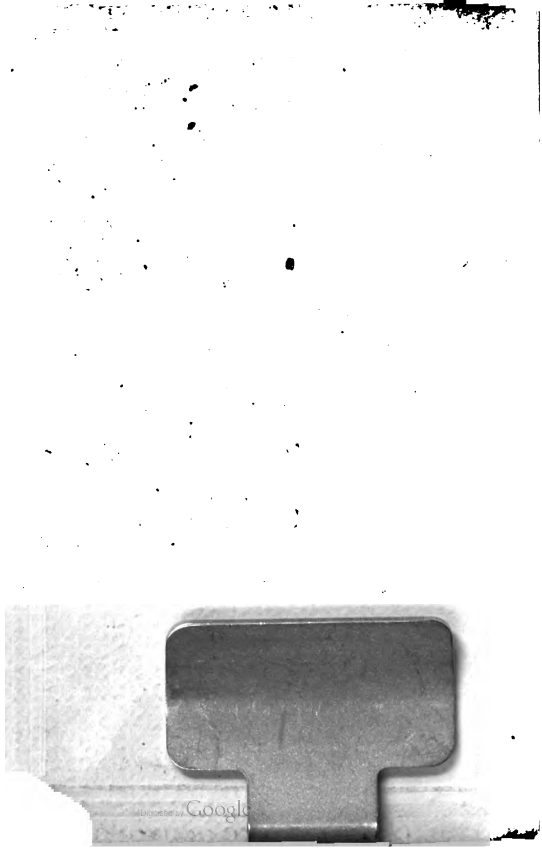


THE
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THE
OFFICER ON DUTY.

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THE OFFICER ON DUTY.

I.

THE NEW POSITION.

MY DEAR SIR—I congratulate you on having at length succeeded in your wishes. Your appointment as an officer in the volunteer service will put a new aspect on your daily life, and bring you at once into a novel and responsible position.

The patriotism which impelled you to seek the office, will, I hope, stimu-

late you to a faithful discharge of its duties. You do not of course look upon it as a sinecure, nor expect to march along a path of roses. You have, I trust, counted the cost; and are prepared to meet the dangers of the battle-field, as well as to share in the glory of the triumph.

In the few counsels which I shall take the liberty to transmit, you will recognize the spirit of friendship, as well as the solicitude of the patriot. Not being myself a military man, you will not expect any attempt to define your duties in that respect. Able works adapted to your station, with such practical application of their principles as the drill and the march and the campaign, are at

hand; yet there are duties and labors and trials not strictly military involved in your new position, to which I may refer; and I am confident that my suggestions will be received in the same spirit in which they are conceived and uttered.

You find yourself having authority and command, when it may be recently you were a civilian, subject to the direction of others. The young officer is taken from the college, the counting-room, the work-shop, or the farm, and is put in command of men whom he is to drill and discipline and lead to battle. At once an entirely new phase of life begins. There is the charm of novelty; and most young men feel a sort of pride and

satisfaction in being thus connected with their country's defence and destiny.

But after all it is no holiday business. It is quite another thing than the parade and pomp of soldier-life in time of peace. The novelty will soon wear off, and the stern reality begin to be felt. The sound of martial music which awakened such a patriotic thrill, will become a matter of course; and the drum beat will have scarcely more stirring influence than the shrill steam whistle that calls the laborer to his toil. You will find, and in fact I presume have found already, that it is one thing to anticipate glory, and another to work out the tedious art of war which

leads to it. The sheen of the new equipments will ere long grow dim, and the gold bands and buttons will become dull and dingy. After some months of comparative inaction, living in tents and moving through the monotonous routine of camp life, you will begin to wonder what there was to attract you into this sort of business. Ennui, if not home-sickness may begin to touch the under-current of feeling, and make you sigh either for the more exciting scenes of the battle-field, or the more comfortable occupation which you have left behind.

How much the young mind lives on excitement! How apt it is to be discouraged, if that stimulus be want-

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ing ! A word on this point. In a great army, like the one we now have in the field, divided up as it must be into sections, and distributed over so vast a space, some portions must be for defence, some for aggression, and some for mere discipline. It takes time to put an army in trim for action. There is an immense amount of drill and marching and tactics needed, ere it can move with efficiency. While this is going on, it seems to your ardent aspirations as if nothing was being done. Perhaps it is your lot to guard and strengthen some secluded point, while it is another's to attack. The latter is all excitement. You are dull and almost disgusted. But the

rule of military life is, to be where you are put, to go where you are sent, and to do what is commanded. If your business is in camp, so be it. Do your duty *there*. Make the camp feel your presence for good. Let the soldier be recognized there as well as in the field. If you are ordered to the front, well and good. March to the front and show yourself a hero *there*. If your duty is in the fort and behind the big guns, stand there, and teach the men to handle them with tact and energy. If others are put forward and you are left behind, the rear, remember, is as honorable as the van, if you there discharge the duties assigned you ; and he who is most efficient in preparing his men

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for a resolute stand in the day of battle, is the very man to head them in an assault, or to lead them into the deadly breach.

