

# Leslie's

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## The British "Slackers" Holiday

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"SLACKERS" WITH PAPER PLUMES IN THEIR HATS

"Slackers" are the men whom the public thinks ought to enlist but who won't. In the early days of the war patriotic young women made a practice of pinning white feathers on young men not in uniform. Now the "slackers" frequently decorate themselves with white in a spirit of bravado.

LONDON, June 25.

THE slogan over here "business as usual" would read "pleasure as usual" if some of the "slackers" had their way, to judge by the number of young, able-bodied men to be seen on the streets with little or nothing to trouble them apparently—and it is a foregone conclusion that compulsory military service in some form will have to be resorted to before they will be induced to join the colors. It is certainly a most remarkable situation; either the danger of a German invasion has been greatly exaggerated and the arms of the Allies are meeting with greater success than we are allowed to believe, or else these men are the most calloused, unconcerned human beings it is possible to conceive of.

Recently Hampstead Heath was the mecca of an enormous holiday crowd, and I went out to look it over.

Open spaces like Hampstead Heath are splendid breathing places and easily accessible, a perfect boon for families who can enjoy the invigorating air and romp up and down the little hills and vales. But it seems almost incomprehensible, when the country is engaged in a war for its very existence, that there should be found young men making themselves look ridiculous with paper feathers in their hats, dancing and jigging to the tune of a mouth organ or barrel organ. The Recruiting Office had erected two booths for speakers who tried their hardest to induce suitable men to enlist. Various methods were employed from cajolery to browbeating. One speaker, so hoarse from talking that he could hardly articulate, his face as red as a beet with exertion and excitement, implored them with tears in his eyes. "Boys,

## “Slackers”<sup>2</sup>

don't leave it too late. Do join at once. You won't have to go to the front to-morrow. It will take at least six months to train you. Don't you know that 50 miles away your mates are dying in the trenches waiting for reinforcements before they can make the advance that will drive the enemy back? Think what it means to you if the Germans ever do invade us. Look at Belgium. Have you read Lord Bryce's report on the outrages? Remember the *Lusitania*, innocent women and children murdered. Why don't you join to-day and do your bit?"

Another speaker would ask for one recruit, just one, and after trying all kinds of

persuasive methods would say, "Now I am going to be personal" and would single out individuals and ask why they had not enlisted. One young man replied that he had his father and mother to care for, and amid derisive shouts of the crowd would be told what would be likely to happen to his parents if the enemy won. Others replied that they would not enlist voluntarily, as if they left their jobs other young men were awaiting the opportunity to walk into their shoes, but if it was compulsory they were ready to go—in fact anxious to do so. The speaker could always obtain applause from the many women in the crowd by stating that if it were women he was recruiting, he would have to turn them away so many would want to join.

I admit I don't understand these young men. I hardly think it cowardice on their part, but am inclined to think that the majority of them, notwithstanding the appeals made to them by posters, the press, and by public speakers, do not comprehend the enormity of the danger they are in, and it seems as though the only way to get them out is by compulsory methods.

