

Extract from "The Soldier Instructed in His Duties, by Natural and Divine Law" by Marco Ofarris, Lieutenant Colonel of the Rusciglione Cavalry Regiment, 1733

The Army began from the Sky, when by God's order the good Angels fought against the rebel ones. Between men, it had its origins after the first Father's sin; when of two sons of his, one gave death to the other. Having lost the original innocence, discord never lacked among men, so war was born with man. The art of war is the art of those who want to defend themselves well and offend the enemy in a campaign: and this art is founded on *unity*, being this the mother of science, and the perfection of all arts; because when all forces are united, they act as one: it is the same for a great number of men, in proportioned formation, which act in the action of defending and offending as if they were a single man.

The Army is licit, and approved by God himself, in many Sacred Texts. Being the Israelites in the Sinai desert, the Lord God ordered Moses to prepare them for war, and choose among his people the most robust and valiant men, of twenty years or more; and gave him the knowledge to camp, how to get trumpets and their calls, that they ought to play depending on the various movements and marches that they had to execute. God in different occasions and times elected Generals to command his people, such as Moses, Joshua, Judas, Gideon, Samson, and others; which fought by God's command, or in defense of His divine laws, or to chastize those who rebelled against those. After the death of Moses, the Lord talked to Joshua, and told him: Moses my servant is dead: now go, and pass the Jordan with all your people, which is under your lead, I will do to you as I did unto Moses, be constant and brave: and the first praise the priest gives him after his death, is that he distinguished himself in war, that is, *fortis in bello*.

Warfighting is not only not against eternal glory, but it is very conducive to make the soldier virtuous and pure; as we know of many characters, and many Kings, and many other people, that being Warriors, they were valiant and holy: moreover, reason tells us that if it was an activity approved by God himself in different occasions, it cannot be that it isn't approved by him, if we observe his Divine laws. Among the barbarian nations without the true light, Religion was thought of as something necessary, to keep People and Soldiers in true obedience: so Plato the philosopher called Religion *bastion of power, binding of laws, and of discipline*; and Cyrus made sure that his soldiers were religious and pious, saying, the more they're valiant in fighting, the more they fear God, the exact observance of God's law is the true guidance in this life.

Warfighting does not impede that the Soldier be virtuous, to be fair, every act of virtue that we find in any other individual, isn't of such perfection, as that as we find in the Soldier, because in him it shines much more because of his hard and dangerous trade: in which, well obeying his duties, he obeys Divine law, which commands him to fight for God, for his Fatherland, and for his King. King David was holy, and he kept a company of valiant soldiers, to use them in the hard functions of war; he thought military valour was this necessary, nor it ever occurred to him that his conduct was contrary to Divine Law.

Valor, or courage, is an elevation, and greatness of spirit (*animi excelsitas et magnanimitas*) is a kind of Godlikeness to which everyone, from General to Soldier, give praise. Now this valour makes it so that it be common interest of soldiers not to let themselves be guided by ideas formed by caprice, and spirited by error, by making them mindful that a virtue is never contrary to another, and they're always friendly between them with a perfect correspondence; it is much easier to get fire out of ice, than valour out of vileness; only sin arms death with terror, and makes it terrible and ferocious. The just man, when he can't avoid it, he doesn't fear it; to desire it is evil, but to fear it is worse; for good men it is good,

and for bad men it is bitter, and for those who live badly, it is almost a necessity that they have to end badly their days: it is less demanding to live well than to live badly.

Lastly, death is the end, and the only remedy to hardships, it is a rest to the tiredness of this hard life; because it cannot take, from good Christians, more than one life, that they have to give back to nature, which doesn't extend its power further from the body, power which ends with out last breath.

To aspire to the glory of a valiant Soldier, first one has to make sure of virtue, which is a natural habit of the soul, which equates to reason, and it is also a habit of the well-instructed knowledge, and virtue shines by itself, nor by someone else's fault it loses its brilliance, and one should desire it for its own sake, and for this it cannot be given or received, but it must be purchased, which is the best and ultimate purpose of human nature. Well-directed virtue to its own ends is perfect, and all good works stem from virtue; it is a perfection of body and soul, a trusty companion that never abandons man until death; being it superior to the randomness of luck; all other things in the world come forth as uncertain, temporary, changeable, only virtue has deep roots and there's no force that can move it, and it is better for a virtuous man to be rumoured about by bad men than hated by good men. The evil man has with him his penalty, and the virtuous one his happiness, and the glory of being praised, and esteemed by all; virtue manifests itself in life, and affirms itself in death, and the goodness of life is discovered by virtue; virtue is of such might, that even the enemy praises it in his opponent; and the more it is persecuted by envy, the more it shines: the virtuous man procures to win the affection and esteem of men by doing them good.

