

ter of astonishment to find, as, if common report be correct, we have recently found a person in the position of an officer of the Force disgracing his commission by publicly expressing his opinion and his hope that the Dominion Forces if called out to suppress an infamous riot, would not obey their officers. Yet under our conditions of culture, our citizen soldiery ought to be beyond the influence of vulgar demagogues, and to be able to perceive clearly that his duty as a soldier is, while acting as such, to put aside all political party feeling, and regard himself simply as the representative of law and order in its highest form.

Let it be remembered in this connection, that the mischief of a violent and insubordinate spirit is not confined to its moral aspect or to its effect on the mere honor and responsibility of a corps, but that the most disastrous effects may result from its indulgence.

Loss of credit and honor to an army, or to a regiment, is a serious evil. And the grief inflicted upon a commander, by insubordination is so poignant, that, could those who have never held command under such circumstances, realize it, they would surely shrink from inflicting it. But the consequences of infringement of military regulations, or even of the indulgence of a capricious and fault-finding spirit, without absolute disobedience, may cause the wreck of brigades, of divisions, of armies, or snatch from a successful general his most glorious opportunity of victory. Let us, both from history, and from our own experiences, illustrate these positions. This is the language in which Napier describes the state of Sir John Moore's army during the retreat to Corruna.

But at this time the bad example of murmuring, given by men of high rank, had descended lower, many regimental officers neglected their duty, and what with the dislike to a retreat, the severity of the weather, and the inexperience of the army, the previous fine discipline of the troops was broken down. Such disgraceful excesses had been committed at Valderos, that the general issued severe orders, justly reproaching the soldiers for their evil deeds, and appealing to the honor of the army to amend them."

Let any man of feeling, picture to himself the state of mind of Sir John Moore at this time, the anxieties of the command of a retreating force, aggravated by the conduct of his own government, tenfold intensified by the misbehaviour of his officers and men, to him who can at all estimate the position, must needs be a pitiable one.

Now, we do not suppose that in the serious work of even a discouraging campaign, the cheerful alacrity, and the healthy stamina, the induration to hard work, and the generally high intelligence of the Canadian soldier would fail to sustain in his mind the conviction, that no adverse circumstances—no

depression consequent on them—can be, in the very smallest degree alleviated, but, on the contrary, must be very seriously aggravated by a reckless and undisciplined spirit. We believe, that the great majority are fully aware of the higher dignity of the man who can control his feelings of momentary irritation, and submit to wholesome, tho' at the moment, unpalatable restraint, for the general good, and indeed we may point to a proud example of discipline under suffering in the conduct of the Red River Expedition of Oct. 1871, under Col. Scott.

If encouragement in this direction be necessary, let men call to mind the conduct of highly disciplined crews, in numerous cases of wreck. That of Blight's boats crews for instance, in his terrible boat voyage, after the mutiny of the *Bounty*. The heroism of those noble soldiers who went down in parade order in the *Birkenhead*, after all means of escape had been devoted to the women and children, and those necessary to their attendance. Never was there a grand or example of the principle that if it come to a bitter end, and there be nothing before us but death inevitable, it is surely better to meet that death as brave men, than as cowards.

Yet, believing as we do, in the sterling qualities of our splendid national soldiery, and believing that they would not be found to fall short, in serious emergencies of any of the soldiers noblest attributes, we cannot blind ourselves to the fact, that there have been instances of a levity, to use the mildest term, which, is unworthy of the general character of our soldiers, and which has, at various times, tarnished regimental honor, and inflicted on officers the deepest obloquy.

What shall we say for instance of the by-stander's impatience which will manifest its disgust at the loss of a meal from the fault of bakers in supplying bad bread, by riotous conduct, instead of quiet and serious representation and remonstrance.

What can we say of men who will break open, and rob without any provocation or want, the canteen of a camp, and behave with such insolence to another regiment, as to cause the utmost difficulty to its officers, in preventing a serious breach of discipline in retaliation.

What shall we say of whole guards violating their almost sacred trust, and actually descending to robbery of the above, confided to their charge.

What can we say of men, who will consent to sully the reputation of their corps, by violent interference with the civil law, which it is their most imperative duty to sustain, or of officers who should countenance the instigations, by which men are led to such acts.

Yet these, and similar acts, are within our cognizance, to say nothing of others, which have been the subject of General Orders at various times, within the last six years.

It is very painful to us to li recathem, yet we hold it better to face and know our weaknesses, than to set them aside, as if they did not exist, and we cherish a firm belief, that by resolutely bringing sensible men face to face with them, we pursue the course most likely to guard against their recurrence again.

In order to exemplify the terrible effects of a caustic spirit amongst officers, it is only necessary to refer to the destruction of the light Cavalry Brigade at Balaklava. Kinglake is singularly and minutely graphic in his analyses of the bearing on the carrying out of orders, of the idiosyncracies, and peculiarities of mind and temper, of those entrusted with their execution. Read by the light of his interpretation, it is impossible not to perceive with perfect clearness, that the awful mistake which, while it crowned the English name with glory, consigned to destruction a brigade of the finest cavalry in the world, was the result of placing in high commands, two officers, who habitually allowed their mutual personal antagonism and a spirit of adverse criticism, of the orders of their Commander in chief, so to influence their reception and interpretation of them as to substitute an irritable, impatient, yet dogged submission, for a patient cheerful, and intelligent obedience. In fact, judicial blindness was the simple result of want of self abnegation, and terrible were its consequences.

On the other hand it must be conceded, that the Prussian army combines to a rare extent, the union of a stern but not vexatious discipline, with the intelligence naturally resulting from a sterling system of national education. To the presence of these conditions in the German forces, and their comparative absence, (especially the inferiority of discipline) in those of France, may be very materially attributed, the disastrous results to that great and gallant nation, of the war which is now furnishing us with the latest examples of the effects of arms, of tactics, of strategy, and of logistics.

Now, taking into consideration the advantages to the civilian soldier, so to speak, (by which expression, we mean to convey the idea of a soldier who is not a soldier all the year round) of the happy simplification of drill, which is continually progressing, and our comparative freedom from war office red tape, we would confidently ask what country, if not Canada, is best calculated to produce a citizen soldiery, possessing many of the best of those qualities which made the Germans victorious? Let this question sink deeply into the minds of those who, proud of their country and army, will necessarily have the spirit to desire that the latter may not fall short of any degree of excellence attainable.

Let us consider in one more aspect, the deplorable effects which may ensue from indulgence in that reckless and self seeking