You expected more stirring scenes ; you wished to distinguish yourself at once. These hopes are in a measure disappointed. You are stationed perhaps where distinction comes only by those efforts and energies which attract no public notoriety, such as strict obedience to orders, efficient drill, personal interest in your command, and a determination to place it high in the matter of discipline. But are not these soldierly virtues ? And is not this department of duty as important as any other ? Surely the officer who shows such qualities,

in the unobtrusive work of placing his command in a condition to handle their arms, to march well, to move with energy and precision, is doing a good work and deserves well of his country.

True, there is no great glory in this. It is not like the daring and bravery which some have evinced in the hot strife of actual conflict. But what would an army be without discipline? Why should those qualities be underrated which give force and efficiency to the rank and file? The post of duty is the post of honor, be it where it may. The man who can conduct a retreat under trying circumstances, may deserve as well of his country as he who makes a suc-

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cessful attack ; and the soldier who holds the enemy in check, may show as high military qualities as he who can drive them before him.

“Honor and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part—there all the honor
lies.”

II.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THE novelty of your new position will wear off, the *responsibility* never. Let me say a few words on this latter point. It is no light matter to be in command, even on a lower grade of commissioned officers. You are placed on one platform, the men on the other. You are above ; they, below. It is your duty to give the order, theirs to obey. But your duty looks two ways : the one towards your superior officers, and the other towards those under your command. Here is a double responsibility. I

trust you have considered the subject in this light, and will not take it amiss if I throw out a few thoughts bearing on this aspect of your military life.

The first duty is in relation to your superior officers. The force and energy of the military arm lies in strict obedience. Usually men are courageous enough, have enough of what is called brute force, and some of them superadd what is far more important, *moral courage*. Moral courage is of the mind ; is intelligent ; is the expression of principle ; is, in fact, the highest kind of courage.

But even with all these qualities, an army, if not under rigid discipline, would be comparatively inefficient.

Hence a grand fundamental point is discipline ; and discipline is founded on obedience. The general in chief is responsible to the government—must do what the government orders him to do, unless, conscious of its own want of military skill, it shall choose to resign the direction to him. Under him are grades many. The next in command looks to the general in chief. The orders of the superior are always to be executed. The subordinate has no discretion. The responsibility lies in the chief. Should the next in command obey promptly and implicitly, and fail of success, it will not be his fault. Who gave the order ? That will be the question ; and the responsibility settles of course

where it should. And so down, through every grade. There is a fixed, iron rigidity, in regard to military rules, which cannot be bent to suit individual caprice. Obedience is the grand and fundamental law of the soldier's school.

Looking *upward* then, I trust you will always, with promptitude and zeal, obey the order that comes from a superior officer. Like it, or not; approve it, or not; still obey it. Had this rule been observed, there would have been far less discontent and disaster in our noble army. The bickerings and jealousies and underminings would not have been so prevalent. I don't say that a superior officer is always and of course a man

of sound judgment, nor that his policy is always to be approved; that he commits no blunders, makes no mistakes, and subjects his command to no unnecessary disasters. Alas, no. But even if he mistakes, a greater mistake still would be, not to follow his orders. That would be incipient mutiny. It would lead at once to demoralization. For his plans and policy he is responsible to the higher power. If he prove an imbecile, it will soon be ascertained, and he will be discharged.

This principle of strict obedience runs down through all grades of commissioned and non-commissioned officers, involving at last the whole rank and file. Just as the members

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of the human body take their tone and do their work by a connection with and dependence on the brain, through which, as the highest physical medium, the mind acts ; so the army is moved by a network of influences, which centre in the chief, but are distributed through many inferior channels.

The responsibility is divided according to the official grade. The lowest commissioned officer has his share, not only as to his conduct towards his superiors, but also towards those under his command. The men are bound to respect his official rank and to obey his orders, provided such orders are within the military code ; and ordinarily we hope they do obey.

If they do not, either he is to blame for unofficerlike conduct, or they are liable to punishment for disobedience.

There are some incongruities unavoidable in the volunteer service, which render discipline not easy to be enforced. Here, for instance, is a company of respectable men, from twenty years to forty-five, gathered from some country district where all are on a level, and none have been subject to authority. Some of this company are well educated, having possibly taught in the school or filled some of the town offices. Well, an officer is put over them scarcely of age, and in some respects inferior to some of the rank and file. Here is an incongruity. Yet what is to be

done? As long as the young officer is duly in command, and still more, if he deport himself as he should—if he show the men that he has soldierly qualities, and can put them through the necessary discipline, his youth and inexperience should not beget contempt nor justify disobedience. They are in duty bound to respect and obey him. Out of the army, and at home, they might be at liberty to assert their independence; but here, under military rule, they cannot. Here they are to defer to him, and obey him. The necessary law of the military code fixes this matter.

At the same time the young officer finds his position embarrassing, and sees how much responsibility is con-

nected with his department and his actual command. It is a new but important school for him. If he loses the respect and the confidence of his men, he loses all. If they find he is a mere pretender, knows little or nothing of military tactics, cannot guide, much less govern them, however they may seem to follow his orders, it will be evident they do not heartily obey.

Here is one cause of discontent and lack of discipline in our volunteer service. The regular army is on a very different platform. The space socially between the officers and their command is wide. The position of the parties in this respect is by no means the same. The military rules are one, but the power to

enforce them is far less in the volunteer than in the regular service. The materials to be moulded are very different, and the skill to do it is generally in favor of the United States officers.

