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SOME LEADERS OF INDIAN IRREGULAR HORSE.

By COLONEL R. G. BURTON.

THERE is a romantic flavour about the early English conquest of India which lends to its annals an absorbing interest. The actors in the scenes of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries march across the stage of history with sound of drum and trumpet, under many standards, accompanied by the clash of arms and battle-cries in many tongues. The flag of England waves victorious in the breeze; there are the standards of the Kings of France and the tricolour of the French Republic; the Bhagwan Jhanda of the Mahrattas bellying black against the dust and smoke of battle; the banners of the Mogul, and emblems of many oriental potentates; the red and green striped flag of Tipu Sultan with its central sun; and many others. We see them borne by a motley horde, led by European adventurers or by native soldiers of fortune. These are of many races and many tongues—Pathans, Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, Mahrattas, Mussulmans of various communities, and rascallions of many types.

There were among the adventurers many reputable soldiers, such as James Skinner, the son of an officer of the East India Company's service and a Rajputni lady. James Skinner ran away from school, and was taken to the house of his sister by a servant who found him wandering in the bazaar. In 1795, when seventeen years of age, he obtained an ensigncy in one of the battalions of the famous General de Boigne, in Sindhia's service. He took part in many campaigns and battles, and distinguished himself as a leader of both infantry and cavalry. When in command of two battalions he carried by assault the fort of Jaipur, while in the battle of Malpura he led a cavalry charge and captured a field battery. Later he was engaged on behalf of the Karaoli Raja against the Chief of Uniara, between Tonk and the Banas river. The Karaoli infantry deserted to the enemy, leaving Skinner and his battalions to fight the battle alone. Attacked by 6,000 men, he attempted to retreat to Tonk, but his force was destroyed after a desperate resistance. Skinner, shot through the groin, lay two days on the field of battle, when the surviving wounded were taken to the Uniara camp. He related that on the second morning an old man and woman went round the battlefield serving out bread and water, and he afterwards sent them a thousand rupees in recognition of their humanity.

On the outbreak of war between the English and Mahrattas in 1803, Skinner, with other English subjects, was dismissed from Sindhia's service. He entered Delhi with Lake after the battle before

that city, when 2,000 of Sindhia's Hindustani Horse went over to the English General. Asked whom they would have as a commander, they shouted with one accord: "Sikandar Sahib!" (Skinner Sahib!); thus was formed the famous Risala of Skinner's Horse, whose yellow uniform is conspicuous to this day in the ranks of the Indian Army.

James Skinner served during the next thirty years with this corps and one which he subsequently raised, and retired as a Colonel and a C.B. He died at Hansi in 1841, and it is recorded that, "accompanied by the whole of his corps and a great concourse of people, the coffin was carried from Hansi to Sitaram-Ki-Sarai on the outskirts of Delhi. Here all that was mortal of the gallant old adventurer was met by the civilians and military officers of the station and a vast multitude from the city, and so escorted to its final resting place. None of the Emperors of Hindustan, said the natives, was ever brought into Delhi in such state as Sikandar Sahib!"

There were in the old turbulent days in India many leaders less noted than Skinner, but who performed deeds no less gallant or remarkable, whose records lie buried in oblivion under the accumulated dust of vanished years. Of such was Evan Davies, who was appointed by the English Government to carry out the reform of the Nizam's Irregular Horse in 1816. The Nizam's Horse had changed little since Wilks, in his "History of Mysore," gave the following account of the contingent which joined Lord Cornwallis' Army in 1791:—

"They were rated at 15,000 and really amounted to 10,000 men, well mounted on horses in excellent condition; and to those who had never before had an opportunity of observing an Indian Army, their first appearance was novel and interesting. It is probable that no national or private collection of ancient arms in Europe contains any weapon, or article of personal equipment, which might not be traced in this motley crowd; the Parthian bow and arrow, the iron club of Scythia, sabres of every age and nation, lances of every length and description, and matchlocks of every form; metallic helmets of every pattern, simple defences of the head, a steel bar descending diagonally as a protection to the face, defences of bars, chains, or scale work, descending behind or on the shoulders, cuirasses, suits of armour, or detached pieces for the arm, complete coats of mail in chainwork, shields, bucklers, and quilted jackets, sabre-proof. The ostentatious display of these antique novelties was equally curious in its way; the free and equal use of two sword-arms, the precise and perfect command of a balanced spear eighteen feet long, of the club which was to shiver an iron helmet, of the arrow discharged in flight; but, above all, the total absence of every symptom of order, or obedience, or command, excepting groups collecting round their respective flags; every individual an independent warrior, self-impelled, affecting to be the champion whose single arm was to achieve victory; scampering among each other in wild confusion; the whole exhibition presenting to the mind an imagery scarcely more allied to previous impressions of reality than the fictions of an Eastern tale, or the picturesque disorder of a dramatic scene."

Such was the unpromising material which Captain Evan Davies, of the East India Company's service, undertook to reorganize. The Nizam's cavalry had been found by Wellesley in his campaign in the Deccan in 1803 to be very useless, although he gave a better account of a portion of it which took a standard from Sindhia's troops at the battle of Argaum. The reform of the Nizam's Horse was undertaken especially with a view to dealing with the Pindaris, those bands of freebooters who were gradually overrunning the whole of India, and to overtake whom the English cavalry were too heavy.

