

SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 20.

OFFICE OF THE SANITARY COMMISSION,

Treasury Building, Washington, July 29, 1861.

At a meeting of the Commission, held this day, the following resolutions were passed unanimously, and ordered to be printed.

FRED. LAW OLMSTED, *Res. Sec.*

Resolutions passed by Sanitary Committee in Session, Monday, July 29, and ordered to be sent to the President, Heads of the Departments, and to both Houses of Congress.

Resolved, That the Sanitary Commission, in their endeavors to promote temperance, cleanliness, and comfort among the troops, have become convinced that the first sanitary law in camp and among soldiers is *military* discipline; and that unless this is vigorously asserted and enforced, it is useless to attempt and impossible to effect, by any secondary means, the great end they propose—which is the health and happiness of the army.

Resolved, That looking only to the health and comfort of the troops, it is our profound conviction that any special relaxation of military discipline in favor of volunteer troops, based either upon their supposed unwillingness or inability to endure it, or upon the alleged expectation of the public, is a fallacious policy, and fraught with peril to the lives of the men and the success of the national cause; and that, speaking in the name of the families and the communities from which the volunteers come, and in the name of humanity and religion, we implore that the most thorough system of military discipline be carried out with the officers and men of the volunteer force, as the first and essential condition of their health, comfort, and morality.

Resolved, That the health and comfort and efficiency of the men is mainly dependent on the uninterrupted presence, the personal watchfulness, and the rigid authority of the regimental and company officers;

and that all the great defects, whether in the commissariat or in the police of camps, are radically due to the absence of officers from their posts and to the laxity of the discipline to which they are themselves accustomed—a laxity which would never be tolerated among regulars, and which, while tolerated among our soldiers, will make our force a crowd of armed men rather than an army.

Resolved, That it is the public conviction of this Commission, that the soldiers themselves, *in their painful experience of the want of leaders and protectors*, would heartily welcome a rigid discipline exerted over their officers and themselves; that the public would hail with joy the inauguration of a decisive, prompt, and rigid rule, extending alike to officers and men; and that any despondency or doubt connected with our military and national prospects, or with the health and security of our troops, would disappear with the first indications of rigid order enforced with impartial authority throughout the whole army.

Resolved, That the Sanitary Commission assure Major General McClellan in advance, of all the moral support and sympathy of their numerous constituents, and beg him to believe that the humane, the intelligent, the religious, the patriotic, will uphold his hands in every endeavor to communicate a spirit of subordination, fidelity, and obedience to the troops, even by resort, if found necessary, to the utmost rigor of military law, believing that the health, comfort, and efficiency of the army are all united in their dependence on a strict, uniform, and all-pervading military discipline.