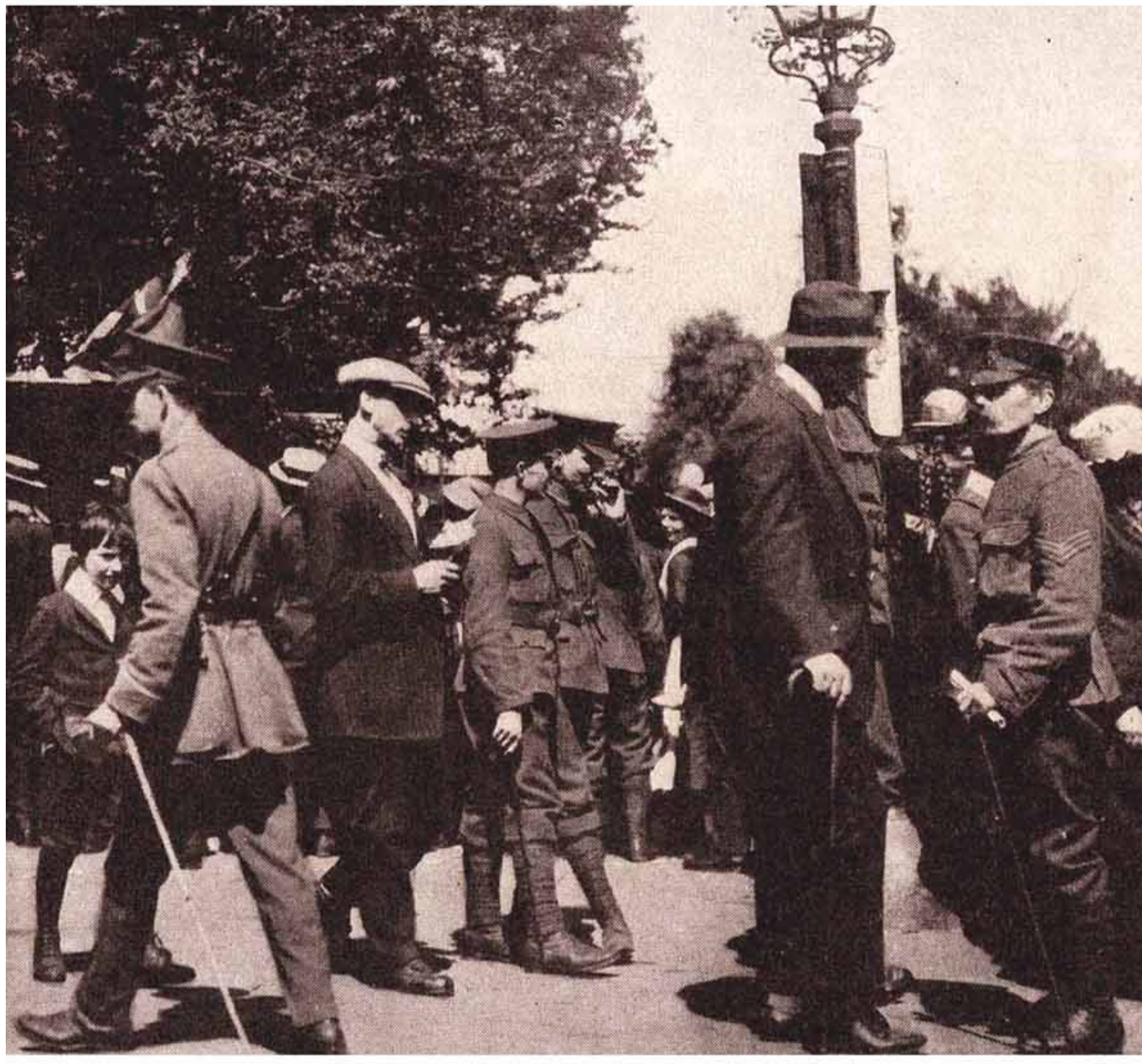


AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE ARMY

Recruiting officers frequently get personal in their appeals. They are particularly insistent on healthy young men's enlisting.

Lord Kitchener has survived the attack made upon him by a sensational newspaper and is entrenched in public favor stronger than ever, yet it looks as though "some one has blundered" in the matter of supplying ammunition. Lord Fisher, by resigning as First Sea Lord, owing to differences of opinion with Mr. Winston Churchill, Secretary of the Admiralty, virtually caused the fall of the Cabinet, and in the changes several surprises have occurred, not the least being that of Lloyd George leaving the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer to take the newly created one of Minister of Munitions. A splendid opportunity presents itself for a man with great executive abilities to hustle up the supply of ammunition that is so urgently needed. It is to be hoped that he meets with more success in this than he did in the last excise bill he drafted and had to withdraw owing to the opposition it met from all quarters.

# "Slackers"<sup>3</sup>



RECRUITING SERGEANTS AT WORK IN  
A HOLIDAY CROWD

Hampstead Heath is a popular London pleasure resort, and attempts are made to get men to enlist whenever it is crowded. Great Britain clings to voluntary enlistments instead of the admittedly more efficient conscription system because the government is afraid that it would be overturned if conscription were decided upon.



NO HINT OF THE NATION'S DEATH GRAPPLE  
IN THIS SCENE

Less than 125 miles from these merry dancers the British army was at death grips with the enemy in the trenches of Flanders. Here were hundreds of able-bodied young men entirely deaf to the call of the army, and apparently indifferent to the danger that threatens their country. The aristocracy came forward promptly and the laboring class has enlisted freely; it is the so-called middle class that furnishes most of the "slackers." The women are particularly active in trying to induce enlistments and make life miserable for the stay-at-homes by public exhortation and ridicule.

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