street of Bicester. Their conclusion, after a great deal of fascinating detail, is that shopkeepers were not "a homogeneous group or stratum" (p. 207). And the evidence of the book is that the lower middle classes were not either, useful though it is to examine them in common.

One of the strong points of the book is the manner in which most of the authors look at their group in relation to other groups, higher and lower in society; it is no accident that both Crossick and Gray have written with distinction on the "Labour Aristocracy". What is needed now, to advance the discussion the book hopes to start, seems to be more intensive work on lower middle-class culture, which is what the heterogeneous parts had most in common. And the next item on the agenda for "The Making of the English Middle Class" (a conclusion that we are unlikely ever to reach) would probably be a similar set of essays to ask similar questions about the next group up — here usually called the "established middle class". It is likely to be no more simple a task.

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GWYN HARRIES-JENKINS. — *The Army in Victorian Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977. Pp. xi, 320.

My review of this book must be a warning, not a recommendation. Mr. Harries-Jenkins starts with the thesis that Sir Redvers Buller's defeats in South Africa in December, 1899, and January, 1900, proved "the Victorian military system" to be "terribly wanting" (p. 2). Of course one agrees that these defeats were bad; equally one agrees that the Boer War revealed in the British army the sort of faults one might expect in any army which had not faced a serious opponent for nearly half a century. But, besides these things, there are the facts that on 8 February 1900, just thirteen days after its defeat under Buller's command at Spion Kop on 26 January, this army started a brilliant counter-offensive under Buller's successor, Lord Roberts; by 15 February it had relieved Kimberley; on 27 February it compelled Cronje to surrender with his whole force at Paardeberg and relieved Ladysmith; and on 13 March, a mere 46 days after Spion Kop, it captured the Orange Free State capital at Bloemfontein.

To most people such a string of victories, which in less than seven weeks transformed the whole war, would suggest that what was "terribly wanting" in the army was not the quality of the troops but Buller's dismal leadership. Mr. Harries-Jenkins, however, will have none of that idea. Ignoring all these facts, he mentions not one of the victories gained by Roberts and actually whitewashes Buller's wretched muddles by calling him a man "abused and blamed for the defeats of the British military" (p. 32). No author capable of so selective a use of historical data can be called an objective historian.

Yet one hesitates to accuse Mr. Harries-Jenkins of deliberately misrepesenting the facts because lack of ordinary historical knowledge mars so much of his unfortunate book. Thus, having once laid down his thesis that the British army was "terribly wanting," Mr. Harries-Jenkins seeks to explain it on social grounds, saying that the bulk of British officers came from "the English ruling class" (p. 3). But this inevitably provokes the question of how the army could ever have been so miserably neglected and financially starved throughout Victoria's reign if the class which provided its officers was also the class that ruled the

country? In fact, as Mr. Harries-Jenkins shows, correctly if at excessive length in Chapter 2, most British officers came from "the landed interest"; but this section of the population was certainly not "the English ruling class" during a reign at whose start every "£ 10 house-holder" had the vote in urban constituencies and which saw manhood suffrage achieved long before its end — a fact so unmistakably demonstrated both by the crushing defeat of the landed interest in the Corn Law controversy of 1846 and thereafter by the failure of the Tory party to win a majority in Parliament until Disraeli gained much working-class support in 1874.

After postulating his stereotype of the British officer as coming from the huntin', shootin' and fishin', not the reading, writing and thinking, classes, Mr. Harries-Jenkins alleges that except for the works of Pasley and three authors admirably discussed in Luvaas' *Education of an Army*, Burgoyne, Napier and Mitchell, little was "published during the early years of the Victorian army which contributed to the development of an underlying body of theory" (p. 109). A glance at any competent military bibliography should refute that statement. This was the period when innumerable memoirs were published by Peninsular veterans; such memoirs had the inestimable value of being books on war by men who had experienced war; between them they had seen all phases of it. They included excommissaries like Henegan and George Head, medical men like Guthrie and McGrigor, the Judge Advocate, Francis Larpent, J.T. Jones, the author of a first-rate three volume work on siege warfare, and most instructive of all, Col. Gurwood's frequently reprinted volumes of Wellington's despatches. Besides these books by veterans there were the important works on Cavalry by Beamish and Nolan. One cannot suppose that soldiers did not buy and read, as well as write, these books, and certainly the *United Services Magazine* was not kept going, under various names, from 1829 to the present day by civilian contributors. So there is a sad neglect of evidence here, but it pales beside Mr. Harries-Jenkins' astonishing reference to "Prussia's expansion in Denmark and Italy" [*sic*] (p. 131)!

If space permitted, one might go on and on and on, but to what purpose? Indeed, this seems an occasion on which a reviewer's criticism should extend to the publisher as well as the author.

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MARTHA VICINUS, ed. — *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977, Pp. xix, 326.

This new volume of articles on women in the Victorian period is a worthy successor to *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (1972), which was also edited by Martha Vicinus. Taken individually, all of the articles in this new collection are good, and some of them are of major importance. Taken together, especially when considered in conjunction with the articles of the first volume, they offer a framework for the history of middle-class women in Victorian England.

The titles of the two collections suggest the framework which is enunciated in the introduction that Vicinus wrote for *Suffer and Be Still*, and is more fully developed in her introduction to *A Widening Sphere*. The unifying theme of *Suffer and Be Still* is an analysis of the constraints that surrounded Victorian