

*LECTURE "On the Connection between the Ordinary Work of Soldiers in Peace-time and Warlike Efficiency," delivered before the Royal United Service Institute on Tuesday, 1st April, 1873: Lieut. General His Grace The Duke of WELLINGTON, K.G., in the chair, by Lieutenant J. F. MAURICE, R.A., Professor of Tactics, Royal Military College, Sandhurst.*

(Continued from Page. 225)

You will see that I have, in saying this, somewhat limited my subject. For it is not necessary that I should speak to you of the advantages of drill or of shooting practice, nor yet again need I speak of the necessity for training men to endure severe marching; nor yet of the necessity, not only for keeping all materials of an Army in good order, during war-time, notably as to the arms and ammunition, large and small, the condition of Horses, the fit of harness, &c., for of many of these you are already masters; and that which is most difficult for you in any of these, belongs to special corps, whose place few of you aspire to take. That which is really difficult for you, is connected with all these, but is not these. So little indeed does it consist in the mere keeping of material in good order, that if I must select a material something with which to connect it, I am disposed to say that in fact on which I most wish to dwell to-night would be—forgive me if for a moment I almost seem to treat you with impertinence—the very polishing of buckles itself. I do not think that I should be misunderstood by any soldier. I am quite sure that I should be misunderstood by none of those who have been setting before us most clearly the necessities of modern fight if I say that I can almost better express to myself the intense interest which my profession in peace-time has always had for me, altogether apart from its theoretical study, by that answer than by any other. If a soldier's beau ideal of all perfection is to be the polish of his buckles, or any other kind of outward show, of course none more contemptible can be imagined. But if we have never the right to say that the end justifies the means, there are certainly times when the means go very far towards glorifying the momentary end. I prefer to select that which in its momentary effect tends not at all towards warlike, hardly even towards peace efficiency, because round it rather than round something else which has a special advantage of its own, I can mentally gather all thoughts which relate to the development in each rank of that habit of getting duty done as duty, and to that wonderful organic unity on which, rather than on anything else, the creation of an Army effective for war, depends. It is in the development of that effective organic unity, that power in an Army of acting as one body, animated by one spirit, that the whole interest of our work in peace-time centres.

It seems to me that it is this, and all that is involved in this, which we fail to make clear to some, at all events, among you.

In a general way, we tell you that "discipline" is your difficulty. But "discipline" is a word which some, at all events, do not understand in the sense in which it is used by those, for instance, who tell us that "Discipline won the victories of the late war."

Discipline is a thing, the necessity for which in an Army in one sense no one outside of it doubts. But by discipline, in popular parlance, is usually meant, as Captain Flood Page has happily pointed out

to you, that which is in nowise sufficient for an Army.

Obedience to the personal command of a superior is, of course, a necessity, but I do not believe for a moment that that will constitute your difficulty. When I am anxious to make clear to you to-night, if I can, is that our work in peace-time has a certain definite education in it for our work in war-time, the nature of which, as I believe, could be much more fully set before you than it has yet been. In relation to all other professions, anyone who approaches them from the outside, is fully conscious, that quite irrespective of their actual practice, there is a long preliminary training which has a distinct value in relation to the practice. In the case of soldiering alone, and we have, I believe, ourselves mainly to thank for it, no one outside the Army seems to dream that there is anything but a little drill to be learnt by the daily routine.

There is a sort of popular notion that discipline is a thing which can be taken on and put off, like a glove, at no notice at all. It seems almost an insult to a man who knows well that he is quite ready to sacrifice everything to the cause he has at heart, to tell him that he requires to learn discipline. He quite understands, in the abstract, the necessity that one man should command, and that he himself should obey. What he does not understand, are the difficulties of command and the difficulties of entering into a relationship with his fellows, to which he is wholly unaccustomed.