Still, in proportion to the difficulties should be the energy and perseverance. If there are more hindrances, the glory is greater in overcoming them. If the material is less pliable, and submission to authority less implicit, then of course any officer who overcomes these impediments will command the greater respect and deserve the richer reward.

Now, dear sir, in view of these incongruities and embarrassments, you will perceive the responsibility

of carrying out your duty to your country and to your immediate command. It is no light burden which has been laid upon your shoulders. You are over intelligent, free citizen soldiers. They are men who know what is your duty and their own—men of shrewdness, of observation, in some instances even of high culture. How shall you gain the respect and confidence of these men, so as to mould them into well-disciplined soldiers? The thing, though not easy, is not impossible.

The first point is to know what are the *specific duties* of the position which you hold. Be it that of lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, you should perfectly understand what such an

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officer is required to know and to do. There will then be no blunders. It would be most mortifying to find yourself at a loss when any order is to be given or military rule enforced. In an instant the men will see your embarrassment, and you will lose somewhat of their respect. But if you are ready to do the right thing at the right time and place, and move with confidence because you know what is required, then, even though you may be very young as compared with some under your command, you will nevertheless stand well in their esteem. If they know more than you do as to some branches, or have a deeper experience in human nature than yourself, they should not know

more of the military tactics belonging to your position, or they will be sure to feel some degree of contempt, though they may not be at liberty to express it.

Therefore be determined, by a diligent study of military books, to put yourself in possession of every rule belonging to your position. Have these rules at your finger's end. Bring them into practice as the circumstances require, and thus show, that however deficient you may be in some branches, your knowledge of military tactics cannot be called in question. This is one step.

Another is, *your example before the men*. Some seem to take it for granted, that when a young man receives

a commission in the army, he is thenceforward not under the same obligation of self-control and moral deportment as when in civil life. What a grand and fatal error ! His relation to externals is, to be sure, somewhat changed. He is not required to put forth those delicate offices of politeness and attention which the presence of the female sex requires ; but if he thinks he may lay aside external decorum, and "rough it," as the term is, he will find he has made a great mistake. A young officer of rowdy tendencies and vulgar manners is sure, ere long, to bring himself into general contempt. If there are refined and cultivated minds around him, they will

of course be disgusted ; and even the worst characters in the regiment will despise him who ought to set them a better example, but who actually rivals them in their low and brutal manners.

I cannot believe there are many of this rowdy class among the commissioned officers. However, among so many as now hold commissions, it would be strange if there were not some of this class. Happily the government is weeding out these men, and substituting better in their places.

It is natural for the men to look to the officers, not only for military orders, but for moral example. Let them see an officer correct in his de-

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portment, polite in his manners, treating them with the respect due to our common humanity, kind and courteous in the necessary intercourse between him and them, and that officer is sure to win their respect and confidence. He may be a very young man ; but *that* they will not object to, if the above-named qualities are exhibited.

But let the officer assume a domineering spirit, issuing his orders in a sort of imperial tone, scolding and fretting at every false movement, ripping out meanwhile an oath or two, showing not only no patience, but no regard to any one's feelings, proud and defiant in his bearing, as if he considered the men but mere

machines, and when off duty exhibiting no regard for them, and taking no interest in their comfort or welfare—such an officer will soon find himself out in the cold. It would not be strange if the company should get up a petition for his removal to some other command.

There is a medium between a haughty reserve and a too familiar intercourse. The former alienates and disgusts ; the latter weakens discipline and begets disrespect. Good common-sense is very apt to find out that medium, and to stand upon it.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.

I would say a word or two more on the responsibility of example. Example has great power everywhere, for good or for evil, but nowhere perhaps more than in the army. There men are in close contact. Opinions circulate freely ; character is discussed ; conduct is observed and commented upon. Every officer has to pass the ordeal. He is weighed in the balances of public opinion, and occupies the place generally which that opinion assigns to him. If he is a well-qualified officer, showing

always a familiarity with military tactics, and taking every pains to perfect his men in their duty, he will be spoken of accordingly. "That officer knows what he is about," will be the password.

If he is gentlemanly in his bearing, courteous in his manners, kind in his speech and intercourse with his men, while yet he rigidly exacts the required duty, he will rise in their estimation. "That man we like ; we always find him the same. He treats us as an officer should treat his men."

If, still farther, he shows a personal interest in those under his command, looking after their external comfort, offering incentives to clean-

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liness and neatness, and himself setting the example, sympathizing with them in their trials, and aiming to elevate them in moral character, another plume will be added, and they will not only respect him as an officer, but esteem him as a man. They will come to regard him in the light of a friend. Should that officer be called to lead them in battle, they would follow him to the cannon's mouth; and should he fall, they would bathe his body in their tears of generous affection. How powerful is kindness! How beautiful it is when extended to those below us with a view to render them contented and happy!

EQUALS.

The commissioned officer finds himself in contact and constant social intercourse with those of his own grade, and he is obliged to lay down for himself some rule of etiquette which shall govern him. These young officers come together first, of course, as strangers. Becoming acquainted, they soon elect their companions according to some secret sympathy or preference. Educated under different influences, and bringing into camp different principles, with more or less social and intellectual cultivation, it is evident, that while the claim of courtesy is upon all, the right of friendship is with none. Each one, according to his

social affinities, chooses his own companions. Others may dislike it ; but there is no help for it. "Charity," said an eminent author, meaning kindness, "is due to all ; intimacy is the right of none."

