a penchant for accuracy in terms of setting and costumes; much of the armour and arms featured in his paintings were likely even from his own collection.[95] So, when paintings such as *God Speed* or *The Shadow* appeared, in a society where militarism and the threat of war and invasion were increasingly apparent, there is an unmistakable appeal, both morally and visually. Additionally, especially during the Boer War period, they give an important message; men, regardless of their domestic situation, had a duty beyond themselves, and a purpose necessitating selflessness. Like the knights in children's stories and the depictions of King Arthur himself, the need to defend the country and put aside personal desires was becoming of the ideal Englishman. Women, in their turn, had a role to play in supporting them. As in *The Accolade*, the female role relates to the notion of 'women worship,' which came about in the 1860s.[96] Debra Mancoff points out that readers of the *Idylls of the King* discovered that 'good women inspired men'; ideal womanhood existed as part of the chivalric standard, just as noble masculinity did.[97] Importantly—and with huge relevance, considering



[93] Baker Street Gallery, *The Accolade by Edmund Leighton* <https://oblivicon.com/art/accolade-edmund-leighton-2/> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[94] Christie's, *Edmund Blair Leighton (British, 1852-1922) To Arms! 'Sweet bridal hymn, that issuing through the porch is rudely challenged with the cry 'to arms''* (2013) <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5728948> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[95] *Ibid*.
[96] Debra N. Mancoff, *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1995), p. 72.
[97] *Ibid*.

Figures 6-7: Details, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. 264: https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/60834383-7146-41ab-bfe1-48ee97bc04be/ CC-BY-NC 4.0.

the previously-mentioned fears surrounding both moral and physical degeneracy—true women were not ruled by passion, but morality; reflecting what has been seen in earlier chapters, womanly virtue was supposed to inspire men to heroic, manly action.[98] It can hardly be a coincidence that this traditional ideal arose at a time of great change for both gender roles. It has been mentioned in chapter two that women's increasing presence in the workforce heightened anxieties surrounding masculinity and effeminacy. By enforcing the code of chivalry, Victorians and Edwardians killed two birds with one stone: men ceased to be degenerate weaklings incapable of defending their country, and women returned to their docile positions. *God Speed* offers a demonstration of women's duty to support their fighting men and is particularly relevant as a painting created during the Boer War. Vivid and romantic, a fair-haired maiden ties a red scarf as a favour to the arm of a knight, mounted on his pure white charger; the painting evokes the uncertainty of and the human, melancholy side of war. It is interesting to note that, in the interests of historical continuity and the renewal of medieval masculine ideals, such depictions were similarly portrayed in art from the medieval period itself, which lends to the authenticity of work by later artists. It is possible to see remarkably comparable

[98] *Ibid*.

illustrations of knights and maidens from the fifteenth century. In a time of such upheaval and disruption of English tradition, familiar imagery must have been a comfort, which would, in turn, allow it to gain further traction. It also provided a strict, chivalric precedent for English men to follow, drawn into the present day by artists and writers alike. With the knowledge that many had reproductions of these works in their homes, the symbolism within them becomes more potent; by creating chivalric, medieval scenes designed to appeal to the modern observer, the values inherent within them—duty, selflessness, bravery—are disseminated romantically across different sections of society.

Figure 8: Edmund Blair Leighton, *God Speed*, Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leighton-God_Speed!.jpg

Poignantly, several writers posit that audiences viewing *God Speed* at the Royal Academy would have immediately recognised the connection to soldiers leaving for war.[99] Critically, Blair Leighton was not alone in his depiction of such scenes during the Boer War; his friends Frank Dicksee and Solomon Solomon exhibited similar work at 1900's Royal Academy exhibition.[100] Dicksee's *The Two Crowns* was particularly popular upon its exhibition; a *Daily News* plebiscite declared it to be 'the best picture of all,' and the painting

[99] Sotheby's, *187 Edmund Blair Leighton* <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/19th-century-european-art-n08303/lot.187.html> [accessed 28 August 2023]; Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index, *God Speed* <https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/DetailsPage.aspx?Feminae_ID=41307> [accessed 28 August 2023].

[100] Sotheby's, *26 Edmund Blair Leighton* <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/british-irish-art/lot.26.html> [accessed 28 August 2023].

was soon purchased for the nation for £2,000 following the Chantrey Bequest.[101] That such a painting was considered worthy of such a sum speaks volumes; the work of Dicksee and his contemporaries tapped into the nation's zeitgeist, both drawing from it and continuing to shape it through the ideologies presented in their work. Ultimately, the effect of this popular trend in artwork is impossible to underestimate. Blair Leighton's work, as popular as it was, has been crucial in conceptualising the spectacle of chivalry and medievalism; along with Dicksee and John William Waterhouse, it can be argued that their work has been instrumental in forming the image of Arthurian legend which still exists within society's cultural consciousness.[102] The values embedded within these works, then, are all the more important to recognise for understanding masculinity in this period; the image of the valiant English knight was rampant, both in words and in art, and underlines a substantial area of the Victorian and Edwardian response to change and military failure in recalling the history of the nation, reestablishing a chivalric code for all men to emulate and regain the prestige visible in romantic, heroic recollections of the past.

Idealised Physical Classicism

Along with a focus on medieval spectacle, the Victorian and Edwardian periods saw a revival of classical notions of male beauty and fitness. Bodybuilding was constantly intertwined with 'classicizing rhetoric,' and this can be seen in the way strongmen were marketed: the 'Kings of Force' were provided with stage names recalling the Greek and Roman gods—Hercules and Apollo, for example.[103] Few strongmen were more associated with the image of Hercules, however, than Sandow. Incorporating the visual imagery of the ancient heroes in his performances, Sandow went so far as to claim a classical origin story for his passion: when he was about fifteen, he saw the ancient statues of Rome whilst on holiday with his father.[104] Asking his father why nineteenth-century men were so ill-developed in comparison,

---

[101] Heather Birchall, *The Two Crowns* (2002) <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dicksee-the-two-crowns-n01839> [accessed 5 August 2023].

[102] Christie's, *Edmund Blair Leighton (British, 1852-1922) To Arms! 'Sweet bridal hymn, that issuing through the porch is rudely challenged with the cry 'to arms''* (2013) <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5728948> [accessed 5 August 2023].

[103] Maria Wyke, 'Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding', in *Constructions of the Classical Body*, ed. by James I. Porter (United States of America: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 355-380 (p. 357).

[104] David Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow, Victorian Strongman* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2011), p. 20.

he was ostensibly told that 'nowadays the brain is cultivated and the body neglected.'[105] Henceforth, Sandow was obsessed with the degeneracy of civilisation from classical times, which can be seen reflected in his extensive writing and fitness regimes explored in chapter two.[106] It is appropriate, then, that by the time of the Boer War, Sandow had firmly established himself as the living classical ideal, and it is important that it was during the conflict that this notion came to a head. J. L. Cranfield has explored the discourse surrounding the male form during the Boer War within *The Strand*, and it is apt to suggest that Sandow's body was both a 'realisation of the male bodily ideal,' and a 'site of cultural contest.'[107] When a plaster-cast of Sandow's body was put on display at South Kensington's British Museum in 1901, curator Roy Lankester's intentions were tied up with contemporary ideas of influencing men to conform to former ideals of manhood. He is reported to have believed that Sandow presented 'a perfect type of a European man,' and, even more importantly, demonstrated 'what can be done in the way of perfecting the muscles by simple means,' tying back to both Sandow and Baden-Powell's beliefs.[108] The subsequent result of Lankester's work, however, underlines Cranfield's notion of men as the 'highly problematic vehicles for the grand narratives of the past,' stressing both the contemporary preoccupation with recreating former glories from history, and the difficulty in reconciling past masculine ideals with the unsettled present.[109] *The Strand*—with a steady circulation of 500,000 copies—picked up the grand narrative of the past with the creation of Sandow's cast, suggesting it was right to '[seize] the opportunity of handing down to future generations a permanent record of the most perfect specimen of physical culture of our days—perhaps of any age.'[110] In an interview with Sandow himself—accompanied by a plethora of photographs of the plaster-cast process—he reiterated Lankester's belief through his suggestion that the cast demonstrated 'how an originally delicate child can perfect himself