Thus an eye-witness of the battle of Mehidpur in 1817 wrote:— "We could see the Pindaris flying like the wind, at a considerable distance off, our cavalry having no chance with these fellows, even on an open plain. The Pindaris, unencumbered with accoutrements, heavy saddle, etc., will gallop round and round the most active of our troopers; and his very horse seems to partake of the master's cunning and dexterity, and to know exactly the moment for a quick and timely retreat."

The Reformed Horse were soon employed on active service, for in March, 1817, Davies attacked a force of 3,000 Pindaris and Arabs in Khandesh, putting them to flight after a short hand-to-hand conflict in which the enemy lost 200 killed, while Davies himself was severely wounded in the encounter.

The Pindaris were not easy to catch. Their object was plunder, not fighting, which they endeavoured to avoid by their remarkable mobility. These freebooters were not a race but a military system of bandits. They fluctuated in numbers, being augmented from time to time by military adventurers from various native states, and frequently amounted to as many as 30,000 men. They were of all races and religions. Their headquarters were about the Narbada river from whence they raided far and wide, issuing forth in bands of from two to three thousand mounted men, ravaging the country in every direction and destroying life and property. They were mounted on small but hardy horses, and were armed with a spear, a shield, and a sword, whilst a few bore fire-arms in the shape of an old pistol or fire-lock.

In 1814 they raided the Madras Presidency, committing widespread depredations, and eventually spreading consternation as far as the walls of Madras itself. So great was the alarm and fear of these hordes of robbers that it is related that in 1816 "an idle rumour reached Madras of the arrival of Pindaris at the Mount; all was uproar, flight, and despair to the walls of Madras." The alarm originated in a few *dhobis* and grass-cutters of the artillery having mounted their ponies, and, in mock imitation of the Pindaris, galloping about and playing with long bamboos in their hands in the vicinity of the Mount. The effect was such, however, that many of the civil servants and inhabitants on the Mount Road packed up and moved to the Fort for protection. Troopers and messengers were seen galloping to the Government House and thence to the different public authorities. Such was the alarm in the Government House that on the afternoon of that day an old officer, anxious to offer some advice to the Governor, rode smartly up to the Government Gardens, and on

reaching the entrance observed the younger son of the Governor running with all possible speed into the house, who having got to a place of security ventured to look back, and then discovered in the old officer a face which he had before seen; when turning back again he exclaimed: "Upon my word, Sir, I was so frightened I took you for a Pindari!"

To contend with these freebooters it was obvious that nothing but irregular cavalry, as mobile as themselves, would suffice, and Evan Davies adapted his methods to the end in view. He wrote in 1816: "The matchlock was laid aside as being of no use on horseback; on the contrary, it invariably discovered our march to the enemy at night. Employed as we were without infantry, and being frequently obliged to act on foot, I procured English carbines for one-third of the men, the remainder I armed with a pistol, spear, and sword each. As, however, they had always been in the habit, under their own chiefs, of marching in one long, loose extended line, it was absolutely necessary to teach them to wheel by threes, and to form line in any given direction. This they soon acquired. The carbineers are taught to skirmish on foot and on horseback, and are excellent marksmen. They are also taught the use of the sword agreeably to the native mode. The spearmen are taught the native spear exercise and to skirmish on horseback. The Risalas are told off in squadrons for field exercise; and are merely taught to change position on a flank, by bringing forward or throwing back a wing; form close columns of squadrons; form line from ditto; attack to the front both by squadrons and in line; retire in line by alternate half-squadrons. The above is all they have attempted, as more attention has been paid to their using their arms well, singly as skirmishers, than to making them regular troops."

By these methods Davies and his successors changed the Nizam's cavalry from an armed mob of mediæval horse into a force described by Lord Gough in 1853 as "the best irregular cavalry in the world." In the interval they had fought through more than one campaign and had been mainly instrumental in the pacification of the turbulent Deccan. Evan Davies, himself a soldier of fortune, was the ideal type of soldier for this work. Known as "Tiger Davies," from his love of hunting the great beasts of the jungle, he was a fine sportsman, a good shot with the rifle and pistol, a master of the spear and sword exercise, active and of robust constitution, and made his horses perform wonders. When quite a lad he performed a very bold exploit at Goa in 1809, following a wounded panther to its den. At Bolarum in 1814 he rode up to a bear, threw his cap in its face, and speared it when it stood on its hind legs. On another occasion, at Mominabad, he stood near a bush where a panther was concealed, and when the beast sprang out at him, "Davies waited till he saw the brute in the air, then took one pace aside, and as the animal's feet came to the earth, cut his head in two equal parts. Down the beast fell; Davies wiped his good sword with some leaves, and looked as cool and composed as if he had done nothing."

