

THE SOLDIER IN SERVICE.

Essay read before the National Guard of Utah, at the Executive Offices, Salt Lake City, March 15th, 1895.

GENTLEMEN—At the request of my friend and comrade who under the orders of his government is engaged in giving the benefit of his experience, study and talent to the organization and equipment of the National Guard of Utah I have consented to read to you a compilation of my own thoughts and experiences in the military profession for the purpose, first, of instruction, second, of diversity, third, and chiefly, to increase your interest in the character you assume as national guardsmen, in contradistinction to your duties as civilians. I recognize how hard it is for you who have your daily duties in civil life, to give the time and attention necessary for the proper study of a profession, the employment of which involves the most serious and momentous results, viz: the care as well as the destruction of human life. But you must remember that the days of the militia (play soldier) are over, and the national guardsman is but little removed from the regular contingent; that the duties you assume when mustered in, are not, as in former times, solely for parade and show, but for the stern and often perilous duty which your name implies, to guard the nation. Fine appearance and military precision were the sole ambition of the militiaman; you must be measured by your love of country as well as a technical knowledge of your profession. Noble indeed is the character of the true guardsman, binding himself as he does to lay aside, whenever called, his private interests for the public weal. For his reward he may get the respect and support of his fellow citizens. He gets little else. Your love of country should come to you intuitively; the technical knowledge of your profession must be obtained from those who have made it their sole occupation.

Hence it is, that I cheerfully come to the assistance of my brother officer in giving you the benefit of my experience obtained after a life-time of study and practice. What I shall have to say to you will be of a more general character than I wish. Were I about to deliver a course of lectures, I would particularize more, taking up each of the many subjects involved, and try to digest each thoroughly before laying it aside. All that I can hope to do under present circumstances is to awaken in your minds thoughts that may lead to research beyond the territorial act creating you, or the drill regulations.

By technical knowledge, I mean the methods and means adopted in actual military service, i. e., against an enemy. To know one's tactics, to make an excellent showing on parade or drill, to attain proficiency as a marksman, to train and exercise so as to perfect to the highest degree the physical man, to subordinate the mind to absolute obedience to superiors, regardless of your personal estimate of them, go to make up the true soldier. It is the inspiration as it were of the instrument by which the operation is to be performed. It is the initial step. How to use the weapons, and perform the operation, is the real end to be desired. While all should know the means and methods of mili-

tary operations, it is essentially necessary that officers and non-commissioned officers should be familiar with them. In all of our military operations, the use to which our knowledge can be put, the practical exercise of the teachings of camp and school, are too little thought of; I will venture to say that the average guardsman will go to a regular military garrison, and select as the most able officer in it the one who can put up the finest drill; whose command exhibits the greatest proficiency and best appearance, whose familiarity with all that pertains to camp administration is noticeable above his fellows. He may be right, but on the other hand it is possible he may have selected the very last man who should be trusted with serious military operations.

What are the means and methods? I could not tell you in the short time allowed me for a lecture of this kind. A mere summary of the different heads is all that is possible. Each of them is a subject for one or more lectures to properly elaborate it. I shall use them merely in illustration, and leave it for you to develop their full meaning and use by future study.

First, let me ask how and when the National Guard is likely to be employed. The use of military force to sustain the government, and enforce the mandates of its judicial power, will only be resorted to when the civil authority is unequal to the task.

Heretofore in our country such occasions have been rare, but as our foreign and dissatisfied native population increases, they will become more frequent. Up to this time the mere existence or presence of military force has been sufficient menace to the enemies of law and order, to prevent any combination or concerted action of sufficient magnitude to overcome the civil authorities; yet at times we find agitators of commanding ability and extraordinary magnetism, who enslave their followers, dethrone their reason, enthuse them with anarchistic and socialistic ideas to such a degree that law, order, property, all that government exists to protect, is endangered. As I said, the existence or presence of military force has been sufficient to hold these in check. The agitators have been able to stir the multitudes to the verge of action, but they have always lacked the one essential: organization to wield them when brought together. Not organization to bring them together, but organization to wield them.

They realize this deficiency as well as we, and we may expect in the future they will endeavor to overcome it. Happily, it is a greater task than they imagine, and before they could accomplish much that would be useful to them, we in our capacity as trained military men could disperse them.

It is with occasions of this kind that we can expect chiefly to be occupied, and it is the manner in which we meet the occasion that will bring to us the commendation or condemnation of the public; that will secure to us the sympathy and co-operation of our fellow citizens who now are too apt to look slightly and derisively upon us.

But this misconception of the true mission of the military art is not confined to the civilian. We ourselves are apt to misconceive, though in a different way, its objects, its methods, its

accomplishments. Not infrequently we hear the young graduate from West Point complain that at the Academy he was never taught the practical elements of his profession. Theoretical knowledge is at his fingers' end. On arriving at his post of duty he has an idea that his collegiate training should fit him for the immediate application of it. At times he feels humiliated in seeing an old sergeant better qualified than he in the details of practical work. He is apt then to criticize the course at the Academy. I do not agree with such. True military education cannot be completed in a collegiate course; any more than can perfection in any of the arts or sciences. It is divided into three periods. The theoretical at the Academy; the details of administration at the garrison; the application of both in the field or active service. It is this latter period that is so often neglected. Many there are who go through the routine of organization and drill successfully, who perform all the duties incident to their position in garrison with skill and intelligence, who challenge comparison in everything, that think they have achieved all that is required. It is only the primer to what is to come. We will admit as a premise that all these qualifications exist, then let us formulate what will be required in the third period of our military education.

For this purpose let us assume that any one of us is called out with our command, a company, a battalion, a regiment or a brigade, to quell an insurrection, to oppose an organized opposition, or to protect threatened property. What would we do? We will be informed that disturbance exists; that the laws are being defied; that property is being destroyed or held by a lawless organization, and we are to proceed to the locality and overcome it. That is all the information we get. How many of us will assume the responsibility, or are equipped with the knowledge necessary to execute it? Naturally the first person to discuss is the commanding officer. I do not assume to dictate conduct or rules of action for those whose rank is greater than we can reasonably aspire to, but for those of my own rank or my juniors to whom will be entrusted most of the operations we may expect to be actors in. Still I will assert that perfection in the rules I lay down for minor action, will prepare one for the requirements of a larger and more extensive field. The thorough commanding officer should be proficient in all the details of his profession as learned in the school and garrison, to know what his command requires, what it can do, and to instruct those to whom the details are assigned. Generally, he should not be hampered with their execution, but he must know their necessity, the proper methods for procuring, caring and accounting for them, in order that before engaging in any operation he may be assured that his command is properly equipped for the work assigned it. He should be dispassionate, secretive, distrustful. Dispassionate lest those under him suspect over anxiety or timidity. Secretive lest his plans become the subject of criticism and opposition among his subordinates. Distrustful lest he be imposed upon by exaggerated reports, and led into rash unwise or undigested action. He should be prompt, energetic, watchful and resolute. No quality