---

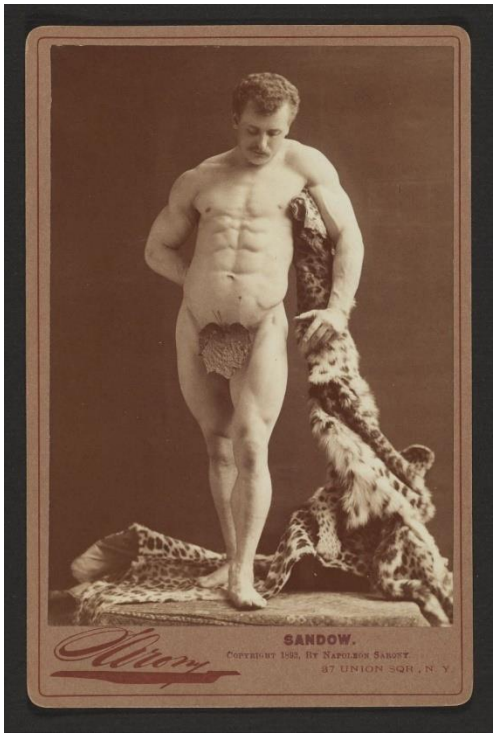
[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[107] J. L. Cranfield, 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40.2 (2012), 549-573 (p. 552).
[108] 'Sandow in Plaster of Paris: A Unique Cast', *The Strand Magazine*, 22.130 (October 1901), 461-468 (p. 461).
[109] Cranfield, 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', p. 552.
[110] Reginald Pound, *Mirror of the Century: The Strand Magazine 1891-1950* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1966), p. 53; 'Sandow in Plaster of Paris: A Unique Cast', *The Strand Magazine*, 22.130 (October 1901), 461-468 (p. 461).

physically.'[111] There is, therefore, a clear attempt being made to present to the British public a 'perfect' male physique, in the image of the ancient heroes Sandow had once seen in Rome; they are encouraged, explicitly, to believe it possible to attain themselves—in a time when confidence in British masculinity and military prowess was low. Nevertheless, harkening back to the problematic side of Cranfield's argument, reality did not entirely meet Lankester and Sandow's ideals. The statue was not met with universal praise. Some thought it distasteful that a music-hall personality was being displayed in the museum.[112] Others believed the cast to be unattractive, and others still took issue with its nudity.[113] Clearly, the presentation of male perfection was a contentious art, reflecting the difficulties and contradictions seen in earlier chapters; whilst many forms of direct, manipulative attempts to shape perceptions of ideal masculinity went unchecked, certain explicit depictions—away from the academic and historical spheres, suggesting a level of snobbery and selectiveness in choice of subject—were considered unacceptable by general society (much like the rivalry between amateur and professional sports).

Though Sandow's cast did not have the impact it was intended to have, Sandow's classicism remained influential, and his popularity did not wane; artwork, photographs, and even film captured Sandow's self-imposed Herculean associations, alongside his public performances.[114] Aubrey Hunt was so awed by Sandow's physique that he had him pose as a gladiator for a painting; confident and muscular, the ensuing work is a far cry from the image of masculine degeneracy.[115] Likewise, solidifying the favourable comparison between his body and the ideal statues, Sandow was photographed by Napoleon Sarony posing as the Farnese Hercules; every effort appears to have been made to mimic the statue, and therefore the classical male body, emphasising the concept of idyllic antiquity being brought to life for

---

[111] 'Sandow in Plaster of Paris: A Unique Cast', *The Strand Magazine*, 22.130 (October 1901), 461-468 (p. 468).
[112] *Ibid*., p. 461.
[113] Josh Davis, *Eugen Sandow: A Body Worth Immortalising* <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/eugen-sandow-a-body-worth-immortalising.html> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[114] Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow, Victorian Strongman*, p. 10.
[115] Wellcome Collection, *Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs. Sandow as Gladiator*. […] <https://jstor.org/stable/community.24748285> [accessed 13 September 2023].



Figures 9-10: Eugene Sandow as Hercules Farnese by Napoleon Sarony, Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarony_Herkules.jpg; A Statue of Hercules in a museum near Lemnos, taken by Doruk Bacca, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FarneseHercules.jpg

modern men to emulate.[116] These comparisons were subsequently published; according to one publication 'many say that the Author's proportions are the more symmetrical of the two.'[117] The language of Sandow's advertisements built upon this comparison, to great effect: 'the statue of Hercules alive.'[118] Hope was not lost for modern manhood, then; again, the rhetoric utilised suggests Sandow is the ideal man of history come to life, a fact given visual evidence with photographs such as Sarony's—an enticing, and perhaps pressuring, notion in light of the fears of effeminacy and inadequacy amongst Englishmen at this time.

Considering that magazines such as *Modern Man* were keen to promote Sandow and physical culture, it is impossible to ignore the consistent association between Sandow and antiquity; men were being consciously shown an ideal to encourage—or pressure—them to improve themselves, as it was, evidently, possible to achieve. The timing of this fascination with the ancient male form is no accident, either; though it was not new, there is undoubtedly a clear and concerted effort to manipulate men's perceptions of themselves and the ideal male form through repeated imagery, designed to entice them into action through the recollection of heroic values from history. In conjunction with the sheer amount of other

[116] Wyke, 'Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding', p. 358.
[117] Wellcome Collection, *Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs* […] <https://jstor.org/stable/community.24748293> [accessed 13 September 2023].
[118] 'Advertisements & Notices', *The Era*, 9 June 1888. British Library Newspapers.

media calling upon men to emulate England's own glorious, manly past, the rhetoric and imagery are all-encompassing and unmistakably influential. Though Sandow is significant for his incredible fame and influence, he was not the first to model ancient poses; in 1828, for example, one Andrew Ducrow was labelled in a Dublin circus as 'The Living Statue or Model of Antiques,' and, pertinently, performed seven Herculean poses.[119] Just as with other forms of medievalism, then, Sandow and the obsession with classical masculine strength and heroism fits into a long narrative of attention on the masculine condition and its inadequacy at different points of time, further suggesting, whilst a pronounced crisis did exist around the turn of the century, it was not isolated, additionally underlining that anxieties and preoccupations which would come heavily to the fore at the start of the twentieth century were not entirely new.

Figure 11: Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs […] L0033355 https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.24748293 Image and original data provided by Wellcome Collection (CC BY 4.0)

[119] Wyke, 'Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding', p. 357.

Chivalry and the *Titanic* Disaster

Gestures of chivalry were not restricted to the past, however. A month after Lawrence Oates' gallant death during Captain Scott's expedition—which would reaffirm to the public how a gentleman should die—the sinking of the RMS *Titanic* in April 1912 provides an important episode to help understand the construction and values of Edwardian chivalry and masculinity, perfectly encapsulating notions of both race and class.[120] To this day, some of the most recognisable images from the disaster are those of passengers and crew going down 'like gentlemen.' Richard Howells, in his important 1999 study, argues that the *Titanic* myth 'articulately encoded' contemporary expectations of both men and women, and without wishing to rehash Howells' work, it is important to consider the sinking of the *Titanic*, as an encapsulation of masculine idealism coming to a head, and as a subsequent example held up to instruct men on how to behave.[121] This can be seen, without a doubt, across the myriad of publications produced in the after the sinking. In May 1912, Professor J. A. Cramb publicly spoke about the disaster, and 'the light in which it placed English character': the conduct of the ship's passengers 'was exclusively determined by English character.'[122] Winston Churchill likewise remarked to his wife that 'I cannot help feeling proud of our race & its traditions as proved by this event.'[123] A far cry from the criticism rampant since the Boer War—the *Titanic* offered a boost in confidence, and distinctly English manliness—constantly intertwined—became a key point in the disaster's coverage. 'Be British, boys, be British!' exclaimed Captain Smith in his final order, according to one legend; Smith's legacy became inextricably tied, henceforth, with English masculinity.[124] When Admiral Lord Beresford spoke of him, he was 'chivalrous' and gallant— 'the very best type of British seaman and British gentleman.' The same language is repeatedly utilised: gallantry, chivalry, Britishness. Even commemorative songs appeared, making the rhetoric all the more inescapable: *Stand To Your Post* and *Be British* (titles leaving nothing to the imagination) were quickly published to