This principle, I think, decides the etiquette. All should be treated courteously, kindly ; while yet one or more may be selected as chosen companions. No officer has a right to complain at this. He has no right to say that A B is proud, or "stuck up," as the phrase sometimes is, because he does not choose *him* as his bosom-companion ; or keeps him at what he considers a "respectful distance." Provided A B is polite in his intercourse with you and

others, gives every one his due, is ready in an emergency to lend a helping hand, he should not be complained of because his taste and preference lead him to select some other person than yourself for his intimate companion. Here there should be liberty. You make your choice, founded on your instinctive social preferences; allow him then to do the same.

Charity, I said, is due to all. By this I mean kindness, the disposition to do every one a favor, if it lie in your power. Occasions will be frequent in which this kindness can be shown. One will ask you, under the pressure of necessity, to take his place in some official duty; and when

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it can be done, you will of course even put yourself to an inconvenience to accommodate him. In sickness, you will be ready to minister to him ; in pecuniary straits, to lend him, if you can, the aid he needs.

There is a certain degree of politeness which ought to be kept up among officers of the same grade, which is neither cold formality nor mannerism. It is the style of intercourse common among gentlemen in civil life. It springs from good breeding and kind feelings. Exercising such a spirit, there will be few quarrels, little envy, and a generally good temper among the associated officers.

A certain degree of reticence or close-mouthedness, is a very impor-

tant item in this segregated community. Gossip is one of the characteristics of camp-life. The men, having little else to do, do a great deal in this line. From tent to tent they wander and discuss character. The officers, as a matter of course, have to pass under their criticism. The officers too are very free in their criticisms on the men, and on each other, and even in regard to their superiors. To stop this entirely, would be impossible. Perhaps it might not be best. If a man cannot stand this trial of the tongue, he is not worth much. If, by his delinquencies, he lays himself open to general censure, why should he not be made to feel it? If an officer make a fool of him-

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self by his levity and his indiscretions, how can he expect all eyes to be closed to his folly, or all tongues silent in regard to it? No. Let a man be a man, and act up to the duties of his station, and no matter how much gossip prevails in the camp, he is sure to come out unscathed. In fact he may bid defiance to it. But it will save a man from much personal inconvenience if, when character is assailed or a course of conduct comes under severe criticism, he use his privilege of not mixing himself with the affair. Reticency or close-mouthedness will at any rate do him no harm.

“Ah,” says one who thinks he has been the victim of scandal, “if men

would only speak the truth, we should not complain; but they get up unfounded reports, unauthorized suspicions, and circulate them. They keep the ball rolling until the prejudice becomes so strong, that even conscious innocence has to quail."

This may be. We will not deny it is sometimes the case; but in the end truth and virtue must triumph. What we have to recommend is, that you "keep your tongue;" and don't give heed to flying reports which implicate character, nor take up a prejudice against any individual on slight grounds. Try to take the charitable view. Do so as long as possible. Even when the facts are proved and the conviction is clear;

even then try to keep from disparaging the military or moral character of a brother officer. What a world of trouble would have been avoided, had this simple rule been generally observed. "Whoso keepeth his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles."

SUPERIORS.

As to superior officers, great delicacy should be observed in regard to their character and standing, because the higher in authority, the more influential are they in conduct, and the more disastrous would be their failure and their fall. Young officers are sometimes quite free in their criticisms on older and higher ones. We do not wish to abridge

all freedom of speech even in this direction ; but there is a certain degree of reticence required in regard to the failures and defects of superior officers, due to their higher standing and their more influential position. Any words or acts which weaken their authority cannot be considered in any other light than as tending to demoralization.

IV.

DIRECT MORAL EXAMPLE.

COMING as officers do from various regions, and from a variety of home influences, some will be more refined, others more rough and unpolished. Some will have been brought up under Christian influences, and others with no such privileges and restraints. You are thrown together with these discrepancies and opposite characteristics. But soon character will come out. You will feel each other, so to speak. One will think it no harm to rip out an oath now and then. This will shock his tent-

companion, who has been taught to regard swearing not only as vulgar but as *impious*. Hearing the oath, he will say nothing perhaps ; but he will feel a great deal. Now if this profane young officer could see what infinite disgust his profanity produces in his more virtuous companion, he would not, I think, persevere in the practice.

Another thought let him take home to himself, namely, that this sin is contagious. While some are horrified and some disgusted, there are others, of less moral force of character, who by the power of example will slide into the same odious and useless practice. Many a young officer who would have been shocked

at the idea of ever using an oath, after becoming familiar with the sound of oaths not only by the men, but even by his fellow-officers, has trampled down his early scruples and become as daringly wicked as any of them. Sad and sorrowful spectacle. How would his father and mother weep, if they could hear those lips, taught from childhood to pray, throwing off the profane joke, or uttering with levity that name they so much revere and love. And what shall we say of the *example* of him who has inflicted this terrible wound?

Camp-life and tent-life test the character. The bad generally grow worse, unless some special mercy intervene; and the good either be-

come bad, breaking through all moral obstructions, and rushing blindly and madly in the wake of the tempter; or, disgusted with the immoralities that surround them, they determine to stem the torrent, and so rise to even a higher grade of virtue. It is a terrible ordeal for a young man. God grant, my dear friend, that you may stand firm on the side of virtue and piety.

