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MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND SELF-RESPECT.

The average young man experiences considerable of a shock, soon after he begins his military career. The atmosphere of civilian life has, in these latter days, heightened his self-realization. He has been fed on the saying that this is "the young man's age", and he is pretty well persuaded of his own importance. He soon becomes undeceived, whether he be Subaltern or Sapper. He soon begins to realize the unimportance of the individual, and the need of developing what Donald Hankey calls a "corporate personality". He has to lose himself in a mass, build himself into a great organization, adjust himself to act in perfect conjunction with others in a common, concerted effort.

But in doing this, he has no shadow of an excuse for thinking that he is called upon to compromise or sacrifice one iota of the self-respect or self-reliance, which he may have developed in civilian life. If we turn to K. R. & O., Section VIII on Discipline, we find that officers are required "to adopt such methods of command and treatment, as will not only ensure respect for authority, but also foster the feeling of self-respect and personal honour essential to military efficiency." The personal equation is not eliminated; it is only built into and merged in the corporate personality. We also find, in the same Section of K. R. & O., that N.C.O.'s "will avoid intemperate language or an offensive manner." The self-respect of the N.C.O. is also guarded by a regulation, that he is not to be reproved in the presence or hearing of a private soldier. It may be argued that this is designed to safeguard his disciplinary prestige, but it also works for his self-respect.

Having written this much, we are reminded of the old saw that "A young man's glory is in his strength." While there is pretty general assent to this aphorism, there does not always appear to be a wise appreciation of that which constitutes real, manly strength. It runs deeper than mere physical prowess, and a trained and disciplined muscular system. The strong and disciplined character is a big thing, and runs into the realm of a man's thoughts, words, carnal passions, as well as his physical power. Whatever a man has of this discipline or need of discipline, he brings into the army to strengthen or weaken it. The man who can control his temper, hold his tongue or at least keep it clean, restrain his passions and strangle lewd and filthy thoughts is already a long way on the road to becoming a good soldier. Let him preserve his self-respect by building all the discipline and restraint of civilian life into the fabric of the good soldier he is capable of becoming.

Some men have so failed to discipline their tongues, that a stream of blasphemy or filthy language flows from it without their really knowing what they are talking about. The name of the late

Lord Roberts is one to conjure with, and here is how he viewed the undisciplined and filthy tongue:—

"Every man who wears the King's uniform, should remember that he belongs to a noble service, and he should endeavour to conduct himself at all times in a manner which will not bring discredit upon it. Decency in speech and conduct, belong to that self-respect which every soldier should do his best to cultivate."

"It rests with you, men, to bring about the reform I am so anxious for. If you will all band together and let it be clearly understood that foul language is bad form . . . there would soon be a change for the better."

"I call upon all good soldiers, officers, N.C.O.'s and men, to take this to heart and do their best to put a stop to a practice which is degrading in the extreme, and to relieve our service from a reproach which goes far to tarnish the lustre of its brilliant reputation."

The influx of younger men, youths, into the service today imposes a great obligation, and affords a valuable opportunity to the older men. Let a stand be made for clean speech. A little of the old English public school spirit, that moved the lads to wash out the filthy mouth of a "smart Alec" with soft soap, might find useful occupation where some men of a barrack room are trying to turn it into a moral cess pool.

Disciplined language spells control of thoughts, and a restraint upon lewdness and animalism. Men easily run to things they talk about in jest, and much irregularity and immorality, is born of the undisciplined expression in language, of the lower animal instincts. The discipline that enables a man to say "NO!", and stick to it, is of fundamental value in the army. Some seem to think that all restraints upon human passions are foreign to the army, forgetting that a man's strength is determined by his success in restraining his passions, and that he is called upon to be his very cleanest and straightest and best, in order that he may give his best in service.

Military discipline is built essentially upon the bedrock of self-respect, but, like the foundation stones of any great institution, that self-respect is out of sight as it supports the fabric of military organization and work. Its truest manifestation is a man's pride in his corps, and in the desire to do it credit. Canadian Engineers who have recently joined the Depot, remember this! Your corps deserves the best you can give, for only that best can prevent you from lowering its proud reputation and unquestioned prestige. This consideration should keep men from laxity of speech or morals which undermine a young man's essential strength.

But we would stress a final observation:—We are soldiers today, but civilian soldiers who hope soon to return to civilian life,—soon, but not until our job is done, and done well. If we are to command respect when we leave the army, we must preserve self-respect while we are in it.

On one occasion Lord Kitchener addressed his army on this matter of self-respect and clean moral living. He closed his address with these straight words:—"I ask all the men who compose the Army which I am proud to command, to consider whether self-indulgence is worth the price which has to be paid for it in disease, in punishment, in injury to the man himself, his wife and his children, in destruction of the efficiency of his corps, and in degradation of his own body and mind."

Such general appeals to men in the army, do not imply that even the majority are so lacking in self-respect as to fall into undisciplined language or laxity of morals, but they do imply that all can exert themselves to witness to and preserve, such rectitude of conduct as will make the highest military discipline and efficiency possible. For Tennyson's lines are as true in military as in civilian life,

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,

These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

"ON GUARD!"

OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
E. T. D.—SHUN!

A Lawn Social, in aid of the Red Cross Fund, will be held this afternoon and evening on the grounds of Trinity Church, Ibrville. The brass band of the Canadian Engineers will attend, and ice

cream, tea and cakes, will be on sale.

All Officers and Men of the Depot, are cordially invited. Not only is a pleasant afternoon and evening assured, but you will also be "doing your bit" toward aiding one of the most deserving branches of war work.