---

[120] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, pp. 3-4.
[121] Richard Howells, *The Myth of the Titanic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 1, 11.
[122] 'English Courage', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 May 1912. British Library Newspapers (p. 6).
[123] Winston Churchill, *Winston and Clementine: The Personal Letters of the Churchills*, ed. by Mary Soames (Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2001), p. 64.
[124] Howells, *The Myth of the Titanic*, p. 11.

raise money for relief funds.[125] A descriptive passage in the former remembers 'the heroes who sacrificed their lives for others in obedience with the instincts of their race,' before quoting the Captain's 'Be British!'; the latter is even more blatant and extremely pertinent to the societal desperation to recall Britain's glorious past, recalling the preoccupations of Henty:

> What a glorious thing it is to know,
> that the breed is just the same
> as it was when the Anglo-Saxon race,
> first gained immortal fame.
> What a glorious thing it is to know […]
> our men knew how to die.[126]

It seems that the masculine agenda of the last twenty years had been successful. As in the depictions of King Arthur, Howells points out that distinctly 'British' qualities were stressed in post-sinking coverage; selfless duty and devotion to work is 'an insistent and recurring theme,' reflective of the immense focus on national efficiency and service during this period.[127] Philip Gibbs, just a month after the sinking, praised the dutifulness of wireless operators Jack Phillips and Harold Bride; Bride maintained his 'devotion to duty' even after the sinking, and Phillips fulfilled his duty 'to the uttermost and with sublime devotion, careless of death.'[128] Gibbs even wrote that the '"Birkenhead" Spirit [was] Still Alive,' according to a declaration from Smith.[129] Admiral Lord Beresford, with all the authority his position brings, spoke out in a lengthy letter to *The Times*, praising the 'dauntless heroism' of the ship's workers, which he felt had been ignored.[130] Vividly, he engenders pathos and emphasises the steadfast bravery displayed by the workers who knew the terror they faced: never had such 'indomitable pluck and discipline' been shown by those below; emphasising

---

[125] Encyclopedia Titanica, *Stand To Your Post / Be British* (2003) <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/stand-to-your-post-be-british.html> [accessed 5 August 2023].
[126] *Ibid*.
[127] Howells, *The Myth of the Titanic*, p. 104.
[128] Philip Gibbs, *The Deathless Story of the Titanic: A Facsimile Reprint* (London: Lloyd's of London Press Ltd, 1985), pp. 9, 22.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[130] Charles Beresford, 'The Wreck of the Titanic', *The Times*, 22 April 1912. The Times Digital Archive (p. 10).

again the period-typical use, and the desirability, of 'pluck,' he repeats that 'working below really requires more fortitude and pluck.'[131] Beresford states that, regardless of class, their names 'will be recorded on the roll of fame for gallantry.'[132]

This is particularly interesting, for it suggests chivalrous, 'gallant' behaviour, conforming to the English masculine code, had the power to confer a gentlemanly status upon a man in death irrespective of his wealth and class in life. Bolstering this notion, there are so many similar examples of heroism from all classes to give; it would be impossible to list them all here. It also speaks to the eagerness felt by the British press to emphasise irrefutable examples of English heroism—even if events such as the Earl's Court Tournament suggested that the aristocracy was the preserve of nobility. This notion would again be problematised with the outbreak of the Great War, when 'temporary gentlemen,' raised from the ranks to fulfil the role of officers, complicated the relationship between class and inherent, noble masculinity. It is worth noting that Howells, too, recognises the curious link between the *Titanic* and medievalism; the 'best of the men on the *Titanic*,' he argues, shared the idyllic traits demonstrated by the knights of Arthurian romance.[133] The fact that boys and men were being encouraged to look to medieval knights for moral guidance in the two decades leading up to 1912 is, then, all the more critical. Girouard, too, in his influential study centred on revived chivalry, also drew from the story of the *Titanic* (as well as the *Birkenhead*), highlighting its importance further in consideration of Edwardian masculinity. Critically, he argues, much like Howells, that 'Victorian and Edwardian chivalry produced its own world of myth and legend' which was not always rooted in reality—and this emphasis on purely English manliness spanning across the classes is incredibly pertinent.[134] In contrast, other races—particularly the Italians—were described as cowardly and effeminate. Gibbs relayed one well-known story told by Fifth Officer Lowe, involving an Italian who stooped so low as to dress as a woman to escape in a lifeboat.[135] Mythicised British masculinity is, once more, bolstered through juxtaposition, linking to firmly English ideals of 'playing the game.' Rightfully, Howells points out the dehumanising language used to describe the foreigners; they are unmistakably depicted as inferior.[136] This was significant enough for Lowe to be

---

[131] *Ibid*.
[132] *Ibid*.
[133] Howells, *The Myth of the Titanic*, p. 83.
[134] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 14.
[135] Gibbs, *The Deathless Story of the Titanic: A Facsimile Reprint*, p. 12.
[136] Howells, *The Myth of the Titanic*, pp. 105-106.

criticised by the Italian Ambassador to the US; he subsequently had to issue an apology, but it did little to change popular conceptions.[137] Though many did irrefutably act heroically that night, the ensuing press and literature would focus on specific things (contemporaries such as Archibald Gracie praised the 'heroic conduct' of both men and women, but where is the comparable coverage of female heroism?) to paint a certain, inspiring image of English manliness—highlighting that these were the most important qualities a British man could demonstrate to prove his worth and masculinity.[138]

Further helping to form the 'myth' both Girouard and Howells refer to, to shape an excellent image of English masculinity did not necessarily mean emphasising only the good examples; the condemnation of 'cowards'—regardless of class—also forms a part of the disaster's moral instruction. Great emphasis was given to 'the rule of human nature,' in that women and children were to be saved at all costs.[139] In a time of gender upheaval and the push for female equality, this was highly contentious—and an extended series of correspondence just days after the disaster on the topic of 'Women First' and male chivalry highlights once again how masculinity was at the forefront of public consciousness. Writers rushed to defend the principle of male chivalry—and had the opportunity, as with medieval-based stories, to stress traditional gender roles—and many did so with the rhetoric of national efficiency on their tongues. In the interest of 'race economy,' one writer argued, as the mothers of the future, women ought to be saved.[140] Against the backdrop of such arguments, men who survived faced difficulty in justifying their survival. Gracie, for example, emphasised that he climbed onto the overturned Collapsible B after the final plunge.[141] There is no greater example, however, than J. Bruce Ismay, managing director and chairman of the White Star Line, who was held as an example of everything chivalry was not after '[dropping] quietly into a lifeboat' and escaping.[142] That Ismay faced such backlash, the extent of which still colours his reputation, is a testament to the strength of feeling towards cowards. Ismay himself was aware of this dichotomy; when asked during the Senate Inquiry 'whether there were any

---

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[138] Archibald Gracie, *The Truth About the Titanic* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), p. 119.
[139] Charles Lightoller, in Gracie, *The Truth About the Titanic*, p. 117.
[140] Bay, C. Hansen, '"Women First!"', *Daily Mail*, 26 April 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive (p. 6).
[141] Gracie, *The Truth About the Titanic*, p. 82.
[142] Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, p. 5.

women and children on deck,' he answered, 'What kind of man do you think I am?'[143]

Figure 12: J. Bruce Ismay (hand to his face) being questioned by Senate Investigating Committee, Internet Archive Book Images, No restrictions, via Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:J._Bruce_Ismay_being_questioned_by_Senate_Investigating_Committee.jpg>

There was, therefore, a 'kind' of man—and though the kind to be avoided was usually passed off as foreign, not all could escape the vitriol of association, and both the press and the subsequent legend emphasise the contrast to bolster the men who acted 'correctly.' Frances Wilson compellingly argues that the press explicitly decided that it would focus on the 'stirring narrative of chivalry and cowardice.'[144] In the eyes of the public, he had failed, at the critical moment, to die as a chivalrous gentleman; the repercussions were severe, and he sank away, 'never [to climb] out of the hole into which he had fallen.'[145] No doubt the outpouring of viciousness against Ismay the coward was cathartic for the press who had spent a decade grasping for the ideal of manhood, and it was a warning to those men who wished to shirk their duty and forget the chivalric code. Ultimately, the *Titanic* was absorbed into England's

[143] Joseph Bruce Ismay, in 'Chief Witness at the Senatorial Inquiry: The White Star Chairman', *The Illustrated London News*, 27 April 1912. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003 (p. 637).
[144] Frances Wilson, *How to Survive the Titanic, Or, The Sinking of J. Bruce Ismay* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 59.
[145] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

grand narrative, alongside King Arthur and his knights, to demonstrate that—despite difficulties and contradictions throughout the 1890s and 1900s—traditional values survived, and British men remained inherently superior, selfless, and chivalrous.

