

## DRILL AND DISCIPLINE.

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MILITARY INSTITUTE, 15TH DECEMBER.

*(Continued from page 12.)*

It remains for us now to try and draw from the teachings of history some lessons for our guidance in the discharge of our own duty as officers of Her Majesty's army in Canada, and if my premises have been correctly stated, and my conclusion properly drawn, we must consider first the motive which calls our force into being, and which would, if need be, impel it into action; and, secondly, the character of the men who compose it, and the conditions under which they engage.

First, then, our force is for defence, not for aggression. Aggression it may be, but only in the sense that aggression may be the best method of defence. We aim at no conquest. We seek only to defend and keep what is our own. As part of a great empire we may have to bear our share of Imperial as well as local defence, but so far it is for defence that our force has been called into being, and for defence only is it likely to be called on to fight. And this consideration largely determines the character of the men who compose it, and the conditions under which they serve. Being purely local, it offers no such field for the adventurous spirit as is to be found in the Imperial service. It has nothing for the mercenary or the soldier of fortune. Its prospects of achieving any share of military glory are remote. It is therefore wanting in many of the inducements which cause men to engage in the profession of arms, and to submit to the discipline which that profession requires. On the other hand those who join our force do so of their own free choice, and, all other inducements being excluded, we may assume that they do so from a feeling that the duty devolves upon them, having a liking for the work, and opportunity of doing it, of making that provision for defence which reason and experience prove to be essential to the life of a nation. Thus entering, we have also a right to assume that they fully intend cheerfully, willingly and intelligently to submit to all the conditions which their choice entails.

Thus, I think, we arrive at a safe foundation on which to rest our discipline. We have the motive power, the character of the force, and the conditions of service. What are the rules by which such a force should be governed? The answer, I think, is obvious. With men such as will enlist under the conditions described, a clear and distinct understanding of the duties required of them, and the restrictions imposed upon their freedom of action, is the first essential. A conviction that the discharge of their duties, and the submission to these restrictions, is a necessary part of the service they have undertaken is, in general, all that is required to ensure a willing and cheerful obedience. The power of punishment is necessary, but punishment will be rarely required, and must be carefully used. Certain offences must not be passed over, and in every corps there will be a sprinkling of careless, with a few, happily very few, vicious characters, whom nothing but the dread of punishment will control, and the sooner such men are got rid of the better. Commanding officers must never forget the important fact that the men under their control are most of them for the first time subjected to any discipline whatever, domestic or otherwise; that for the first time in their lives they have been required to live by rule, to do certain particular things at certain particular hours, and to abstain from certain other things; to obey orders promptly, to recognize authority,—all this being so contrary to the usual habit of their lives that to me, and I have no doubt to others, the docility, the cheerful obedience, the respectful demeanour of the men of our force is a constantly recurring source of wonder as well as of the highest gratification. It

is true that the short period during which our men stay in camp does not try their good qualities as a longer period would, but when we have had a more lengthy experience the result has been the same. And I may here say that I look upon even the short period we stay in camp as of greater advantage in respect to discipline than to drill. Drill can be taught to men collected for an hour or two for that purpose, and during that time it is easy to enforce order, but discipline in the true sense of the term can only be taught when men are together, subject to all the rules, and engaged in all the duties, which pertain to a military life.

I have said but little about drill except that by means of drill we teach discipline. I believe drill should be thorough—much more thorough than we, unfortunately, are able to make it. But after all, when men are well grounded in the rudiments of drill, when they can march, turn on the march, form fours, and front and right and left turn, and form to the front, and do that with precision, the rest is comparatively easy and depends more on the officers than the men. The skirmishing and modes of attack and defence they take to naturally, just as a boy at school goes to cricket or football when he has done with the grammar and lexicon. The trouble with us is that we have so little time for our military education that the rudiments are hurried over in order to get at the rest, and our men are required to skirmish before they have learned to march—in my opinion, a grievous and lamentable error. I hope I may be pardoned the observation, when speaking of skirmishing, that the new mode of attack which we have lately been learning, seems to me so exceedingly complex, that a great deal of time is being spent in learning a method which, in actual warfare, would be found unworkable by any troops, and certainly by men no better drilled than ours are, or are likely to be.

And now, in conclusion, I venture, after more than five and twenty years active connection with the force, to say, with some degree of authority, that what is most essential to its well being, is that the officers, upon whom its discipline depends, must enforce that discipline by example more than by precept, and I would say to the officers of the force, and especially to the younger ones—whatever your rights or privileges as officers may be, always act as though bound by the same obligations as the men, set them an example of subordination in all things, even the most trivial. If a thing is forbidden to the men, let it be equally forbidden to you, even though the order does not apply to you, and especially, in all matters relating to conduct and discipline. I have, for instance, to my great vexation, when men on the march have been forbidden to enter a drinking saloon, seen officers go in to that saloon before the men, using their privilege as officers to do that which their men were not allowed to do. Everything of that nature should be carefully avoided. Nor must familiarity be allowed to breed contempt, as it inevitably will do if freely indulged in. In this democratic country, and in a force like ours, when often there is nothing but the Queen's Commission to make the distinction between officers and men, the former must be specially careful to prove themselves, in all respects, worthy of that distinction, and competent to exercise the power which it confers. Men are very quick to note any weak point in the conduct or qualifications of their officers, but I have always found them ready to value and respect their good qualities. The men expect that their officers shall be competent to instruct them, and command them in the field. It is also necessary that the officers should set the men an example of neatness, smartness and punctuality; of willing obedience to orders; of cheerful endurance of hardship and privation. They must watch to see that all duty is promptly and properly carried out; that the non-com. officers are up to their work; they must be patient and forbearing, but able and willing to be firm and resolute when firmness and resolution are necessary. Much that in the regular service may be left to sub-