

### Sentiment and Soldiering.

In an article in the *Broad Arrow* of June 25th, the following remarks appeared:—

That sentiment plays an important part in the soldier's life must be admitted, startling as it may seem, by every rational and careful observer. The great wars in which men engage from time to time are incurred for sentiment more frequently than for tangible advantages, and sentiment has its share in determining the side upon which victory declares itself. Men are not machines—they are wonderful compounds of habits and prejudices, fancies and feelings. The philosopher Coleridge has been at the trouble to show that nearly all political revolutions, or serious agitations therefrom, have been inspired by an abstract idea. In the same way, it is possible to show that nearly all the great campaigns of the world, and nearly all the bloodiest battles have been fought for and won by a sentiment.

The early armies were nearly all sentiment. They were mobs, unable to fight without working themselves up into fury, or endeavouring to similarly excite the enemy. The old yells, the clashing of spear and shield, the extravagance in gesture, were all intended to express the idea of rage and defiance. Fighting was to be done, if at all, in hot blood. Men swarmed as bees do. The idea of rigid discipline did not come until later, and the silence in the ranks of modern armies marching to combat, or already engaged in it, would strike an Attila, a Genghis-Khan, or a Boadicea, with astonishment. The necessity for individual coolness in the smoke and tumult is as great now as was the need for excitement and passion in the older times. The individual kind of fighting is rarer than it was even since the bayonet was introduced, and much rarer since the days of long and short spears, and clubs. We might, therefore, put the whole matter in this form—that, with the invention of long-range weapons, there has been a gradual and sequential diminution in the sentimental excitement of the individual soldier.

It would be a grave mistake to infer from this account of an immense change, that sentiment has no part to play in modern armies, or with the modern individual soldier. Our main contention is a sufficient answer to the first mistake, if anyone should feel inclined to make it. For example, no one doubts that the feeling pervading the German army in the Franco-German war was stronger, pulse by pulse, than the feeling which moved the French army. It was less vague and dreamy. The German soldier could understand what he was fighting for; it is not so clear that, though the more excitable French soldier cried "à Berlin" in terrible menaces, he had a permanent and ever-renewing source of strong feeling arising out of a clear and correct perception of the aim and cause of the war. The Germans mustered to defend the Rhine. Did the Frenchmen feel any poetic enthusiasm for the Meuse and the Moselle? Vague emotions speedily evaporate, and the excitement of the French soldiers reached its point in Paris before a shot had been fired. In a similar manner the Russian soldiers were sustained during the war in Turkey by a sentimental regard for people allied to them in race and religion.

There was never, as Lord Derby has recently remarked, a more notable example of what mere sentiment can do in military matters than in the British Volunteer movement. It began in sentiment, and sentiment sustains it. We might even go further, and say that voluntary enlistment being the principle of our army system, we build upon sentiment as our sure and sole foundation. Other nations insist—we invite. They order—and we allow.

The Volunteer movement, in this view of the case, is simply a natural and logical development of the genius of the British nation in things military. Philosophic observers may here remark that British soldiers fight so well because their hearts are in the work. They have become soldiers of their own account. Their sentiments have inspired them to be so. The Volunteer movement has not, though it began as described, shown any signs of wearing itself out. It was never stronger, healthier, and more popular than it is at the present moment.

Our advice then, is not to despise sentiment as a force in soldiering. Discipline may do wonders, but of itself it must sometimes fail, in great emergencies. Weak characters will exist in all communities, and find their way into the Army, as into every other profession and calling. *Esprit de corps* is simply a sentiment, and we all know what it will do for a regiment. "Drill, drill, everlasting drill" is only the means to an end. Mechanical perfection needs, however, the informing spirit, and we have called it sentiment for want of any better and more comprehensive term. Without a sentiment of some kind soldiering is apt to be dry, dull and tedious work. With it, it can be made attractive, happy, and even noble.

This reasoning is perfectly true in respect to our own Militia, and though the feeling of united patriotism which pervades all ranks, we have in the country a military force upon which the greatest reliance could be placed, should the Dominion at any time be called upon to put itself in a state of defence. Still yet, though men may be imbued with a deep sense of duty, and willing to forego personal comfort, so as to place themselves at their country's call, an appalling conviction will at times present itself, that even patriotism may ooze out of human nature and cease to be noble, when efforts directed and time sacrificed towards this end are blindly ignored, or made to serve only for political purposes.

The vice which recognizes political over professional claims is the rust which grows on a form of Government during the piping times of peace. In the friction "of a nation's agony the rust disappears."

The efficiency of a modern army now mainly depends upon a thorough scientific knowledge, and an extensive acquaintance with the history of military operations, by its officers, with a perfect state of discipline, a high individual intelligence, and a complete mastery over the various details of military work by the soldier, together with that *esprit de corps* which knits the British services into one unit of force.

This can only be attained first by bringing the men together as often as possible for drill, secondly by establishing an extended system of instruction, and thirdly by recognizing merit as a means of advancement both to military and civil appointments. In respect to the first and second the establishment of artillery officers (field and garrison) at the Royal Schools of Gunnery, might be increased for the purpose of these gentlemen proceeding periodically to the various cities and districts throughout the Dominion to instruct corps both practically and theoretically in military science,—a desideratum most sadly needed as far as the artillery arm is concerned. In a poor country like our own the idea of establishing infantry schools of instruction is most erroneous. All that an infantryman has to learn can be acquired outside an