Conclusion

Ultimately, alongside an increasing obsession with physical culture and militarism, notions of medievalism, Arthurian chivalry, and classicism existed at the forefront of British popular consciousness. This was not new, but it is possible to see an increase in their utilisation in the aftermath of the Boer War with the specific intention of influencing British masculinity. This is particularly clear in the case of King Arthur and his knights, shaped and moulded over the centuries to maintain his cultural relevance; amidst innumerable publications, particularly aimed at children as a preventative to moral and physical degeneration, figures such as Baden-Powell specifically held the fabled King as a chivalric role model, and gave explicit instructions to boys to follow his example. Other famous figures, such as Sandow, followed suit with masculine, classical heroes such as Hercules, and amidst the crisis of the Boer War, Sandow was purposefully utilised as the ideal of manhood. Crucially, this all served to demonstrate that it was possible to attain classical and historic ideals in the modern day which, in consideration of fears of masculine degeneracy, suggests there was some kind of crisis which facilitated the emphasis on such ideology; there was, evidently, something warranting the need to reform British masculinity in this period. Perhaps unexpectedly, the sinking of the *Titanic* only allowed wider dissemination of the racially superior, British masculine ideal based around chivalry, providing a sorely-needed boost in confidence—but also suggesting there was a need to compensate for what men had been lacking in the years before. The variety of publications and works revolving around chivalry is all-encompassing; everything worked to provide the British public with the perfect, masculine figure, brave, golden, and dutiful. Combined with the focus of the previous two chapters, everything ties neatly together; armed with curative chivalric virtues, boys and young men were equipped with the right moral mindset to fulfil their duty to their country, knowing that they had to stay fit and be prepared to fight when necessary. By the outbreak of the Great War, this mentality, propagated over the past two decades, had not been ineffectual. More than a handful of young

men, even underage boys, attempted to enlist to fight in the name of manly, patriotic duty.[146] Michael Paris convincingly picks up on this argument; millions of British men, he states, went to war with romantic notions, stimulated since childhood by the 'pleasure culture' discussed in chapter one.[147] 'He went gladly, and I would have had my tongue taken out, rather than have breathed a word to stop him,' wrote the father of Brian Lawrence, killed aged just 17 in 1915; he '[did] his duty, and died a noble death,' neatly fulfilling the enduring prophecy laid out for true, British men between 1890 and 1914.[148]

Figure 13: A group of soldiers from the Royal Artillery and the East Kent Regiment during the Great War (from private collection)

[146] Richard van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 111, 123, 135.
[147] Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), pp. 9-10.
[148] Arthur L. Lawrence, in Richard van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 123.

Conclusion

It would be pertinent, finally, to return to the concept of Tosh's crisis. Tosh calls for greater work to be done on the notion of a crisis in masculinity at this time; it is appropriate, in light of what has been discovered in this study, to define what this crisis could have been. It is indisputable that there was an escalation of anxieties surrounding masculinity from the 1890s onwards, intensified by the military failures of the Boer War and compounded by constant and simultaneous discourse regarding British decadence and racial degeneracy. This crisis—for there is scarcely another way to describe it—manifested in numerous ways, and was characterised by a dissatisfaction with modernity and a pervasive belief that Britain's men were not equipped to face the challenges looming in the new century, especially in comparison to other nations and their increasing threat. Subsequently, militarism increased markedly in this period, spurred on by the Boer War and expanding threats from the continent, and fostered further by the boom in invasion literature and discourse surrounding the state of Britain's soldiers. Crucially for the notion of British manliness and national confidence, there was an unignorable recognition that the army was not prepared to defend its country and territories (this being a crisis of its own), which led, in turn, to huge reforms that fundamentally altered the make-up and the perception of the armed forced and military masculinity. This came at a time when perceptions had already been shifting; since the Crimean War, there was a growing appreciation for the ordinary soldier, and following the Cardwell Reforms of the 1870s, localisation meant that soldiers and civilians crossed paths more than ever before. Suddenly, the soldier was no longer a distant, stigmatised figure; he became domesticated, and slot perfectly into the image of ideal masculinity nurtured by society. A further shift in predominantly masculine culture was precipitated by the rise of physical culture, a fact that was recognised by Eugen Sandow by 1900; though the notion of sportsmanship had already been fostered over the previous decades, especially in public schools, the attitude of the nation towards tangible, physical fitness had, by the turn of the century, transformed. Simultaneously, and stretching even further back into British history, the notion of chivalry and knightly manliness had been revived, and in the face of increasingly modern warfare and industrialised upheaval, captured public consciousness in a way that had severe repercussions on masculine expectations; tying heavily to the public school ideology of the sporting gentleman, this was illustrated no more clearly than during

the sinking of the *Titanic*, and in the way her heroes and villains across the classes were depicted in the press in the subsequent months.

Particularly relevant to the coverage of the *Titanic* disaster, this study has also revealed how extensively both Victorians and Edwardians manipulated their media, either through careful selectivity or purposeful manipulation, to cultivate a specific ideal of hegemonic masculinity. It is also worth noting that, as Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard call for, this dissertation has managed to underline how expectations shifted with age, exemplified by public school boys and their romantic friendships bordering on homosexuality, and has illuminated the development of working-class masculinity in this period. That athleticism, militarism, and chivalric virtues affected all corners of society—illustrated by the experience of the working classes—emphasises the fact that there was a discernible shift, or crisis, at this time; the utilisation of works by women such as *Bootles' Baby*, and the role of women in enforcing hegemonic masculinity also worked effectively to this end. Nevertheless, working-class voices were much trickier to distinguish than their middle- and upper-class counterparts, for the vast majority of primary material was either written by or for them; nevertheless, it is clear that, through increased attention to the accessibility of physical culture for poorer members of society, increased literacy and school attendance, and the creation of public school narratives in hugely popular books and magazines—to name a few—a concerted effort was being made to distil masculine virtues typically associated with wealthier English gentlemen down to the working class male population.

However, as has been discovered, hegemonic masculinity defined by duty, selflessness, and chivalry, and encouraged by so many mediums throughout society, did not encompass British masculinity entirely; transgressive identities continued to flourish despite adversity and were as much part of the British masculine identity, even if this can only be acknowledged in hindsight. Writers such as Forster were adamant that homosexuality had a place in British masculine identity and subverted popular rhetoric to effectively illustrate this. Curiously, it was in this period that transgressive identities, particularly relating to homosexuality, were gaining a recognisable foothold for the first time; the trials of Oscar Wilde, of course, most famously brought awareness to the concept of homosexuality at such a critical point, and cross-dressing regularly found a place in the nation's periodicals. As Matt Cook has discussed, the coverage of these issues—however derogatory they may have been—served as a learning tool for those who could relate outside the socially acceptable norms, for writers could not control how their work was interpreted. Alongside contentious public-school fiction

and the depiction of romantic, male-male friendships, these are thus just as critical in understanding uniquely British manliness, especially by the time of the Great War, which remains an apotheosis of British masculinity. The increasingly acknowledged existence of these identities, furthermore, adds further impetus to the likelihood of a crisis of masculinity arising at the turn of the century.