We will suppose you all right: at any rate, we will hope so; and beg you to consider how much good a silent example on the side of morality and uprightness may effect. If "one sinner destroyeth much good," shall not the example of one upright young man be as potent in

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the opposite direction? If your fellow-officer never hear an oath from your lips, it will be a testimony against his profanity. There is a power in silence here.

If your conversation be always chaste, his loose style of talk will receive a silent but powerful rebuke. If you politely, yet firmly, decline an invitation to drink, though he may jocosely intimate perhaps that you have joined the temperance corps, yet, my word for it, his liquor will not be as easily swallowed as if you had shared in the potation. If you are solicited to take a hand at cards or some other gambling facility, and you refuse, after a little bantering perhaps about your conscientious-

ness, you will be no longer annoyed ; while the young gambler may go on his delusive and fascinating career, until property and character are both shipwrecked.

These three vices, profanity, drinking, and gaming, are the most prevalent vices of camp-life. Everywhere you hear the oaths profane. In many of the tents there are arrangements for card playing ; and the beverage that destroys the head and heart is secreted in the camp chest, or buried in a convenient hole, from which it can be drawn forth and circulated. Hence quarrels, blasphemies, fights ; the result of which is to fill up the guard-house with demons in human shape.

Against this trio of vices, how many tracts, books, and verbal remonstrances have been brought to bear. But alas, though in some instances these practices have been checked, and in others we hope even eradicated, still we have to admit their fearful prevalence.

Will you allow me to say what I think will do most to reform the morals of the rank and file, and rescue them from this stigma? In my opinion, it is *the good example of the officers*. A strict and scrupulous regard to that command which saith, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" "Swear not at all. Let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay," will have

more effect than any reading matter which we can throw into the camp. Indeed, the force of these books and tracts will be in a great measure counteracted, if the officers still set the example of profane swearing.

The same is true of the other two vices. So long as the officers indulge in card playing and in drinking, what better can you expect of the men under their command? Or how can we remonstrate, with any hope of success, while such an example is before them?

Most of the officers who have forfeited their commissions, and been dismissed from the service, are obliged to attribute their disgrace to one or all of these vices. The authori-

ties would be unworthy of the great public trust committed to them, were they to allow the army to be in hands so defiled, and under officers so demoralized.

Said one to me on a certain occasion, "You have written several good books for the soldiers; why do n't you write one for the officers? The latter seem to think that all the books and tracts and pungent appeals against vice and irreligion are not for *them*, but only for the rank and file. They consequently turn them all over to the soldiers, while *they* meanwhile indulge perhaps in the same immoralities without restraint."

But this, we think, is too sweep-

ing a charge. We are unwilling to believe that any large number of our commissioned officers are thus reckless. On the contrary, we think that they not only carry pure blood in their veins, but many of them pure principles in their hearts. Indeed we know of many officers whose reputation is above reproach, and whose example is well worthy of imitation. We will not believe that among our officers vice is general and virtue the exception. And we beg of every young officer, that by his spirit and his example he will prove the declaration that the officers are worse than the men, to be, in *his* case at least, without any foundation.

V.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.

I HAVE spoken of morality. There is something still better, and which includes it, namely, *religion*. Do n't be startled at the term, it is not strange to you. It is something you have thought of before, and which you think of occasionally now. Nor is it a subject with which a soldier should not concern himself. There have been great generals who have been religious men. Joshua was one; David was one — the “man after God's own heart;” Gideon was another — brave warriors all, who

knew how to discipline armies, and led them on to victory.

Did their religion make them less efficient? In more modern times there was our own Washington, whose fame as a general was scarcely more conspicuous than his devotion as a Christian. I lately heard a striking and characteristic anecdote of him. It was new to me; perhaps it will be to you. One of his leading generals, Wayne I think it was, was asked by the chief "if, with the force he had on hand, he thought he could take a certain fortification." "By God, I think I can," was the reply. Shocked by the profanity, the noble commander looked him calmly in the eye, and said seriously, "Say by the

help of God you can." There was an example for you.

Havelock too, the hero of Lucknow, who led his brave highlanders over the burning plains of India, and cutting a path of victory, battered down the gates of the enemy's citadel, delivering his own countrymen and checking a most formidable rebellion. The British nation has honored his memory by a statue in the metropolis ; but his name is written more indelibly in the book of life. Havelock was truly a religious man.

Others might be named of less note, but of no less religious principle. I remember to have read, I think it was in Scott's life of Napo-

leon, an account of one of the generals in the imperial army, who was a true Christian. He was a modest but brave and reliable man. The emperor usually gave him the post of danger, for he was sure to occupy it well. In the tent at night, when other officers were gathered around the card-table, he sat just near enough to catch the light in order to read his little Bible, which he always carried in his breast pocket. In the battle he usually dismounted and marched or stood side by side with his artillerists, giving his orders with as much calmness as on the parade ; and in that crashing forward movement at Wagram, which broke the Austrian centre, his course might be traced in the very

front by the terrible execution of his artillery.

