

# TOPICS OF A TROOP STABLE

## Horse Sense in a Conversation About the Men and the Work.

By F. J. DEE

"VISITING Rounds," consisting of the orderly officer, sergeant of the guard and the sentry, had just visited No. 1 Stable of a certain Canadian Cavalry Corps. The stillness was broken only by the occasional rattle of a log chain and the sound of the sleek, contented troop horses, stolidly munching their hay. Suddenly from old No. 10's stall came a long drawn sigh. "Old Bill," as the Troops called him, was the veteran of the regiment, and he invariably opened the nightly conversation, just as invariably prefacing it with a long drawn sigh.

"Well, well," remarked "Bill," at last, "did any of you people ever see such a case as that remount that joined to-day. If he's up to standard, I'll eat my saddle blanket. He'll be in the sick lines before he's been here a week, I'll bet."

"Oh, I don't know," came from "A 27," on the other side of the stable, "good feeding, grooming, and regular work will do wonders with that youngster in a week or two. Give him a chance before you decide about him. You said exactly the same thing when 'Jack' joined, and to-day he's the best jumper in the squadron."

"Where did the fellow come from, anyhow?" asked Bill. "He wasn't bred in this part of the country, I'll swear; he's too rangy for that."

"If you'll wait until I've pulled this blessed head collar over my ears, I'll slip into the 2nd troop and find out," said "A 44." "Old 'Rajah' was talking to this youngster, and he'll know all about him."

So saying, "44," or "Prince," gave another tug and, succeeding in slipping his head collar, calmly backed out of his stall and, walking to the door of the stable, nuzzled it open with his nose and proceeded on his errand.

"That fellow will get into trouble some night wandering round the way he does," remarked staid old Tom, the Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant's horse, "and I for one shall have no sympathy for him. He's too fresh anyway. Say, would you believe it, there's another beastly musical ride coming this spring. My groom told me this morning."

"Seems to me," commented "Old Bill," "that they are trying to turn decent service horses into a lot of skewball prancing circus plugs nowadays. It's enough to put one off his feed. What with musical rides, long distance patrols, aviation meets, and what not, the service is going to the dogs."

"I'd rather like these trips," broke in "A 19," "if it wasn't for the beastly railway journeys. They help break the monotony of barrack life."

"When you have as much service in as I have, youngster," gruffly declared "Old Bill," "you won't want the monotony broken any. You youngsters make me tired, always wanting to show off in front of a crowd. If you ever have to handle a real angry crowd you won't be so fond of 'em, I can tell you."

Here "Prince" returned with information that the remount had been imported from the lower provinces, was rising five, 15.2 in height, and was delighted at being sold into the service.

"He won't be so delighted when the roughs get after him with their long whips, in the school, I'll bet," prophesied No. 13, who had just completed his training, "I wouldn't do my lot in the school again for a field of clover."

Attention was here diverted from the remount, by a remark from "Baby, A 21." "Did you people see that Infantry Officer that they stuck on me on parade this morning. Say, he's the limit. Do what I would, I couldn't keep that man on. He fell off four times in the school, and I thought the Sergeant Major was goin' to have a fit. That man will never be able to ride—a spavined clothes horse, leave alone a troop horse. He's got hands like a farrier sergeant, and a seat—well a dirigible balloon's a fool to him for buoyancy. If they keep putting these people on to me, I shall hurt one of them one of these days, I know I shall. That's what gets over me in the service; if you're bad tempered, and generally ugly, you're cast to the young horses for another dose of schooling with lots of whip and spur as a corrective. If you do your work, and behave as yourself, ten to one if you're not picked out for attached officers to learn equitation on. Equitation be twitched—aggravation I call it."