Unfortunately, the sheer amount of content and the relative brevity of this dissertation have forced the utmost diligence and selectivity in choosing which primary material made the final cut. There is so much that could be dug into with greater, individualised focus—military art, for example, or the depiction of soldiers, and men more broadly, in music hall performances. This study has, however, aimed to demonstrate the scope of all these influences impacting masculine ideology, from literature to periodicals and beyond, and the way those influences link so fluidly together, which was proven by my argument coming full circle in chapter three. Moving both forwards and backwards, it would be additionally useful to explore the same ideologies propagated both further back in the nineteenth century, and in the Great War, to gain a stronger understanding of the longevity of the masculine ideals and the sequence of other crises examined and touched upon here. Regardless, what has been explored here is critical for several reasons. It is, chiefly, a critical insight into the myriad of influences affecting British masculinity at a time of great upheaval and anxiety, revealing the deeply unsettled ideologies underpinning contemporary manliness and the way society attempted to maintain control over the image of British masculinity. It is, furthermore—as previously discussed—incredibly important to understand this period in terms of masculinity, for these influences would come to define the conduct of men fighting in the looming Great War.

Ultimately, it can be safely inferred that there was a crisis of masculinity in the period between 1890 and 1914, though it is important to note that this crisis did not exist in an isolated vacuum. Throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, men were regularly believed to be incapable of fulfilling their duties. Instead, it formed part of a much broader tapestry of crises and anxiety surrounding British masculinity but was brought to a head and intensified by the onset of modern warfare and industrialisation, military failure, and the belief that many British men had become sedentary and degenerate by the turn of the century.

Bibliography

Primary and Archive Sources

‘“King Arthur.”’, *The Era*, 12 January 1895. British Library Newspapers

‘“King Arthur” at The Lyceum’, *Graphic*, 19 January 1895. British Library Newspapers

‘“King Arthur” At The Lyceum’, *The Standard*, 14 January 1895. British Library Newspapers

‘“The Duel Throughout the Ages”’, *The Times*, 1 April 1912. The Times Digital Archive

‘“Where the Rainbow Ends,” at the Garrick’, *The Illustrated London News*, 28 December 1912. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003

‘Advertisements & Notices’, *The Era*, 9 June 1888. British Library Newspapers

‘Athletic Sports’, *The Dragon*, 28 February 1900

‘Benefits of Athletics Are Discussed by British Medical Association’, *Dundee Courier*, 30 July 1909. British Library Newspapers

‘Books Received’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 October 1912. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/

‘Chief Witness at the Senatorial Inquiry: The White Star Chairman’, *The Illustrated London News*, 27 April 1912. The Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003

‘Corsets for Men’, *Leeds Times*, 25 May 1895. British Library Newspapers

‘Death of Mr. Blair Leighton’, *The Times*, 5 September 1922. The Times Digital Archive

‘Dressed as a Woman’, *Cornishman*, 14 April 1910. British Library Newspapers

‘English Courage’, *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 18 May 1912. British Library Newspapers

‘Excessive Athleticism’, *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 August 1900. British Library Newspapers

‘Fascinating Military Novel’, *Leicester Chronicle*, 25 July 1896. British Library Newspapers

‘For the Children’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 16 June 1905. British Library Newspapers

‘Grand New Competition’, *Modern Man*, 22 April 1911. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘How Soldiers Are Made’, *The Era*, 22 September 1900. British Library Newspapers

‘In Female Attire’, *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, 27 August 1907. British Library Newspapers

‘List of New Books and Reprints’, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 3 August 1911. The Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive

‘Literature’, *Morning Post*, 12 April 1882. British Library Newspapers

‘Little Arthur’s Guide to Knowledge', *The Marlburian*, 5 October 1909

‘Most Amazing Offer Made!’, *Modern Man*, 17 February 1912. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘Mr. Rudyard Kipling’s Vigorous Indictment’, *The Times*, 15 January 1902. The Times Digital Archive

‘Music-Hall Jottings’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 January 1900. British Library Newspapers

‘New Army Uniform’, *Dundee Evening Post*, 21 June 1900. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘Patriotism as a Virtue’, *The Times*, 28 December 1911. The Times Digital Archive

‘Physical Degeneracy’, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 28 April 1906. British Library Newspapers

‘Playing Fields. Trend of Athleticism, Bishop of Salford’s Lament’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10 December 1909. British Library Newspapers

‘Practising for the Justes Royal and Tourney’, *Western Gazette*, 12 July 1912. British Library Newspapers

‘Queen of Beauty’, *Daily Mail*, 10 July 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive

‘Queen of Beauty’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive

‘Rev. D. Graham Says Young Men Would Be Better Engaged in Making Themselves Efficient in Military Exercises than in Effeminate Games’, *Dundee Courier*, 18 December 1908. British Library Newspapers

‘Rogue Dressed in Female Attire’, *Aberdeen Journal*, 16 January 1901. British Library Newspapers

‘Soldiers’ Effeminate Curls’, *The Dover Express and East Kent News*, 9 December 1904. British Library Newspapers

‘The Author of “Bootles’ Baby.”’, *Newcastle Courant (1803)*, 25 February 1893. British Library Newspapers

‘The Brodrick Cap in the British Army’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 9 November 1904. Papers Past <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19041109.2.22>

‘The Great Tournament’, *Daily Mail*, 9 March 1904. Daily Mail Historical Archive

‘The March of Events (Continued)’, *The Graphic*, 25 July 1908. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘The Physical Development of the Boer’, *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 31 October 1899. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘The Soldier’s Curls’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier* (London), 25 March 1904. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

‘Topical News Pictures’, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 20 July 1908. British Library Newspapers

‘Unsoldierlike Curls’, *The Evening Telegraph*, 27 April 1904. Gale Primary Sources

‘Volunteers’ Physique’, *Evening Telegraph*, 8 August 1905. British Library Newspapers

‘X.—Literary Competition.’, *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 287

A Male Wearer of Corsets, ‘Men in Corsets’, *Tamworth Herald*, 13 June 1896. British Library Newspapers

Aitken, W. Francis, *Baden-Powell: The Hero of Mafeking* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1900)

Army Life; Or, How Soldiers Are Made – Infantry (1900), online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-army-life-or-how-soldiers-are-made-infantry-1900-online> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Austin, Alfred, ‘Song’, in *The Book of Cricket Verse*, ed. by Gerald Brodribb (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 22

Baden-Powell, R. S., ‘“B.-P.’s” Advice to Boys’, *Cheshire Observer*, 20 October 1900. British Library Newspapers

Baden-Powell, Sir Robert, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, 7th edn (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1915)

Beresford, Charles, ‘The Wreck of the Titanic’, *The Times*, 22 April 1912. The Times Digital Archive

Brittain, Vera, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925* (London: Phoenix, 2014)

Brooke, Rupert, ‘Peace’, in *The Poems of Rupert Brooke: A Centenary Edition*, ed. by Timothy Rogers (Great Britain: Black Swan, 1987), p. 129

Burwood, Godfrey, ‘Another Oscar Wilde Case. A Sensational Exposure’, *Modern Man*, 11 December 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

C. W. B., 'Officers Training Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, VII.14 (1909), 346-347

C.I.V. Procession. Cyclists and Infantry (1900), online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-civ-procession-cyclists-and-infantry-1900-online>. [accessed 13 September 2023].