Don't underrate the religious soldier. Let religion have its due, in forming and completing the character, whether among civilians or among those who occupy the highest positions in the army. What a noble army we should have if every officer was a religious man, fearing God, and fearing none but him. Much as Cromwell was laughed at by the cavaliers, yet he never lost a battle, and he made the name of a God-fearing general to be respected the world over.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

I desire to recommend this subject to your serious consideration. I am persuaded you will not cast it aside

as having no claim upon your attention. There is deep down in your breast a feeling which tells you that you need what religion only can give. I am speaking on the assumption that you are not a religious man. Are you satisfied? Does the world, does your position, do all the excitements of military life convey to your heart a true inward satisfaction? "Not entirely," I hear you say. No, of course they cannot. They have not the power. You want the penitence, the pardon, the purity, the high immortal aims which religion gives. Then would you be lifted into a calm region, as if some angel-wing had borne you upward into the neighborhood of heaven.

Besides, you want this benison of God, this undying good, in order not simply to make you happy, but that you may meet properly all the vicissitudes, labors, and trials of your profession. Your example will then tell for good upon others. You will be a centre whence healthful influences will go out. The officers will feel it, the men will feel it ; it will be a light which cannot be hid.

Then, again, you will have a compensatory good amid all your privations ; you will have something to fall back upon. Nothing can destroy this soul-sustaining principle. And when you have to look death in the face on the battle-field, while, without religion, you may well dread

its approach, with it, and supported by its hopes, you may regard the bullet that opens your way to eternity as a messenger of heaven sent to call you to the skies.

I cannot but hope that now, if not before, this subject will take a deep and permanent hold of your thoughts until you can say, I have found the one thing needful—the good part, which can never be taken away from me.

VI.

THE CHAPLAINCY.

THE government has provided for the religious necessities of the army by appointing chaplains, whose duty it is to lead the worship, to visit and counsel the officers and men, and in every legitimate way to improve their moral and religious character.

Some of these officials do their duty well, others not so well, and others very imperfectly, or not at all. It would be unreasonable to expect that among so many, all would prove faithful and acceptable. And here, as I am writing for the benefit

of *all* the officers, I beg leave to put in a word for the chaplain.

Were I to sit down by the side of one bearing the responsibilities of this office, my thoughts would run somewhat in this direction : How many men have you in your regiment? "From five to eight hundred." That is a large congregation, and all men, and most of them young men too. What a responsibility ! I suppose you have become acquainted with them all, and visit them frequently. "I am acquainted with quite a number of them, and now and then I get in a word which I hope may do them good ; but as to knowing them all, and visiting them in their tents, the thing is not prac-

ticable." Ah, is that so? I had thought that with a kind and gentlemanly approach, none of them would shut the tent-door against you, or run away on seeing you come. "Perhaps they would not; but you must be aware it is no easy thing to enter a tent with a view of religious conversation." Perhaps not; but we ministers have to do many things not easy to be done. If we wait until things are easy, we shall have to wait a long time, and in the end possibly have to hear something about the napkin and the buried talent.

If the heart be warm with the love of doing good, there is a way, I think, of getting into these tents, and get-

ting at these men's hearts. There is a key which will unlock the door. It is *kindness*, or a heartfelt interest which manifests itself in so subtle and efficient a manner, that ere the men are aware, the door of their hearts will open, and you will be admitted without reserve. Once having gained their confidence, you may talk to them on religion or any other subject, and they will give you a hearing. Touch upon home associations, personal trials, upon military affairs even, and the way may be open to get the main subject naturally and easily before them. Tact is wanted. And yet that alone will not do. You must join to it a sincere desire for their spiritual wel-

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fare. Then what you consider hard may soon become easy.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Again, I inquire how many attend public worship. "The numbers differ ; but I am sorry to say that but a small proportion of the regiment attend." It seems to me all ought to be present except invalids and those on duty. "True, but I can't get them out. I find but little coöperation on the part of the officers ; and you know the men are apt to follow the example of their officers."

Perhaps you have not taken pains enough to get them out. Have you gone to the colonel, and other offi-

cers, and said, Now, gentlemen, if you will stand by me and coöperate with me, I can have the regiment generally at the religious service; but if you do not, my mission here must be a failure. Put it on this ground, and see if any highminded officer, whether a religious man or not, will refuse.

Then, again, have you tried to render the service as interesting as possible? The sermon should be short, pointed, and lively. Long exercises wont do in camp; no, nor anywhere. Don't be long and rambling. Get up good music also. It has a wonderful charm. Enlist all the talent you can find in this branch. Let the men see that the public worship of

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God in your hands is not a drowsy, long-drawn affair.

Still I think your main moral force lies in personal conversation with individuals. Try this perseveringly, and see if your success is not greater than your expectations.

COOPERATION.

The chaplain complains that the officers do not second his efforts—that when the bugle sounds the hour for public worship, they do not come. If this be so, there is a word to be said to the officers on this point.

Talk as we may about the discipline of the army, the great need is *stern principle*, founded on a sense of religious obligation. If the men are

irreligious and immoral, mere outside efforts to bring them to a high state of discipline will be vain. The idea of duty, even of soldierly duty, is in a sense a religious idea. The great want in our army is that very sense of duty. What kills it out of the mind is profanity, intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and other vices. Let these vices get the upper hand, and discipline is at an end.

