

gets towards the top of his list, he finds all his infantry and cavalry contemporaries passing him by and becoming captains; for, though individual officers of other arms may have been very unlucky, or have delayed their promotion by exchanges, the senior lieutenants of all cavalry and most infantry regiments, are much junior to those of the R. A. At last the glorious day arrives, he at last assumes the pretty gold lace of the captain, and then finds that his brother in the infantry, who is younger in age and service than himself, and has had an easier and pleasanter time of it altogether, has not only held that rank for two years or so, but gets sevenpence a day more pay, and has the capital position of captain of a company, while the poor gunner captain has no command and no position, and either is compelled through "paucity of officers" to do subaltern's duty (not an uncommon thing; more that one, *major* has to do it at present for the same reason), or he does *umbra* to his major, and "assists him in the general superintendence of the battery" as the standing order-jargon has it!

He reaches twenty years' service at length. I say twenty years' service, as some Royal Artillery officers have got their majorities at that period, though it will probably never happen again, and then one might suppose, after at least twelve years' hard work as lieutenant, and nine or more—these periods are very variable—of effacement as captain, that he has reached the grand goal of field officer's rank and pay, and command of a battery. Has he? He gets nominally the pay of a major of infantry, it is true, but only when actually with and in command of his battery. The infantry major gets his 16s. 6d. a day whether with his regiment or away from it. The gunner only gets 14s. when on leave. As to rank, every possible mode is taken by the Horse Guards and his regimental superiors (who carefully re-echo the ideas of the dispensers of patronage, as a rule) to disabuse him of the idea that he is a regimental field officer. It never struck any one, for instance, to direct that an infantry major on a foot-parade is not to wear spurs and sabretache, which are as much badges of his rank as stars and sleeve-lace, but the gunner-major is forbidden to do so, for no possible reason except to continue the policy of depreciation of the artillery which the present commander-in-chief has the merit of introducing. He cannot give one of his men leave from tattoo; nominally he can, but really the leave-list his signs has to be approved in the "brigade" office before it is efficacious. He cannot dispose of prisoners unless so far as permitted, which is in most cases to the same extent as he was allowed twenty years before as a subaltern. Though nominally responsible for the drill of his men, in reality the hours and subjects of his drills are ordered for him by his "brigade." From want of other officers, he has frequently to do the lieutenant's work of routine inspection of kits, barracks, guards, and the like. I was lately told by a major that having no other officers under him, though he had the pleasure of possessing several colonels over him, he was expected to visit daily a guard of three men! he added that he really had far more position and authority when a lieutenant twenty odd years before than he has now as major. Then many of the older officers, who are for the most part good Tories, are extremely jealous of the rank of the majors, and knowing that the Horse Guards won't be too angry with them for anything that depreciates the artillery, lose no opportunity of scolding, lecturing, snubbing, and degrading their majors—a line of

conduct which can be more safely and successfully pursued in the army than elsewhere! This seems passing strange, but is true, even to such an extent that district generals have had to take notice of it, and the Horse Guards have actually had to interfere in several instances! So that on the whole the position of the major R.A., unless he happens to command a field battery away from his "brigade" headquarters, is a far more unpleasant position, and compares very unfavorably in pay, rank, or consideration, with that of the major of an infantry regiment, a man of the same service and who often owes his better fortune to the lucky circumstance that he was too stupid or too idle to press for Woolwich, and so took refuge in the infantry. It is in the rank of major that the position of the gunner officer shows to most disadvantage; he has served at least as long as majors of the other arms, has on service a greatly more responsible position, is expected to know and be fit for more, has a heavy responsibility in money and stores, and yet he is paid less, and neither the dress nor the treatment due to a field officer is conceded to him! Worse than all, the only assignable reason for this is what in all other armies leads to a directly opposite conclusion—that he is an artillery man. Meantime, the same service (twenty years) give the doctor relative rank and pay of lieutenant-colonel.

For about ten years more, under "cold shade" of an administration which prefers amateur to professional soldiers, the gunner major plods through his career, feeling daily more wearied and depressed, in strange contrast to the other branches where hope and consideration increase with service and rank. He becomes lieutenant-colonel at present at twenty-six years, but this is exceptional and cannot last. However take it twenty six; he then finds that the majority of his brethren of the infantry have attained the same rank several years before, have what is really a greatly better position and much more pay, for only one in four of the gunner lieutenant-colonels get command pay, while every infantry man does. The infantry lieutenant-colonel is in a very splendid and independent position, the command of a battalion. Three out of four of the gunners have no position or real duties at all, and have the alternative of either consenting to effacement or of usurping the command of the one battery which is often stationed with them, to the prejudice of its major, the destruction of all efficiency and good system, and always to the great discontent of the men. I referred to this in a former letter, but it must be recollected that however silly it may be for a lieutenant-colonel to interfere with a major or a battery, still the fault is very much in the system, which, for want of the moral courage necessary to face the question of promotion and retirement, has attempted to relieve a dead-lock by creating a vast number of additional lieutenant-colonels for whom there are no duties; this, too, we owe to the brigade system at the root. Having passed a good many years in this unenviable and dormant state, the lieutenant-colonel at last commands a brigade, generally where greatly older than the majority of line lieutenant-colonels, and too often when deteriorated in body and mind by the depressing influences of his career. But even this means nothing more than signing reports and seeing prisoners, commanding the small army of some half-dozen brigade staff and clerks, doing no real command if in a field brigade; but if in a garrison one, having the high privilege of interfering with the majors, and of carrying out H. R. H.'s

excellent and economical plan of training foot-gunners to march past and skirmish with carbines!

When our gunner has completed thirty-two years, and is fifty years of age or more—just the period when men of other arms are becoming major-generals!—he becomes regimental full colonel, an anomalous rank which ought to be abolished at once. Here his duties are for the first time in his career independent and interesting, and of the highest importance; but he should have attained to them ten years before for efficiency. Thirty-two years of depression and petty details—a deal of it often passed in marching past and skirmishing (if a "garrison gunner")—is not likely to expand the mind or fit men for high command; and the actual result too often corresponds faithfully to the *a priori* probability. The full colonels cannot tear themselves away from the details of the brigade office, and the appointment of an acting bombardier or the regulation mode of re-drinking a crime of drunkenness retains a fatal fascination for the old officers, from which they cannot emancipate themselves unless it be at times to blow up recalcitrant captains or majors who wish to command their own batteries, or to deliver maundering orations about the Queen's Regulations to compulsory audiences of their juniors, who are forced by discipline to hear these (and other) sermons patiently.

To the relief of every one, the old colonels become major-generals at last, after forty-two years' service, and are shelved. I need follow their career no further: even if H. R. H. had not set his face against commands for artillery generals, the old colonels of that Service and age are seldom fit for them; ten years before that they often were, and would then have attained the rank, even though they had not interest enough to be employed, if they had only been in the infantry.

I have now shown sufficiently why the gunner officers are discontented, why the artillery is getting to be considered a "bad service," why youngsters fight shy of entering it, and why so many leave it at an early period of their career. There are other points on which your space (on which I have already trespassed unconscionably, though not disproportionately to the importance of the subject) will not permit me to dilate: The bad effect of the separation of the "Horse" Artillery; the demoralization of the depots; the mischievous influence of the clique of officers who have, with the connivance of the authorities, spent all their lives at Woolwich; the manner in which Woolwich, the old home of the regiment, is made unpleasant and strange to their brother officers by this clique of German translators, horse-races, and cricketers; the tendency to shunt clever artillery officers out of the regular military line into garrison instructorships and such school duties. All this, though not insignificant, is more than I now undertake to portray. I have said enough to prove my case; more than any officer on full pay dare say. You will observe that the system of nucleus batteries in peace time, which I advocated in my former letters—though it cannot remedy the intentional depreciation of the artillery in the matters in rank and pay—would yet relieve the plethora of superior officers and provide real work for every grade of a nature suitable to the grade; and would wipe out such anomalies as second captains with nothing to do, and lieutenant-colonels degrading themselves to the command of batteries. Two portions of my task are yet unfulfilled but through your indulgence I hope to be permitted on future occasions to