

"Now in which of these points can it be said that an irregular or Volunteer force may be permitted greater laxity than is thought safe for Regular troops? The habit of reasoning upon a command will be admitted to be, in actual warfare, as mischievous if indulged in by a Volunteer, as it would be in a Regular officer. Patriotic ardour, if not reinforced by the habit of obedience, is not unlikely to break down before the prospect of an apparently objectless night-march, or may be unable to resist the temptation of an hour's extra delay in an hospitable village; while the non-enforcement of strict regulations as to clothing and impedimenta is as likely as anything we know to produce the most disastrous effects. As regards this last point, indeed, a certain report of the Sanitary Commission during the late war in the United States is the most positive evidence. In those corps of the Federal Army in which strict obedience to regulations was insisted upon, the sanitary condition was almost invariably found to be good; but in those regiments in which the men were accustomed to do, even to a limited extent, as they pleased, the reverse was the case, not only from the needful regulations respecting health and cleanliness being disregarded, but from the fact that, from the mere want of uniformity in dress, it was impossible for the officers to insure the men being efficiently protected from the weather. The coat of one man was thick, that of another thin; one wore a flannel shirt, another a cotton one, and so on. We cannot imagine any state of circumstances under which an irregular force, however much in earnest, could, if not thoroughly imbued with this habit of implicit submission to authority, be safely pitted against Regular troops. At the very moment of conflict, indeed, the obvious necessity for ready obedience, coupled with the *elan* springing from the enthusiasm of Volunteers in the cause for which they have taken up arms, might be safely trusted to produce the happiest results. Battles form, however, but a small part of a campaign, and the difficulty is always, as respects any troops with which we are concerned, rather to bring forces in due numbers and in good fighting trim into the required position, than how to make them fight when they have got there.

"Assuming, then, that there is but one kind of discipline applicable to any military force, and that discipline results in a confidence on the part of the superior, of what ever grade, that his orders will be implicitly and promptly obeyed by his subordinates, the question remains, whether the British Volunteer force is in a condition at present to inspire those who may have to command it with such a confidence. Can officers and men, some of whom are accustomed to cavil at almost every arrangement made by those above them, be trusted to yield implicit obedience to those same superiors when the real stress comes? Can the members of a regiment which has acquired the habit of becoming disorganized the moment the actual field movements of a review are over, be trusted to undergo discomforts, to endure hunger, thirst, and fatigue, simply because they are required to do so, in the very sight, perhaps, of food, drink, and shelter; and will men who now almost resent a rebuke for wilful inattention to dress regulations, submit without a murmur to the most incessant and minute interference with their personal arrangements? If these questions cannot be answered without hesitation in the affirmative, we cannot think that the Volunteer force is at present fit to undertake the duties of a campaign with much hope of success. We are perfectly aware that in

many, and, indeed, we hope in most cases, an affirmative answer might be given. There are plenty of Volunteer regiments in which the spirit of obedience has been successfully fostered, in which orders are obeyed simply because they are orders, in which steadiness in the ranks is the rule rather than the exception, and in which a thoroughly good understanding between officers and men is combined with due enforcement of submission to authority. But, after all, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and if the Volunteer Army is ever called out the reliance which will be placed upon it will be measured by the amount of discipline to which the force, as a whole, is found ready to submit itself. That it would only be a necessary discipline is certain, and that the time required would be but short we fully believe; but it must be remembered that, in the very exceptional circumstances which would justify such a stoppage of the whole business of the nation as would be caused by the embodiment of the Volunteers, every day would be of incalculable value, and it should be the duty and the pride of every Volunteer officer and private so to utilize the time of peace, that the days of immediate preparation for actual war should be reduced to a minimum.

"We hold that this result will best be arrived at by keeping constantly before the mind the fundamental principles of true military discipline, and endeavouring to extend the knowledge of these principles among all ranks of the force."