Now what is to eradicate, or even restrain these vices? Nothing but a sense of religion. And if the government would take this view—as in some respects I trust they do—there would be no lack of moral and religious means thrown into the camp, with a view to correct the downward

and demoralizing tendency. The appointment of chaplains, we know, is made with this view. The government cannot follow them into the field, and see that they do their duty. That is the business of the officers in command. If the chaplain is remiss, the officers must know it ; and if they are the right kind of men, they will offer him every facility for the discharge of his duty. They will coöperate with him, and make it pleasant for him. Some do. I am glad to bear my testimony, that in many regiments the colonel and other officers are ready for the work. They strengthen the chaplain's hands. They order their men to attend the service, showing by their own per-

sonal attendance and respectful attention, that they regard the worship as a duty, not only to their country, but to their God. All honor to such men.

On the other hand, where there is no coöperation on the part of the officers, and where, by not attending the service themselves, they furnish an excuse for the non-attendance of the men, what can be expected but discouragement on the part of the chaplain, and a rapid deterioration of morals on the part of the regiment? Downward they will go inevitably. Discipline will be at loose ends. Immorality will increase until the most infamous crimes will be perpetrated.

“Why is that regiment,” said one to me, “always quarrelling and fighting? Why such a lack of moral discipline?” The only answer that could be given was, “They do not attend public worship. They have a chaplain, but he can’t induce them to come out to his preaching. Officers as well as men neglect the service; and what could be expected, under such circumstances, but a rapid deterioration in morals? On one Sabbath when I was present, out of a regiment of several hundred, there were not in attendance more than ten soldiers, and not more than one or two officers.” May not this explain it?

If I were an officer, high in command or low, with the eagle on my

shoulder or the simple braid, I would show my sense of the importance of discipline by coöperating in every legitimate way with the chaplain. Instead of manifesting indifference, I would enter heart and soul into his plans for improving the morals of the army. I would be always present, except when sick or on duty, at the public service. I would encourage the men also to attend. Knowing how much general discipline is connected with individual purity of character, I would labor in every possible way to give religious influences free course among the men.

I hope, my dear sir, you will not only subscribe to these views, but practically adopt them. For your

country's sake, as well as for your own—for the sake of the men who look to you for an example, do it; and may God bless and prosper you in the effort.

VII.

LEISURE TIME—HOW TO BE
OCCUPIED.

THE life of a soldier is, you know, made up of extremes. He is either intensely excited in view of the immediate conflict, and when actually in it, or he is doomed for weeks and perhaps months to the listless and lazy life of the camp. In this latter case, he has it is true the drill and the parade ; but these over, he has very little if any thing to do. It is the same with the officer. Hence, where a young man has no taste for books and no inclination to study, time will hang heavy upon his hands.

He is disposed to lounge in his tent, or to seek excitement by social converse with his fellow-officers. Either of these plans for "killing time" is productive of more evil than good. The one destroys his energy; the other is an unreasonable tax upon the time of those who may wish to be occupied in some more profitable way. Politeness may lead them to tolerate a bore, but in heart they may wish him out of their tent.

How shall this leisure in the camp be best employed? Correspondence is one way. Keep it going among relatives and friends. The exercise of brain and pen is always useful in keeping alive the home sympathies. Another mode is reading and study.

In the branches wherein a young man is deficient, this leisure affords the opportunity to perfect himself. Especially should he give attention to military books bearing on his official position, that so, by theory and practice united, he may become master of his profession.

History also, ancient and modern, should engage his attention. Especially should he become familiar with the history of his own country, and the constitution on which the government is based. The biography of military men also would be both interesting and useful. These, with an admixture of light literature, would make his time pass off profitably and pleasantly.

I have no doubt that much of the inefficiency of our army may be traced to the want of regular mental occupation. Idleness is as much the bane of camp as of civil life. It opens the door to a thousand corruptions, which tend in the long run to demoralization.

Then, again, an officer who longs for excitement, and yet for months is confined to this listless life, is strongly tempted to seek the coveted excitement in the social glass, or in the stimulus of the gaming-table. How many have fallen in this way! But the course we recommend will give mental occupation, furnish incentives to duty, and do away a supposed necessity for those forced and

artificial stimulants which are so detrimental to health and ruinous to character.

Again, take a personal interest in the improvement of the rank and file. Suggest employment, and set the example yourself. Show them in how many ways they can improve their external condition. Encourage them to read the good books which are sent to them, and to addict themselves to a tasteful style of music. Any little ornamental surroundings of their tents, and a careful attention to personal cleanliness should be encouraged. An officer's duty is not done when the drill and the parade are through. He should identify himself with his command, and feel

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a degree of pride, as well as responsibility, in raising them as to morals and manners above the ordinary style of a soldier's condition. This will give the officer occupation as well as the soldier.

DISCONTENT.

It is not uncommon, you are aware, to find among the younger officers a growing feeling of discontent, owing, it is probable, to the inanimate style of tent-life. A B supposed he would be sent forward. He hears of others who have gained honor on the field; and he wonders that his regiment should be kept inactive. He is almost tempted to throw up his commission.

But this is not a soldierly or patriotic view. Wherever he is stationed, there he should contentedly stay—biding his time. A soldier's business is to serve his country in any capacity, and under all circumstances. In the old times' warfare, "they that tarried by the stuff" had the same share of honor and emolument as "they who went to the battle." And so now, if a man does his duty in camp, does all he can while there to improve himself and his command, he is serving his country just as truly as he who makes a successful dash upon the enemy. What if his name do not figure in the newspapers, or he be promoted less rapidly than his more favored because more

exposed fellow-officer? His turn may come. And certain it is, if he shall have done his duty in the more quiet labors of the camp, he will be the better qualified, not only to reap, but to merit distinction in the more exciting scenes of the conflict.

