

seconds. No. 5 Battery accomplished it in even shorter time, only taking 6 minutes and 2 seconds. No. 6, who were the last company to compete, were doing splendidly, when all at once the gun fell athwart the carriage, which knocked them out of the race. They afterwards did it over again in 5 minutes and 27 seconds. After the competition was over, the men reformed in their armoury and listened to a few remarks from Lt.-Col. Montizambert, who congratulated them on their efficiency and on the remarkable time in which they had executed the commands. He also said that he hoped that the men would be in their present state of efficiency at the coming drills at Quebec. He also congratulated Brigade Sergt.-Major Benton for being to a great extent the means of the Brigade's present high standing.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns, the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the Militia.)

### A LEAGUE MATCH FOR JUNE.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—I fully endorse your suggestion in your last issue, "now that there are to be no camps until September," it would be wise to have at least one of the League matches fixed in June. Let the whole series be concluded in July. As one of the Executive of the League I would recommend this.

J. R. WILKINSON, Lt.-Col.,  
Leamington, May 30, '91. 21st Fusiliers.

## DISCIPLINE.

(By Colonel H. B. Hanna, late Commanding at Delhi. From the Broad Arrow.)

### III.—COMMANDING OFFICERS—Continued.

A commanding officer should carefully avoid nagging at his officers and men. If he has to admonish or reprimand, he should do it in a few well-chosen, forcible words; but, having once disposed of the matter, it should be dropped once for all. Nagging is not only weak and contemptible, but often leads to insubordination. "When to let things alone is, perhaps, the subtlest, rarest, and most useful of all knowledge." A commanding officer should eschew tittle-tattle and scandal, and above all espionage, for it is mean and despicable, and fatal to discipline. In telling off prisoners in the orderly room, a commanding officer should, after hearing the evidence against them, listen patiently to what they have to say in their defence. He should then, without hesitation, or display of indecision, remand them for trial by court-martial (possibly for further evidence) or dispose of the cases summarily. Each case should be judged on its own merits, and no comparison should be made between the offender's conduct and that of his comrades, such comparisons do no good and may even lead to unseemly altercations and bad blood. I have myself known trials resulting from injudicious remarks of this kind.

In matters of duty unpleasant things must be said. Both officers and men have at times to be brought to book, but our English vocabulary is quite sufficient for the purpose without resorting to intemperate language. The commanding officer should point out quietly in what manner the offender has erred and, when necessary, warn him that punishment will assuredly follow a repetition of the offence; but let him make no empty threats. If the offender be again brought up for a similar offence, punishment should invariably be inflicted. It is the certainty of punishment, far more than its severity, which checks crimes. Admiral Collingwood declared that a first fault should never go unpunished. A commanding officer, who consistently deals with his men in this spirit, will soon be appreciated and respected by them, and the maintenance of discipline among

them will then become an easy matter, for he may rely on the support of all good soldiers and of some of the bad too.

A commanding officer should have his temper under perfect control, but *occasionally* and *intentionally* he may give it a little licence; it must, however, come out at once, "like the devil hail, rain, thunder and lightning." The *habitual* use of bad language is quite unpardonable, and generally reveals a bad officer. Sometimes it is done to hide ignorance, or stupidity, but where this is not the case, it shows, at least, a lack of the fine feelings of a well-bred man, without which no officer can expect to win the respect and confidence of his men, and may end in inspiring them with the bitterest resentment. A case in point came under my notice a few years ago. The officer to whom I refer, commanded a fine regiment, but was in the habit of addressing the men with or without provocation, in the foulest language. Although, by no means, a man of intellect or culture, he had the effrontery, in the hearing of the men themselves, to draw attention to what he was pleased to call "their low type of countenance." The natural consequences followed, insubordination and violence were rampant in the ranks; he was frequently insulted in his own orderly room, and how it was that he escaped personal chastisement, considering into what a bad state of discipline the men had fallen, has always surprised me. As soon, however, as he gave place to a different type of commanding officer, things changed for the better; crime rapidly diminished, and the regiment is now as well behaved as any corps in the service. Let me add this caution, in case my reference to personal chastisement may be misunderstood. However gross the provocation of which a superior officer may be guilty, a soldier (I use the word in its widest sense) can never be justified in taking the law into his own hands. He can always obtain redress under the provisions of Section 42 or 43 of the Army Act.

All officers should also refrain from using sarcastic language to their men, for nothing wounds a sensitive man's *amour propre* so deeply as sarcasm. Commanding officers should set a good example in this respect, and firmly suppress all approach to sarcasm in their juniors. Intentional sarcasm, when used towards one's subordinates, is a petty tyranny, tainted by cowardice, for the victim is defenceless and cannot resent it with safety. The habit is easily acquired, and often originates in vanity—a desire to put one's wit at the expense of others—of all vanities, perhaps, the most ignoble. No gentleman should, wittingly, wound any one's feelings, and officers have special need to put in practice St. Paul's injunction: "Be courteous," in their dealings with their men, since on their courtesy depends, to a great extent, that good feeling, without which discipline can be but superficial. A touch of humour, however, thrown into a well-deserved rebuke, is very effective; but this is a very different thing from sarcasm. I once served under a general officer who could do this to perfection. On one occasion he was inspecting a regiment, when he suddenly stopped opposite one of the men. Said the general to the soldier: "Is that your best coat?" *Soldier*: "No, sir." *General*: "Then where is it?" *Soldier*: "In barracks, sir." *General*, turning to the colonel of the regiment: "This is very remarkable, colonel. I put on my best clothes to visit this man, and he receives me in his worst!" I fancy the man must have had, later on, rather a rough five minutes with the adjutant, and not a little chaff from his comrades.

Favouritism is a fatal sin in a commanding officer, for it strikes at the very root of discipline—justice; and, unfortunately, this is no uncommon fault. All men are liable to be led away by outward appearances, or influenced by class or national prejudices. Officers serving in India, and belonging to native regiments composed of different races and castes, some, undoubtedly, much higher than others, are peculiarly liable to err in this respect; and commanding officers should keep a strict watch over themselves and their