That discipline, in the sense of personal obedience to orders, is not enough for war we have absolute standing authority. At the time when the Spanish and Portuguese Armies were rendering every operation which could be undertaken, hopeless and disastrous, Lord Wellington thus wrote to Beresford:—"We are mistaken if we believe that what these Portuguese and Spanish Armies require is discipline, properly so called. They want the habits and spirit of soldiers; the habits of command on one side and of obedience on the other; mutual confidence between Officers and men; and, above all, a determination in the superiors to obey the spirit of the orders they receive, let what will be the consequence, and the spirit to tell the true cause, if they do not."

Now much is included in that statement in which I will not insult you by saying that you would be wanting. But "habit" is a matter of slow development, which you have avowedly hardy time, as soldiers, to acquire. Those, I confess, seem to me your wisest advisers who frankly face the fact, and tell you that you must, by "conscious effort," do what we do by habit. But for conscious effort, distinct knowledge of what is to be striven for, is necessary. You must know what the habits are, which you are by "conscious effort," to acquire. It is as to these that I think we, who devote so much time to the process ought, if we are once fairly driven into a corner, to be able to give you some answer.

I can give you only a few examples of some of the leading ones, and if my selection seems to many most unsatisfactory, I can only say that I am fully conscious myself that it is so; but that I am much more anxious to urge you to obtain from others a more complete statement than to perfect it myself to night.

I would venture, before commencing to repeat also what Captain Page has in his lectures so admirably put before you, that up to a certain extent, the habits I speak of may be acquired in many of your own pursuits unconnected with the Army. I should

myself be inclined to say that every kind of work in which men are engaged, tends to develop certain habits, more especially its own, which are, nevertheless, in some degree induced by many other professions; I fancy that there is, in some sort, a *reverso* action also, and that the long accumulating experience of a body so permanent in all its parts as an Army, ought to be able to suggest the best methods by which all kinds of work should be carried on which depend on the organised action of large bodies of men.

The first habit, and that which has so many different forms that it almost includes all others, is that of, in all matters relating to duty, considering, simply, *the part* which it is one's duty to play in the getting done of what has to be done, to the loss of what I may call, perhaps, the friction of personal ability.

Let me illustrate my meaning.

Some years ago, a Volunteer review took place, far enough from here, and not at Brighton. The General in command had often been much annoyed by *stray shots* popped off in mere sport after the reviews were over. He had, therefore, given orders that the ammunition from the different pouch belts should be collected by the Commanding Officer of companies, and that where it was the property of individuals, it should be returned to them when the parade had been finally dismissed. Of course, the General had no intention of interfering with the private property of Volunteers, but he had full authority, as long as they were under military orders, to put a stop to a most un-military proceeding. Now what, under such circumstances, was the duty of each of the Officers who had to carry out the orders? Clearly to explain first to his company the nature of the General's order, and how private rights would not be interfered with, and then, in his definite military capacity, and being fully within his military authority to give the ordinary simple words of command, for the inspection of pouch belts and for their being emptied. Now it happened that in one case, the Officer commanding a company gave no definite formal word of command, but went to each man and with many apologies, and expressions of regret &c., begged that he would, as the General wished it, open his pouch belt. It was a Volunteer who told me the story. He was present on that occasion, and, thanks to his usual avocation, which was that of a large manufacturer, his instincts as to what is necessary in an organization made him see from the manner in which that was done, how it happened that that particular Commanding Officer never could get the duty properly carried on. The point lies in the want of perception that the exercise of right command, is as much a duty as that of right obedience. It was in fact, from a military point of view, an extreme piece of arrogance for an officer to apologise at all. It was not in his personal capacity that he was giving the order, but as a soldier whose duty it was to give it.

There is in the country a sort of notion of discipline which I believe more than anything else, makes men like Mr. Freeman and others talk as if it went without the saying, that the peace service of soldiers could do nothing but mischief to them and to their neighbours. "*Hoc volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*," "I chose this, I will have it so, the more senseless my wish the more shall you yield." That is the sort of notion which I find among my friends, of the ordinary relationship between superiors and inferiors in the English Army as in