C.I.V. Procession. Cyclists and Infantry (1900), online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-civ-procession-cyclists-and-infantry-1900-online>. [accessed 13 September 2023]

Cade., Burlington. R., ‘Answers to Correspondents’, *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 29 June 1912. British Library Newspapers

Cantab., ‘Tight-Lacing for Smart Boys’, *Daily Mail*, 5 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Carr, J. Comyns, *King Arthur, A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895)

Carrington, Charles *Soldiers from the Wars Returning* (Great Britain: Pen & Sword Military Classics, 2006)

Coleridge, Christabel R., ‘King Arthur as an English Ideal’, *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, 1 February 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals

Coleridge, Christabel R., ‘King Arthur, as an English Ideal’, *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, 1 March 1892. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals

Conway, ‘Tight-Lacing for Smart Boys’, *Daily Mail*, 6 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Croppie, ‘Curls in the Army’, *Daily Mail*, 29 April 1904. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Deweyite, ‘Modern Vices’, *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1903. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Discerner, ‘Clothes and the Man’, *The Sunday Times*, 19 October 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive

Discerner, ‘Clothes and the Man’, *The Sunday Times*, 2 November 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive

Discerner, ‘Clothes and the Man’, *The Sunday Times*, 26 January 1913. The Sunday Times Historical Archive

Du Maurier, Major Guy, *An Englishman's Home: A Play in Three Acts* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1909)

'Editorial', *The Cantuarian*, V.1 (1899)

Encyclopedia Titanica, *Stand To Your Post / Be British* (2003) <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/stand-to-your-post-be-british.html> [accessed 5 August 2023]

F. T. M. H., ‘Scholar and Soldier Too’, *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Finnemore, John, *Two Boys in War-time* (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1900)

Forster, E. M., *Maurice* (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1972)

Fred Drew, J. S., ‘Remember the Glorious Dead’, *Bury Free Press*, 20 July 1956. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

'Friendship', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 25 (1902-03), 94

Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abr. by D. M. Low (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960)

Gibbs, Philip, *The Deathless Story of the Titanic: A Facsimile Reprint* (London: Lloyd’s of London Press Ltd, 1985)

Gillespie, Alexander Douglas, *Letters from Flanders* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1916)

Gracie, Archibald, *The Truth About the Titanic* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913)

Graves, Robert, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Guild Publishing, 1979)

Graves, Robert, 'The Kaiser's War: A British Point of View', in *Promise of Greatness: The War of 1914-1918*, ed. by George A. Panichas (New York: The John Day Company, 1968), pp. 3-11

Graves, Robert, *Good-bye to All That*, revised 2nd edn (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957)

Gray-Reid, H., 'In the Army', *Modern Man*, 19 December 1908. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Hamer, Alan, 'The Man Beautiful', *Modern Man*, 23 October 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Hamilton, Henry and S. Potter, *Private Tommy Atkins* (1893) <http://folksongandmusichall.com/index.php/private-tommy-atkins/> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Hanham, Corporal Harold, 'From "The Soldier Poet."', *Daily Mail*, 7 April 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Hanham, Corporal Harold, 'Sword and Pen', *Daily Mail*, 13 January 1899. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Hansen, Bay, C., '"Women First!"', *Daily Mail*, 26 April 1912. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 7 vols (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, Publishers, 1928), VII

Henty, G. A., *St. George for England: A Tale of Cressy and Poitiers* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, [n.d.])

Henty, G. A., *The Dragon and the Raven: or, The Days of King Alfred* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, [n.d.])

Henty, G. A., *With Buller in Natal, or, A Born Leader* (London: Blackie & Son, Limited, 1901)

Henty, G. A., *With Roberts to Pretoria: A Tale of the South African War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901)

Holland, Vyvyan, *Son of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999)

Hueffer, Ford Madox, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes: A Romance* (London: Constable & Company Limited, 1919)

Inspection of the City Imperial Volunteers [Allocated Title], produced by Warwick Trading Company (1900), online film recording, Imperial War Museum © IWM IWM 1025e, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060023330> [accessed 31 August 2023]

James, Henry, *The Wheel of Time; Collaboration; Owen Wingrave* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1893)

Kennedy, Watson, 'Our Love of Sport. A Defence of a National Characteristic', *Modern Man*, 8 May 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Kipling, Rudyard, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1993)

Kipling, Rudyard, *Rewards and Fairies* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1910)

Kipling, Rudyard, *The Absent-Minded Beggar* (England and the United States: Daily Mail Publishing Co., 1899)

Kipling, Rudyard, *The Seven Seas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898)

Kipling, Rudyard, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. by Andrew Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Le Queux, William and H. W. Wilson, *The Invasion of 1910: With a Full Account of the Siege of London* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1906)

London, Imperial War Museum, Royal Engineers Collection Q 29429. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205269357> [accessed 14 September 2023]

London, The National Archives, Class: RG13; Piece: 494; Folio: 23; Page: 32. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryui-content/view/3709127:7814> [accessed 13 September 2023]

M.D., 'Modern Vices', *Daily Mail*, 5 October 1903. Daily Mail Historical Archive

MacGregor, Mary, *Stories of King Arthur's Knights* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, n.d.)

Mackenzie, Compton, *My Life and Times: Octave One, 1883-1891* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963)

Mason, A. E. W., *The Four Feathers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903)

Mellor, Tom and Harry Gifford, *All the Boys in Khaki Get the Nice Girls* (1915) <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/all-boys-khaki-get-nice-girls> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Mills, A.J., and Bennett Scott, *The Girls All Dote on a Military Man [music] / written by A.J. Mills; composed by Bennett Scott* <https://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn535501> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Mills, Clifford, *Where the Rainbow Ends* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, n.d.)

Newbolt, Sir Henry, *Poems: New and Old* (London: John Murray, 1912)

'O.T.C. Camp.', *The Marlburian*, 5 October 1909

Our Military Correspondent, 'The London Territorials', *The Times*, 15 February 1909. The Times Digital Archive

Owen, Wilfred, *Selected Letters of Wilfred Owen*, ed. by Jane Potter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023)

Pall Mall Gazette, 'Cure for Degeneracy', *Daily Mail*, 9 December 1908. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Paul, R. W., *Army Life; or, How Soldiers are Made* (London: R. W. Paul, 1900)

Pux, 'Correspondence', *The Shiburnian*, July 1901

'R.V.C. Lecture by Lieut. J. W. C. Kirk, O.M.', *The Marlburian*, 27 February 1901

Ralph Pringle Interviewing Private Ward V.C. Hero in Leeds (1901), online film recording, BFI Player, <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-ralph-pringle-interviewing-private-ward-vc-hero-in-leeds-1901-1901-online> [accessed 31 August 2023]

Raymond, Ernest, *The Story of My Days: An Autobiography 1888-1922* (London: Cassell, 1968)

Richards, Frank, 'The Making of Harry Wharton', *The Magnet*, 15 February 1908

'Rifle Corps.', *The Marlburian*, 2 April 1908

Roberts, Percy M. B., 'Tight Lacing for Smart Boys', *Daily Mail*, 3 December 1900. Daily Mail Historical Archive

Robson, Bertram, 'Military Training: What It Does for a Man', *Modern Man*, 23 January 1909. The British Newspaper Archives <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Ruskin, John, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1908), XXXIV

S. Y., 'The Athletic Sports', *The Oldham Hulmeian*, June 1912

'Sandow in Plaster of Paris: A Unique Cast', *The Strand Magazine*, 22.130 (October 1901), 461-468

Sandow, Eugen, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, revised edition (London: Gale & Polden, Ltd., 1901)

Sassoon, Siegfried, 'Glory of Women', in *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1983)

Sassoon, Siegfried, *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 241

Sassoon, Siegfried, *The Old Century and Seven More Years* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986), p. 188.