The writer then goes on dilating on the principles laid down above; assuming that if ever a volunteer force were called to take part in active warfare, it would be under the identical regulations which would govern regular troops, and that in all likelihood it would be under the command of regular officers who would exact the same attention and obedience from volunteers as they would from regular soldiers. Referring to the erroneous idea entertained by some people regarding the action of officers in enforcing the rules of the service in this respect, he says:

"But a certain proportion of persons, and notably some part of the press, have never been able to get the original idea of the Volunteer force out of their minds. We still hear, by no means unfrequently, of its being impossible to expect Volunteers to submit to the same discipline as Regulars; attention to the *minutiae* of drill is stigmatised as pipeclay, and adherence to regulations as red tape. In almost every case of insubordination which occurs, some newspaper is found to cry up as martyrs the insubordinate heroes, be they privates or officers, and to write articles, maintaining in effect the right of every Volunteer to do, as the Yankees say, 'as he damn please.'"

"As long as this view finds supporters, so long will it be impossible to put the general discipline of the force on a sound footing. While men feel that they are supported by a section of the public when they think fit to set themselves against their officers—while they see officers themselves wanting in respect to their superior officers, and throwing up their commissions at some fancied slight, they will never learn that obedience is the first duty of a soldier, to which smartness in drill, is after all a very secondary consideration; and they will have to learn it in a stern school, and at some cost of time most precious to the nation, if ever they go out to fight.

In the following remarks he hits upon the real secret of maintaining discipline in a Volunteer force.

"We admit that the peculiar constitution of the Volunteer force makes it extremely difficult to define the limits within which discipline should be maintained. We are far from advocating anything approaching to a martinet code being adopted, or desiring to see introduced among ourselves that strict line of demarcation between the officer and the private which obtains in the Regular Service. In the latter service, the discipline of which we have spoken is maintained, if we may so speak, by force; in our service it can, we most emphatically declare, be only maintained by means of the good will and good feeling of all concerned. But we do believe that this good feeling is not wanting, and that the cases of insubordination which do occur arise almost invariably partly from those false ideas of the conditions of the service to which we have referred previously, and partly from the undoubted difficulty of defining the limit at which the relations of civil life and those of officer and subordinate begin.

"If the lesson of obedience is systematically taught, it will be easily and quickly learned, and the learners will soon appreciate its real value, as we see they do in those numerous Volunteer corps in which the experiment has been tried; but if commanding officers continue to take any men they can get, to let them practically do as they like, dress as they like, and think they are efficient soldiers because they submit to obey the word of command when actually in line, the lesson is not taught at all. If, on the other hand, colonels will be more careful to enlist recruits of the right class than eager merely to swell their ranks; if they take care never to permit a man to be enrolled without strict enquiry as to whether he has or has not belonged to another corps; if they make those under their command see that no wilful disobedience to any regulation is ever passed over, their regiments will improve in tone as surely as they will in appearance and efficiency, and the whole force will gradually become leavened with a spirit of discipline, the possession of which will alone admit of its excellent organization and undoubted high soldierly efficiency being made fully available at the first moment of alarm."

DINNER TO COL. ATCHERLEY, D.A.A.G., AT BROCKVILLE.

On the evening of the 14th inst., the Volunteer and Militia Officers at Brockville gave a complimentary dinner to Colonel Atcherley, D.A.A.G., in commemoration of the 2nd anniversary of his appointment as Commandant of the first Brigade Division, as well as to show how fully his amiable disposition, combined with his unremitting attention to duty and his conduct generally as an officer and a gentleman were appreciated, and had won the esteem in which he was held by the officers with whom, in the discharge of his duties, he was associated at Brockville. The spread was prepared by Mr. John L. Campbell, at the Campbell House, and fully sustained that gentleman's known abilities as a caterer. The chair was occupied by Lieut. Colonel Jackson, Brigade Major, having on his right, of course, the guest of the evening. On his left was Mr. Moss, of Tur-