To be the perfect Soldier, one has to observe eight rules:

- I. To be of good customs and God-fearing
- II. To be obedient, ready, and without reply
- III. To observe a good order in marches and war's functions
- IV. To be constant and patient in hardships
- V. To be valiant
- VI. To live happy with the hope of a prize
- VII. To be well-instructed in military justice, so that he doesn't incur in unlawfulness
- VIII. To be secret, so that he doesn't say what is done in his Company, Regiment, or Army to the enemy

Aristotle says that military life contains many particular virtues; a great obedience, abstinence from pleasure, perseverance in hardships and pains. One has to flee from laziness, it being source of all malice, source of all vices, the door from which they enter: idleness is the grave and death of the man; idle peace is as dangerous, as an industrious fatigue is helpful; lazy and idle men will always be poor and for no reason they lament themselves of bad luck; because lazy men, anywhere they learn to work badly; and the well-occupied man is esteemed as good, so as the idle is esteemed as bad.

Work makes man strong, sane and agile, and takes him away from bad thoughts and bad works; it is the father of good fame, and the path to virtue; and no good work comes without this; and in hardship one needs strength and patience; because with hardship man becomes rich; and with continued work one can pass through any thing; and no work can be called hard, or time can be called long, through which one attains glory and fame; in work shines man's virtue.

The Soldier which enters in the soldierly trade, needs to put before him all the necessities, hunger, nudity, hardships, and difficulties of sleeping, and that war isn't made without bloodshed: as Titus Livius says, hunger and weather are a kind of protracted death, which crowns the labour-intensive life

of the Soldier. Says Plutarch, in the life of Filopermenes leader of Athenians, that it was a tacit rule of war to suffer above all hunger, lack of sleep, and all other hardships that war brings along. Licurgus taught his men to use all of their diligence in the education of their sons, so that they came out strong and tempered warriors; that they get used to sleep in beds made of river canes, more apt to fight against sleep or banish it. This is so that the Soldier only thinks about the ultimate goal, which is to serve his Prince, and to obtain through that service glory and fame; because serving his Prince is an image of serving God, and since who serves God with bigger troubles of nudity, abstinence and hardships gets more glory and merit; so also for who serves his Prince, because by serving his Prince, he serves God.

Our Lord advises us that we stay vigilant against an enemy so daring and clever as death: this advice is of great importance to everyone. Now, if death is sweet to the good ones, and bitter to the bad ones, and if it's better to die well than to live badly, nobody needs to be more interested in dying well than the Soldier, because of the risks and dangers in which he finds himself in war: who follows the path of the musket-balls, goes without certainty, so he needs to be clean of all sins, like St. Ambrose teaches us, and living in this manner he will fight with boldness, defying death, that is nothing more than a rest from hardships, and the end of all things: because life is an elongated death, a dream, from which death is waking up; and the good life promises a good death; and man during his life wants to be praised by everyone up until death; nobody is born for himself: life is made to serve the Fatherland, the family, and friends; ultimately it is smoke, dust, a blow of the wind, about which one shouldn't care about, if not to obtain virtue, which is immortal; and it is one of the Angelic orders of Heaven.

If good conscience accompanies the soldier in danger, either he comes out on top, or he will die like a hero; because good conscience is always the greatest consolation one can have in the hardships and dangers of this life; on the contrary, if sin oppresses the soul, while the artillery throws its blows to the body, one will not be valiant for a long time.

It is a vice of extreme cowardice to not show a fierce soul when boldness gives hope of health, and fear doesn't promise that ruin; so, in all perils, one has to fight with magnanimity, to get out safe, and those daring and animous ones, who serve themselves of their weapons, regardless of dangers, remain the winners. It is cowardice to give yourself to the enemy with the weapon in your hand, to keep your life for lack of courage: and you'll be despised by your very enemies, and hated by your friends, and pointed at as a vile man, and this is well demonstrated by Senefont General of Cyrus in an oration of his to his Greek captains.

The Soldiers needs to never be startled in hearing that the enemy army is bigger than the one in which he serves; because in war, it is valour that wins usually, and not numbers, as Senefont proves with these words to his soldiers: *It is clear to everyone, and everyone knows, that victory is not purchased with a superior number, but with virtue and valour.*

And Alexander, pushing his own to take a hard action, told them: *Nature never made something so high, that virtue could fail to it.*

The Soldier needs to never show anything that shows vileness, nor any sign of fear; he needs, instead, to always show himself anxious to go forwards, and never fall back, because fear is a steady torment to the soul, and those who fear always suspect of worse things, and nothing can push forwards he who always fears, and in dangers, if not daring, nothing helps; so fear makes us forget science and the practice without generosity of spirit becomes useless, and in the end, the stupidest maxim of them all is to fear that which you cannot avoid. Good men do not fear, but evil men always fear; vileness is despised by everyone since it's a vice, which makes man act against reason.