Saunders, Captain L. H., 'Goloshes', *The Modern Man*, 25 December 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Saunders, Captain L. H., 'The Outer Man: A Weekly Feature', *Modern Man*, 11 September 1909. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Saunders, Captain L. H., 'The Wrists of Gloves', *The Modern Man*, 11 June 1910. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Saunders, Captain L. H., 'Wristlet Watches', *The Modern Man*, 14 October 1911. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Simkin, Richard, *Our Soldiers and Sailors in Egypt* (London & New York: Geo: Routledge & Sons, 1882)

Stokes, Hugh, *A Prince of Pleasure: Philip of France and His Court, 1640-1701* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1913)

Talbot, L. Agnes, 'How King Arthur Came to His Kingdom', *Little Folks: The Magazine for Boys and Girls; a Magazine for the Young*, 1896. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals

'The Arras Tapestries of the San Graal at Stanmore Hall', *The Studio*, 15 (1898), 98-104 <https://victorianweb.org/painting/bj/series/stanmore.html> [accessed 14 September 2023]

'The following is the Address of Major H. Isacke referred to in the article on the Corps.', *The Cantuarian*, 7.14 (1909), 347-350

The Gentlewoman, 'Coloured Straw Hats', *Hull Daily Mail*, 18 July 1907. British Library Newspapers

'The Loss of the "Birkenhead"', *The Boy's Own Annual*, 21 (1898-99), 282

'The Minor Field Day', *The Marlburian*, 20 March 1901

The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to Inquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926)

Thorne, Eglanton, 'The Haunted Dingle. A Ghost Story', *Young Woman*, 7 July 1899. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill, 'Trooper Tommy Atkins', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 5 January 1895. British Library Newspapers

Two Troopers Who Have Been Through the Mill, 'Trooper Tommy's "First War"', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 14 December 1895. British Library Newspapers

Vachell, Horace A., *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1910)

Vardon, Warwick M., 'How and Why to Exercise: A Chat on Physical Culture', *The Boy's Own Paper*, 29 (1906-1907), 110-111

Watson, A. G., 'Correspondence', *The Marlburian*, 30 July 1900

Waugh, Alec, *Public School Life: Boys Parents Masters* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1922)

Wellcome Collection, *Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs. Sandow as Gladiator*. […] <https://jstor.org/stable/community.24748285> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Wellcome Collection, *Eugen Sandow: Life of the Author as told in Photographs* […] <https://jstor.org/stable/community.24748293> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Winston Churchill, *Winston and Clementine: The Personal Letters of the Churchills*, ed. by Mary Soames (Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2001)

Winter, John Strange, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers* (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co., 1891)

Winter, John Strange, *Bootles' Baby: A Story of the Scarlet Lancers*, 6th edn (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co, [n.d.])

Winter, John Strange, *Cavalry Life, Or Sketches and Stories in Barracks and Out* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1884)

Secondary Sources

Baker Street Gallery, *The Accolade by Edmund Leighton* <https://oblivicon.com/art/accolade-edmund-leighton-2/> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Barber, Richard, *King Arthur: Hero and Legend* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986)

Battente, Saverio, *The Idea of Sport in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Contemporary Era* ([n.p.]: Vernon Press, 2020)

Baxter, John, *Private Tommy Atkins* (2022) <http://folksongandmusichall.com/index.php/private-tommy-atkins/> [accessed 13 September 2023]

Beckett, Ian F. W., *The Victorians at War* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2003)

Beckett, Ian, Timothy Bowman, and Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Bennett, Will, *Absent-Minded Beggars: Volunteers in the Boer War* (Great Britain: Leo Cooper, 1999)

Birchall, Heather, *The Two Crowns* (2002) <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dicksee-the-two-crowns-n01839> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, *Holy Grail Tapestries - The Knights of the Round Table Summoned to the Quest by a Strange Damsel (The Summons) McCulloch* (2023) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTY2> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Bonzom, Alice, '"Human Derelicts" and the Deterioration of the Nation: Discourses of Identity and Otherness in Victorian and Edwardian Britain (1860s-1910s)', *French Journal of British Studies*, XXVII-2 (2022), in <http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/9360> [accessed 19 October 2022]

Boone, Troy, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005)

Booth, Howard, J. 'Kipling, 'beastliness' and Soldatenliebe', in *In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling*, ed. by Jan Montefiore (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 225-249

Borg, Alan, *War Memorials: From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991)

Bowman, Timothy and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Bristow, Joseph, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

Brown, Michael, 'Cold Steel, Weak Flesh: Mechanism, Masculinity and the Anxieties of Late Victorian Empire', *Cultural and Social History*, 14.2 (2017), 155-181

Burne-Jones Catalogue Raisonne, *The Holy Grail Tapestries: Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine at the Chapel of the Sangreal, the Failure of Sir Gawaine and Sir Uwaine. A Morris & Co. Merton*

Abbey Tapestry from the Quest of the Holy Grail Series (Hodson) (2019) <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/OTcy> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Caesar, Adrian, *Taking It Like a Man: Suffering, Sexuality, and the War Poets: Brooke, Sassoon, Owen, Graves* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993)

Capet, Antoine, 'The Happy Warrior: Winston Churchill and the Representation of War, 1895–1901', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 66 (2007), in *OpenEdition Journals <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.10447> [accessed 10 November 2022]*

Carter, Louise, 'Scarlet Fever: Female Enthusiasm for Men in Uniform, 1780–1815', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society, 1715-1815*, ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 155-179

Cassell, 'Richard A., The Two Sorrells of Ford Madox Ford', *Modern Philology*, 59.2 (1961), 114-121

Christesen, Paul, *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Christie's, *Edmund Blair Leighton (British, 1852-1922) To Arms! 'Sweet bridal hymn, that issuing through the porch is rudely challenged with the cry 'to arms''* (2013) <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5728948> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Clark, Gail S., 'Imperial Stereotypes: G. A. Henty and the Boys' Own Empire', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 18.4 (1985), 43-51

Cook, Matt, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Cranfield, J. L., 'Chivalric Machines: The Boer War, the Male Body, and the Grand Narrative in the "Strand Magazine"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40.2 (2012), 549-573

Davis, Josh, *Eugen Sandow: A Body Worth Immortalising* <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/eugen-sandow-a-body-worth-immortalising.html> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Dixon, Thomas, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Dobson, Michael, 'The Pageant of History: Staging the Local Past, 1905–39', in *Filming and Performing Renaissance History*, ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett and Adrian Streete (Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 163-177

Donaldson, Peter, 'Commemorating the Crimean, South African and First World Wars: A Case-Study of the Royal Engineers, 1856–1922', *War & Society*, 39.2 (2020), 93–108

Donaldson, Peter, *Sport, War and the British: 1850 to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020)

Dunae, Patrick A., 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 24.1 (1980), 105-121

Dunae, Patrick A., 'Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys' Literature and Crime', *Victorian Studies*, 22.2 (1979), 133-150

Erickson, Arvel B., 'Abolition of Purchase in the British Army', *Military Affairs*, 23.2 (1959), 65-76

Farrer, Peter, 'In Female Attire: Male Experiences of Cross-Dressing—Some Historical Fragments', in *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-Dressing and Sex-Changing*, ed. by Richard Ekins and Dave King (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 9-26

Farwell, Byron, *Mr Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987)

Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index, *God Speed* <https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/DetailsPage.aspx?Feminae_ID=41307> [accessed 28 August 2023]

Fitzsimons, Eleanor, *John Strange Winter (1856-1911) – What A Remarkable Woman!* (2016) <https://eafitzsimons.wordpress.com/2016/11/10/john-strange-winter-1856-1911-what-a-remarkable-woman/> [accessed 28 April 2023]

Fleming, Elizabeth A., *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham, 2 vols (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), I

Flothow, Dorothea, 'Images of War in Late Victorian War and Adventure Novels for Children', *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, 66 (2007), (para. 12, 21-23 of 33), in OpenEdition Journals <https://doi.org/10.4000/cve.10404> [accessed 15 October 2022]

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978)

Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975)

Gilbert, Bentley, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain* (London: Joseph, 1966)

Gilmour, David, *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002)

Girouard, Mark, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981)

Gosling, Edward, "A Soldier's Life is a Merry One', or, 'A Certain Cure for Gout and Rheumatism': The Shift in Popular Perceptions of the Common Soldier in Late Victorian Britain, 1870-c.1910', in *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021), pp. 169-191

Griffiths, Andrew, 'Masculinity, Madness and Empire in Kipling's 'Thrown Away' and 'The Madness of Private Ortheris'', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 26.4 (2021), 552-567

Hall, Donald E., 'Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body', in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. by Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Hanna, Emma, *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)

Harty, Kevin J., *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films About Medieval Europe* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999)

Harvey, Karen, and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 274-280

Hattersley, Michael, *How Gay Was Dorian Gray?* <https://glreview.org/article/how-gay-was-dorian-gray/> [accessed 31 August 2023]

Heffer, Simon, *The Age of Decadence: Britain 1880 to 1914* (London: Windmill Books, 2018)