ANOTHER CAUSE OF DISCONTENT.

It is trying often, and tends to produce dissatisfaction, to observe how much favoritism there is in army promotions—how many times they depend less on personal merit than on favored political relations. The general or colonel may have his own ends to answer, and his personal prejudice to gratify; and under such influences, some may rise who

should not, and some be kept down who should rise.

This trouble and trial, however, is incident to all other kinds of life as well as the military. The civilian who sets out for distinction will not seldom be vexed to see an unworthy rival promoted. Such things must be borne with patience. It is enough for a man to know that he has done his duty, that he deserves promotion even though he has not received it. Let him indulge neither in discontent nor in envy. The consciousness of rectitude, and the effort to deserve well of his country, is better a thousand times than any promotion without this "*mens conscia recti*."

CHEERFULNESS.

We recommend you to cultivate as far as possible a cheerful turn of mind. Do n't give way to gloom or despondency. Let no neglect, no disappointment, no reverses deprive you of a cheerful confidence in the issue of affairs. You are a believer in Providence, are you not ? Well then let this faith in the overruling Power sustain you when you are tempted to look on the dark side of things. Adversity and discomfiture are not destruction. Dark as the storm may be, it will not last for ever. The soldier and the sailor both have need of this principle of faith in Providence, more almost than any other class of men.

VIII.

RELATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY.

THE relation in which you stand to the government and to the country renders it impossible, even if it were lawful, to take an active part in politics. As the policy of the nation is mixed up with the war we are waging—involving the principles on which it was begun, with which it is prosecuted, and the ends which it has in view—it will be seen in an instant that officers of the army, from motives of patriotism as well as of

delicacy, should not intermeddle with the affairs of state. Their business is to receive and execute the nation's commands. These commands may not always chime with their personal views, nor meet their political preferences. They may involve appointments which are distasteful, or measures which their judgment does not approve ; but holding their commission under the government, they are bound either to carry out its wishes, or to resign their command. A truly patriotic officer would not inquire whether this or that military movement met his wishes or agreed with his own ideas of expediency. The force and discipline of the army would soon be gone if the officers

were each to indulge his own predilections, or put forward his own views in opposition to those from headquarters.

In saying this, I would not proscribe freedom of opinion, nor of speech. Yet in respect to the latter, seeing there is so much responsibility and such disastrous influence in unrestricted and severe criticism on government measures, I would suggest the delicacy of such criticism, and the propriety of abstaining from it. You may be right, and the government wrong ; such a thing is possible ; or you may have a more correct view of certain movements than those under whom you act ; but the first law of military life, implicit

obedience, should make you reluctant either to condemn the acts and opinions of your superiors, or to justify your own.

How much evil has resulted from the want of such discretion; and what perils has the country been brought into, from the indulgence of personal and political prejudices, which have been as indiscreetly as freely expressed!

Of course the government will not interfere with an officer's political views, though adverse to their own, provided he keep them within his own breast, or modestly assert them when the necessity requires. But if the officer vaunt himself on the difference between his views and those

of the government, if he blurts them out on all occasions so as to infect others with them, and thereby perhaps create a revulsion against the government, that officer ought not to be surprised if he should be silenced or summarily dismissed. He is in the army not as a politician, but as a soldier. He is there to defend his country, to uphold the government, to battle for the life of the nation; and therefore any promulgation of opinions calculated to impair the moral force of the army, to weaken the hands of the government, or to render our success in this conflict doubtful, is, to say the least, a very unpatriotic and unsoldierly course of conduct.

My wish would be, that every officer of the army should hold himself aloof from state or general politics. When he retires from the service, he resumes of course his claim to talk and act, to criticize or comment in respect to men and measures, and no serious evils would ensue; but in the army, where every thing should blend in one concerted aim to put down the rebellion, and to restore the integrity of the nation, it seems to me that the less active participation there is both by officers and men in the political strifes of the day, the more likely we are to have an invincible army and a victorious result. Such are my views, submitted with due deference.

STAND FIRM IN THE DAY OF
TRIAL.

What I have said respects camp-life more particularly ; but the march and the battle-field furnish other topics not less interesting, where human energies are tasked to their utmost, and individual endurance and courage are severely tested. If the principles recommended in these pages be accepted, and the course of action be adopted, I have little fear that in the day of trial there will be faint-heartedness, or that in the fiercest and hottest of the battle there will be any lack of firmness or of courage.

The man of patriotic feelings, especially if combined with religious

principle, will uncomplainingly march over rough roads, and live on coarse or even scanty fare. Patient and enduring under the worst circumstances, and grateful for better, he will look danger calmly in the face, and take his share of the trials as well as the triumphs of the soldier's career. Putting his life in God's hand, he will go into the conflict with a hopeful, sometimes even a buoyant spirit, showing an unflinching determination to discharge his duty; and if he fall, will meet his fate with the firmness of a soldier and the resignation of a Christian.

May such be your spirit in the day of trial. And when the sword is sheathed and the victory proclaimed

and the country saved, may your name shine on the legends of heroic valor, whether you shall have survived the dangers of the battle-field, or shall have found an honorable grave under its blood-stained soil.

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