

**DISCIPLINE.**

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

**III.—COMMANDING OFFICERS.**

“He should be steady in system, that which demands change must be bad. Change in itself is an evil of magnitude.”—SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

In a commanding officer that reverence for authority which I placed first among a soldier's virtues will take the form of a careful and conscientious use of power. Knowing, by experience, the difficulty of obedience, he will seek, on the one hand, to enforce it by steadiness of rule, and, on the other, to render it easy by the clearness, simplicity, and reasonableness of his orders. Both written and verbal orders should be clear and intelligible to the meanest intellect, and are none the worse for a little “damnable iteration.” When orders are intricate or of great importance, such orders should, as a rule, be in writing; but when given verbally the recipient should be made to repeat them, and if necessary more than once. Should they require further elucidation, let him ask any number of questions. Patience on these occasions repays itself a hundredfold. In the field orders have frequently been misunderstood and incorrectly delivered with disastrous consequences. When the orders, however, have been thoroughly mastered, the person receiving them should be left to work out the details for himself, unless it is clear that he is incompetent to do so. Original methods are carried out better than those suggested by another person.

Neglect of duty or inattention to orders should never be overlooked. Strictness in this respect will soon form habits of obedience in the most careless. Such habits can only be properly taught during peace. On service it would scarcely be possible to introduce a good system of discipline in a neglected regiment, as a commanding officer's time would be fully employed in other duties; besides, regiments on service are often broken up into detachments, which, in itself, is one of the principal causes of the deterioration of discipline. Sir Charles Napier declared that a colonel should be able to say to the general, “I cannot see this order executed with my own eyes, but, having taught my officers the necessity of obedience, I will be responsible for its execution.” A commanding officer must exact strict obedience from the senior officers if he hopes to maintain discipline amongst the juniors. In no profession is it so necessary to maintain a connected chain of responsibility as in the Army. If one link fails, it may lead to the collapse of the whole system. To maintain this chain of responsibility intact, commanding officers should not withhold the powers granted by regulations to company officers for the disposal of minor offences, except under very peculiar circumstances, or unless he is of opinion that the officers referred to cannot be trusted to properly exercise them. Not a few commanding officers are under the impression that, in according these powers, they weaken their own authority. No greater mistake could be made, for, as a matter of fact, it is undesirable that every petty offence should be dealt with by a commanding officer. These remarks apply also to indulgences.

One of the worst misfortunes that can befall a regiment is to have a commanding officer who conceals, or connives at the concealment of crime. Such conduct, whether it springs from weakness or indolence, or the desire to stand well with the authorities, is fatal to discipline, and a regiment will suffer from its evil influence long after the cause has been removed; for the bad characters in it, having so long enjoyed immunity from deserved punishment, will, for years, continue to set all constituted authority at defiance, and to corrupt their younger comrades. Commanding officers who desire to make the state of their regiments appear better than it really is, must themselves commit grave breaches of discipline; for example, they will award a few

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#### NOTICE.

Several teams did not fire in the first match because they had not any ammunition. They are hereby notified to fire 23rd May, but in future if any fail to fire on the match day they will forfeit the score. Team Captains are requested to be more prompt in telegraphing.

#### INTER-CITY MATCH.

Team Captains will please notify the undersigned of their intention to take part in the Inter-City Match.

W. R. PRINGLE,

Toronto, 19th May, 1891.

Secretary