

consequences. Apart from the effects of strong drink, from acts of dishonesty and theft, nine-tenths of a soldier's crimes originate in misunderstanding. The natural warmth of some men—the nervous anxiety with which they require their orders to be instantly obeyed—the stubborn disposition and hesitating manner of others,—those adverse tempers frequently produce altercations between non-commissioned officers and privates, which in many instances, from the character they assume, can only be adjusted by the interposition of a Court Martial; but being the result of accidental causes, I do not regard them as furnishing proof of insubordination, although that expression may be employed in designating the offence.

I do not remember, in the course of my career, many instances of a non-commissioned officer properly and strictly discharging his duty, being treated, in its execution, with contumely or disrespect by his men; or that such a person often found it necessary, on his own account, to bring a soldier to punishment; for this reason, when I hear of "disobedience of orders," or disrespectful language to a non-commissioned officer in the execution of his duty," I always examine both sides of the question, and although I should find nothing to justify, seldom fail to meet with some extenuation in favor of the accused party. A hasty word or command unnecessarily urged on the one side, is followed by some improper observation on the other, and this simple beginning I have known, in my time, not unfrequently to end in a Court Martial. Who then can hold up his hand before his Maker, and conscientiously affirm that cases of this description, when both parties, though of course in a very unequal degree, are not free from culpability, should be visited with equal punishment, or deny that almost any other will answer all purposes much better? What officer requires to be told that no soldier ever brought to this disgraceful punishment, through the instrumentality of a non-commissioned officer, will forgive that man to the day of his death?—he may and will forgive him after undergoing imprisonment, because he has time for reflection and seldom fails to convince himself that he had no right to make any reply whatever. In the society of his comrades he soon forgets the solitude of his cell; but reflection, in the other case, only recalls the torturing punishment he has endured, and no matter what impartiality he may use in examining his own conduct, he never can pardon the author of his disgrace so long as he bears the marks of it about his person. Is this human nature, or is it not? If it be, sound policy, ere it recognise the value of good understanding amongst men who are placed side by side fighting the battles of their country, cannot omit to condemn the unnecessary use of the lash.

Who, moreover, can say that other crimes known amongst soldiers differ from those of the same class which occur daily