Hibberd, Dominic, *Wilfred Owen: A New Biography* (Great Britain: Phoenix, 2003)

Hichberger, J. W. M., *Images of the Army: The Military in British Art, 1815-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

Higham, Nicholas J., *King Arthur: The Making of the Legend* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018)

Houlbrook, Matt, 'Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards, circa 1900–1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 42.3 (2003), 351-388

Howells, Richard, *The Myth of the Titanic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999)

Hynes, Samuel, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968)

Ingleby, Matthew, *Charles Dickens and the Push for Literacy in Victorian Britain* (2020) <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2020/hss/charles-dickens-and-the-push-for-literacy-in-victorian-britain.html> [accessed 28 August 2023]

Johnson, Rachel, 'The Past and Future Hero: the Henty boy in the Twenty-first Century?', *The Henty Society Bulletin*, (2006)

Jones, Griff Rhys, 'Foreword', in *The Nation's Favourite Poems* (London: BBC Worldwide Limited, 1998), pp. 5-7

Kennedy, Michael, *Elgar, Sir Edward William, baronet* (2015) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32988> [accessed 14 September 2023]

Knuth, Rebecca, *Children's Literature and British Identity: Imagining a People and a Nation* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012)

Lacy, Michael, *Chapter 6: Arms and Armour Study in Edwardian Britain* (1999) <http://www.vikingsword.com/lacy/laking.html> [accessed 14 September 2023]

Lambert, Andrew, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-56*, 2nd edn (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011)

Lamont, Sally Wood, *W.T. Stead's Books for the Bairns* (2022) <https://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/w-t-steads-books-for-the-bairns/> [accessed 5 August 2023]

Lau, Meghan, 'Performing History: The War-Time Pageants of Louis Napoleon Parker', *Modern Drama*, 54.3 (2011), 265-286

Lewis-Stempel, John, *Six Weeks: The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War* (London: Orion, 2011)

Lurgo, Elisabetta, *Philippe d'Orléans: Frère de Louis XIV* (Paris: Perrin, 2018)

Lynch, Andrew, '"Malory Moralisé": The Disarming of "Le Morte Darthur", 1800–1918', *Arthuriana*, 9.4 (1999), 81-93

Maltby, Richard, 'Introduction', in John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England 1894-1901: Volume Five: 1900*, 5 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), V

Mancoff, Debra N., *The Return of King Arthur: The Legend Through Victorian Eyes* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1995)

Mangan, J. A., 'Lamentable Barbarians and Pitiful Sheep: Rhetoric of Protest and Pleasure in Late Victorian and Edwardian "Oxbridge"', *Victorian Studies*, 34.4 (1991), 473-489

Mangan, J. A., 'Play up and Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Public School Vocabularies of Motive', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 23.3 (1975), 324-335

Marlborough College, *Outdoor Learning* <https://www.marlboroughcollege.org/co-curricular/outdoor-learning/> [accessed 28 April 2023]

Matin, A. Michael, 'The Creativity of War Planners: Armed Forces Professionals and the Pre-1914 British Invasion-Scare Genre', *ELH*, 78.4 (2011), 801-831

McCausland, Elly, *Malory's Magic Book: King Arthur and the Child, 1862-1980* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2019)

McEnery, Tony and Helen Baker, 'The Public Representation of Homosexual Men in Seventeenth-Century England – A Corpus Based View', *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*, 3.2 (2017), 197–217

McGivering, John, and John Radcliffe, *The Absent-Minded Beggar* (2009) <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/readers-guide/rg_absentminded1.htm> [accessed 10 September 2023]

Meyer, Jessica, *An Equal Burden: The Men of the Royal Army Medical Corps in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Midwinter, Eric, *'His Captain's Hand on His Shoulder Smote': The Incidence and Influence of Cricket in Schoolboy Stories* (Great Britain: Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, 2019)

Mitcham, John C., *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Montefiore, Jan, 'Introduction', in *In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling*, ed. by Jan Montefiore (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 1-21

Myerly, Scott Hughes, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996)

Nelson, Claudia, 'Deconstructing the Paterfamilias: British Magazines and the Imagining of the Maternal Father, 1850–1910', *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 11.3 (2003)

O'Brien, Lucy Corinne, 'Edward Elgar and English Nationalism: imperial, chivalrous and pastoral visions' (doctoral thesis, University of Lancaster, 1998)

Paris, Michael, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000)

Parker, Joanne and Corinna Wagner, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1-19

Parry, Linda, *William Morris Textiles* (New York: The Viking Press, 1983)

'Physical Education in State and Private Schools in Britain in the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries: Elementary Schools and Other Schools', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27.5 (2010), 872-904

Pound, Reginald, *Mirror of the Century: The Strand Magazine 1891-1950* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1966)

Pugh, Tison and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013)

Richards, Jeffrey, *Happiest Days: The Public Schools in English Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

Riches, Adam, Tim Parker, and Robert Frankland, *When the Comics Went to War* (Great Britain: Mainstream Publishing, 2009)

Richmond, Velma Bourgeois, 'King Arthur and His Knights for Edwardian Children', *Arthuriana*, 23.3 (2013), 55-78 (p. 55)

Roberts, Robert, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1990)

Russell, Dave, "We carved our way to glory': the British soldier in music hall song and sketch, c. 1880-1914', in *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 50-79

Schellhammer, Richard, *How the Boer War Saved the Movies: The Depiction of the Boer War in Early British Cinema* <https://www.academia.edu/156106/How_the_Boer_War_Saved_the_Movies> [accessed 28 April 2023]

Shrosbree, Colin, *Public Schools and Private Education: The Clarendon Commission 1861-64 and the Public Schools Acts* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988)

Simmons, Clare, 'Chivalric Medievalism', in *A Companion to Chivalry*, ed. by Robert W. Jones and Peter Coss (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 301-322

Sinfield, Alan, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Skelley, Alan Ramsey, *The Victorian Army at Home: The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (London: Croom Helm, 1977)

Smith, M. van Wyk, 'The Boers and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) in the Twentieth-Century Moral Imaginary', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31.2, (2003), 429-446

Soloway, Richard, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17.1, (1982), 137-164

Sotheby's, *187 Edmund Blair Leighton* <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/19th-century-european-art-n08303/lot.187.html> [accessed 28 August 2023]

Sotheby's, *26 Edmund Blair Leighton* <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/british-irish-art/lot.26.html> [accessed 28 August 2023]

Spiers, Edward M., *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)

Springhall, J. O., 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2, (1971), 125-158

Staveley-Wadham, Rose, *Hot Off The Press – New Titles This Week* (2018) <https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2018/11/05/new-titles-5-november-2018/> [accessed 31 August 2023]

Strange, Julie-Marie, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Summerfield, Penny, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall entertainment, 1870-1914', in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 17-48

Summers, Anne, 'Militarism in Britain before the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, 2.1 (1976), 104-123

Taddeo, Julie Anne, 'Plato's Apostles: Edwardian Cambridge and the "New Style of Love"', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 8.2 (1997), 196-228

Talbot, David, 'Crimean Disaster: The Last War Between Gentlemen', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 October 1970. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Taunton, Matthew, *Print Culture* (2014) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/print-culture> [accessed 2 December 2022]

Toda, Mª Ángeles, 'The Construction of Male-Male Relationships in the Edwardian Age: E.M. Forster's "Maurice", H.A. Vachell's "The Hill", and Public School Ideology', *Atlantis*, 23.2 (2001), 133-145

Tosh, John, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016)

Tosh, John, 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800–1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 44.2 (2005), 330-342

van Emden, Richard, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)

Waller, David, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow, Victorian Strongman* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2011)

Watson, Nick J., Stuart Weir, and Stephen Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', *Journal of Religion & Society*, 7 (2005)

West, Anne and Hazel Pennell, *Underachievement in Schools* (London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003)

Wilson, Frances, *How to Survive the Titanic, Or, The Sinking of J. Bruce Ismay* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)

Woollacott, Angela, "Khaki Fever' and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29.2 (1994), 325-347

Wyke, Maria, 'Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding', in *Constructions of the Classical Body*, ed. by James I. Porter (United States of America: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 355-380