After the action in Khandesh his force was employed throughout the Mahratta War and in the subsequent pursuit of Baji Rao, the deposed Peshwa, who fled from place to place through the jungles of the Deccan, and who is still remembered in the hamlets through which he passed during his flight. There to this day the villagers point out his track, and some say that in the silent watches of the night they hear the beat of the hundred thousand hoofs of his myriad horse upon the plain. The Mahrattas who followed in his train have turned their weapons into ploughshares, and become peaceful cultivators of the land.

“They pass and smile, the Children of the Sword,
No more the Sword they wield,
And, oh! how deep the corn
Along the Battlefield.”

Davies came to an unhappy and tragic end at the very hands of the troopers whom he loved so well. Various changes of uniform and other matters had caused considerable dissatisfaction at Momina-bad, which culminated when, on May 5th, 1827, Lieut. Tucker caused two men of the regiment to be forcibly shaved. This violent and outrageous measure resulted in a number of men assembling next morning on the general parade ground, where they erected a standard and took up a position with loaded arms. Colonel Davies rode to the spot to try and pacify the men, when he was shot down by a fusillade from the mutineers and then cut to pieces. Some of the assassins were killed on the spot by their comrades, and others were punished after trial. The bodies of Khudayar Khan, the chief mutineer, and others were buried under a grove of mango-trees, where it was soon afterwards noticed that a small party of fakirs had taken up their abode. One morning a large whitewashed tomb, which had sprung up in the night as though by a stroke of some enchanter's wand, appeared over the grave, but this was at once demolished and the trees were cut down by the men of the cavalry themselves.

Evan Davies was a great loss to the force. Of him the English Resident at Hyderabad had written: “The integrity of his character, his known gallantry and enterprise, his temper and experience, his habits of personal activity, his acquaintance with the language, character, and prejudices of the natives, his dexterity in the use of all their weapons, and his skill in their peculiar modes of horsemanship, eminently qualified him for the command of the Reformed Horse.”

“His bones are dust, his sword is rust, and his soul with
the Saints I trust.”

The officering of the Reformed Horse was somewhat peculiar. There were to be found in it officers of the English Navy and Army, of the French Army, of the East India Company, and the Militia, besides those whose commissions were from the Nizam's Government only. There were associated with Davies four native chiefs who raised and equipped their own bodies of horse, called Risalas, of whom the

most famous was the Nawab Murtaza Yar Jung, of whom an officer of the force wrote in 1834:—

"He had strong claims on our support and protection, for when it became an object with the English Government to organize a body of cavalry for the defence of Berar against the Pindaris; when it was the object of Raja Govind Bakhsh (the Governor of Berar who subsequently rebelled) to counteract us in that purpose, and when he had assembled the commanders of horse and enquired who would serve the English, Murtaza Yar Jung was the first to rise, and in full, *darbar*, laying his hand on his sword, said that he volunteered to do so with heart and hand. He was true to his word; until the day of his death in 1830 he was ever at the post of danger, setting an animating and cheering example to his men. The majestic and soldierlike form and bearing of Murtaza Yar Jung, attesting through many a deep scar the part he had sustained in well-fought fields, will hardly be forgotten by any who have seen this distinguished chief, and never by any officers of the Reformed Horse. He was the first to rise in this assembly, and, addressing himself to Raja Govind Bakhsh, said: "Listen, Maharaja! You ask, who will serve the English; I am a soldier of fortune; all I require is food for my men and corn for my horses, nor much of either. These the English have never denied to those who have served them faithfully; and I am ready to serve them, and to march on the instant to Delhi, to Calcutta, or wheresoever they may command. All countries are alike to Murtaza Yar Jung."

In those days the country was full of turbulent spirits who viewed with dismay and opposed with force the establishment of effective power in the land where they had so long been accustomed to carry on with impunity their lawless mode of life. In these circumstances it was not surprising that some fine leaders were to be found among our enemies and freebooters, a typical example of whom is described by Sir Alfred Lyall in his poem, "The Old Pindari."

There was Chithu, the famous Pindari chieftain who led our pursuing columns such a prolonged chase in the jungles of what are now the Central Provinces. In the pursuit of Chithu and his like operations had to be undertaken over an extensive region, embracing every diversity of physical feature, and characterized by considerable varieties of climate. This area stretched across India from the river Jumna on the north to the Krishna in the south. It was crossed by ranges of rugged mountains, clad with dense forests whose solitudes were seldom disturbed by the presence of man, and culminating in tall peaks crowned by massive forts, hoary with age and bristling with guns. There were rich alluvial plains dotted with villages and large and populous cities whose spires glittered in the light of day, where mighty rivers rolled a thousand miles to meet the sea. Within the limits of this theatre of war were many native states and some English territories. It was inhabited by peoples of many races and many tongues. Pathans, Mahrattas, and Rajputs represented the civilization of the Orient; aboriginal Bhils and Gonds shared with savage beasts the fastnesses of forest and mountain.

Not only the hostility of man but the forces of nature had to be encountered and overcome. Difficult passes over the mountains, worn by rushing torrents and dark with jungle, had to be traversed by great armies with all their baggage. After heavy rainfall even water-courses that had previously been empty were rendered impassable, and the rivers took days to shrink to their normal proportions. Death lurked in many shapes. