

A great injury is being done to the horse-breeding of this country by crossing the small mares with the large Clyde, Shire and Percheron sires. The produce is often an impossible brute, fit for nothing, and if the Imperial army is to be supplied it can only be done from the produce of thoroughbred sires and three-parts bred mares. Each year must show farmers how precarious a living is that which depends solely on grain, and if only the same attention be paid to the rearing of good horses as is being paid to other stock, the result will be beyond all expectation; every day the class of vessels carrying cattle to Europe is improving, and horses can be landed as safe and sound in Liverpool and London as in New York, with this difference, that for every dollar paid by American dealers, the dealers in Europe can afford to give a pound sterling."

Canadian Horses for the Army.

HIS Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge expressed himself satisfied with the Canadian horses inspected by him at the new remount establishment, Woolwich, on Tuesday. The horses in question have been recently purchased by Col. Ravenhill and Col. Phipps for military purposes, and both officers may be warmly congratulated on the result of their labors, and for many reasons. The first is that the farmers of the United Kingdom have ceased trying to supply horses suitable for cavalry purposes—the Government price does not attract them. Our best horses are exported and sold at prices higher than obtainable in this country, and the leggy, weedy residue is not fitted for the wear and tear which service in the cavalry and artillery entails. To make up the deficiency some 17,000 foreign horses are annually imported to supply our army wants from Russia, Spain, Germany and France. The question has for long been discussed whether state aid and the establishment of government *haras* in this country might not remedy the defect of being obliged to trust to foreigners for our supply of army horses. Whatever may be the consensus of opinion on this head, nothing has been done to stimulate the breeding of horses among British farmers, and an important difficulty has been solved by the united efforts of Cols. Ravenhill and Phipps. Both officers went out to Canada in June last to buy and send over a sample of horses from the Dominion, and these—some 80 in number—passed muster on Tuesday by the Duke of Cambridge, who expressed his approval of these first-fruits. Col. Ravenhill stated that most of the horses were taken out of timber waggons. Some of them were almost thoroughbred, and, although in poor condition when purchased, they had, with food and rest, developed into fine troopers. In their native country the animals were all draught-horses, but are capable of being broken in for riding purposes. It is a matter on which the nation may be congratulated that we have at last found a field for the supply of our military horses. To be dependent for them on the foreigner entails a drain of money out of the country in time of peace and the closure of the markets in time of war. So long as England remains mistress of the seas we may look to our colonies to supply that which is unremunerative to native industry. The maximum Home Government price is £45 per cavalry horse, while the Canadian horses were purchased at prices varying from £25 to £35. To this must be added £8, the cost of transit from Quebec to England. The Duke of Cambridge incidentally remarked that the War Department had shown the Canadian farmers the practicability of delivering horses on the Thames under government price, and he hoped that the colonies would be encouraged to breed and send over horses for military purposes. Australia, possibly, may be stimulated in this direction, and in these days of projected Imperial Federation all must be glad to see that the discovery of a fresh field for the supply of our military wants will tend to divert money from the pockets of foreigners and turn the Pactolean stream into the purses of our own flesh and blood.—*U. Service Gazette.*

Commanding Officers.

THE probability, nay, the certainty, of the adoption by the military authorities of a system of selection for the position of officer commanding a regiment leads us to make a few remarks on what we may consider the expiring genus. In the adoption of any system of selection certain rules will have to be formulated, which, it may be supposed, will bring the class of commanding officers to something approaching a uniform standard—of course they will all be good under the expected military millennium! Under the expiring system commanding officers have been of all types—some good, some bad, some neither the one nor the other, some with ideas, some without. But we must confess that all have, more or less, honestly attempted to do their duty according to their lights. The rarest type of all is the popular commanding officer. We heard a commanding officer say once with a melancholy sigh, that if an angel came down from heaven to command his regiment he would not be popular. When we talk of this type we mean the commanding officer who drives the regimental coach with a firm hand, and whilst he makes