Here the conversation was checked by the arrival at the stable of the relief and the changing of sentries. After the new man had walked around the stable and, readjusting "44's" head collar, had departed, the thread was again picked up by "Mike,"

"A 47," a big, intelligent, kindly, Western animal, remarking, "Well, I suppose there's a hard day in front of me to-morrow, for my man told me to-day that the signallers are for long distance work and he expected to be detailed for it. I like signalling rides, for they always take lots of oats with us, and we are resting, usually, in a farmer's barn or under some shady trees, while our men are working. It took me a long time to get used to those flags they wave, though, but my man is very kind and patient, and I don't mind them a bit now."

Here old "27," or "Dope," as he was more often called, said, "It's all very well for you people whose men are signallers, or scouts, or something, but how would you like to be an Instructor's horse. I have to go out into the field or school, day after day, with the same class of recruits, and listen to the same detail for drill, and dismounted service, advance guards, reconnaissance and so on, until we get 'em

off our hands; then there's another lot to train."

Here "Old Bill" chipped in with, "Dope, you are always grouching. If the Colonel took you over you'd grouse just the same. When you were a trooper's horse you didn't like that, then they put you on the transport and that didn't suit. You were then detailed to the signallers, and you still cribbed."

"Oh, you shut up, old hoss," fired back "Dope." "You think you've the right to lecture every horse in the stables, just because you've carried royalty, but that's so long ago that we've only your word for it now, and I for one don't believe it."

"If I could get loose, young fellow, I'd give you such a hammering as would put you in the sick lines for the rest of your service," wrathfully snorted "Old Bill." "I'd have you know, sir, that I have carried royalty on two occasions, and before you begin to talk to me you'd better do less grouching and pay more attention to your work; then your man won't have to use his spurs on you like I saw him doing this morning."

Completely subdued by this sharp rebuke from the old charger, and knowing he would receive no support from the other troop horses, who all respected and liked "Old Bill," "Dope" sulkily lay down in his stall, an example that was soon copied by all the other occupants of the stable.



OFFICERS OF THE 24th REGIMENT, CHATHAM, ONT., AT GODERICH CAMP

Back Row—Lt. W. A. Coltart, Lt. P. G. Morley, Lt. A. C. Woodward, Signal Officer, Capt. W. E. Gundy, Capt. G. W. Cornell, Quartermaster, Dr. C. C. Bell, Medical Officer. Middle Row—Capt. W. R. Hall, Paymaster; Major J. McLaren, Lt.-Col. J. S. Black, Capt. H. D. Smith, Adjutant Capt. O. L. Lewis. Front Row—Capt. G. J. L. Smith, Capt. N. Smith, Lt. E. N. Fremlin.

## First City Regiments in Camp

DOWN in Chatham, Ont., and in Windsor, constructive spirit in military circles is strong. From these two cities this Spring went forth the first city regiments in Canada to go to under canvas with the rural corps since General French's famous report.

When General French sent in his report to the Militia Department, he strongly recommended that the city regiments of Canada should go to summer camps along with the rural regiments. It is understood that the military officials at Ottawa are going to act on his advice. The General's idea is said by militia men to be excellent. The city regiments who do all their manoeuvres in the drill hall, need to get out on the field and experience some of the conditions they would have to face in case they were summoned to actual warfare. But there are difficulties in taking a thousand men or so from their jobs for two weeks. Employers have to be consulted—endless trouble.

It remained to the two smaller cities of Chatham and Windsor to take the initiative in the matter. Four months before the publication of the French report, the 24th Regiment, Chatham, and the 21st, of Windsor, volunteered to go to the camp at Goderich. They went, Chatham under the command of Lieut.-Colonel James S. Black; Windsor headed by Colonel Laing.

It is interesting to note that the experiment was completely successful. Chatham had 215 men out of 232 in her regiment under canvas. Windsor was more than half strength. For one whole week these men were absent from their jobs in town. Wealthy manufacturers and eminent lawyers consorted with workmen in the comradeship of camp life. Co-operation made this feasible. The city soldiers learned from the rural corps how to rough it; which training they never get in the drill hall, and on the other hand, the rural soldiers who do their drilling on the timothy field, got some new points on marching from the city corps.



Colonel Hodgins, Commandant Goderich Camp.



Band of 24th Regiment on parade.