everybody do his duty is popular with the officers and men. The strict disciplinarian will, we think, be more popular with the men than with the officers. There are some commanding officers that are popular because they are easy-going and let things slide. The commonest kind of commanding officer is the one that is popular *outside* his regiment, and who reserves all his imperfections for the bosom of his regimental circle. It is very hard in such a case, when an outsider remarks to one of his officers, "What a charming man your colonel is," for him to answer with a truthful countenance, "Yes—very." Yet it must be a very bad regiment where a different answer would be given, and where the officers are always grumbling abroad about the shortcomings of their commanding officer. This is an instance of the much-derided *esprit de corps* which, in our opinion, is one of the strongest supporters of discipline. Then there is the colonel who lives in the orderly-room, and would be only too happy to sleep in it. Such a man delights in sounding the "officers' call," and keeping them hanging about the orderly-room, whether they have any business there or not, whilst he tells off the prisoners. As his mind is of rather a discursive tendency, when a prisoner and the witnesses are before him, and they introduce irrelevant matter, he keenly follows them—"Sergeant So-and-so said something,"—"Send for Sergeant So-and-so." One name introduces another until there is a *queue* of witnesses outside the orderly-room, like that at a popular theatre before the pit door is opened. This kind of commanding officer is never popular. He wastes his own and his officers' time, and much as a prisoner hates cells or pack drill, he hates it still more when the process of awarding it takes half-an-hour instead of two minutes. The jocular commanding officer is generally liked, more especially when his jokes have no malice in them.

There are some commanding officers, and accounted good ones too, who never know any drill, and who can never remember what movements have been abolished and which retained; such men are very often good sportsmen, smart looking fellows on horseback, look well after their regiments, and not easily disconcerted by a huffy general on parade. As they generally have a good word of command and a smart adjutant, they get very well through an inspection. There is the commanding officer who has been the best of comrades and good fellows as a major, a leading sportsman of his regiment, first across country, and an excellent shot, getting as much leave as he can, who, when he gets command, develops into quite a different being, forgets that he ever was young, and looks upon leave as an institution of the devil. Such a man, when the best meet of the season takes place in the neighborhood, and his youngsters want to go, finds that it is the only day on which he can have an all-present parade or kit inspection. Another sort of commanding officer—we do not think there are many of them—are those that sleep with Julius Cæsar under their pillows, and read Hamley and their drill books by day, but whose knowledge evaporates when the general hustles them, and begs them to "get on with the Royal Wessex," or whatever their regiments may be.

How few really good drills there are! It does not seem a very hard thing to drill well, to have a good voice, a tolerable memory, and a clear idea which is your right hand and which is your left. We say nothing about tactics; that is quite a different art. The class of commanding officers who, if not bearded like the pard, yet are full of strange oaths, is almost extinct; they have, however, existed since the days of Flanders, and a few remain in the higher ranks. Such a man was he, of another generation, who was reported to have gone down on his knees on parade and prayed that a fresh oath might be given him to swear at such a lot of idiots as he had to handle. We must not forget the society commanding officer, generally very popular with the young ladies, who is always ready to start a regimental dance or luncheon. The youngsters complain that he is the only one who reaps the benefit of it, as it is he, and not they, who is asked to the country houses and to the pheasant shooting. Among the best of the various types is the sporting commanding officer, who hunts, shoots and fishes when he can spare time, and what is more, likes to see his officers hunt, shoot and fish too. Such a man may not be a brilliant drill, or an eminent military lawyer, but he can generally hold his own on the parade ground as well as he can across country or on the moor. The only temptation which, if he is a wise man he will do well to avoid, is to take part in those sports which require youth and suppleness. It is sad to see the middle-aged commanding officer swathed in flannels, and perspiring at every pore, pursuing the lively ball at lawn tennis, or who, after vast preparation and much padding, returns sadly from the wickets with a duck's egg, because a certain stiffness in the back did not permit him to stop the fatal shooter. But on such occasions just listen to those good-natured sycophants, his subalterns, "Oh! colonel, I am sorry; we depended on you for a score, but that was a clipping ball that bowled you—best bowled to-day." Such, alas, is human nature. The last type of commanding officer which we have in view is the one who is overwhelmed by his family. Such a warrior is generally henpecked, and his "lady" is really the commanding officer. His sorry charger's life is made a burden to him by having to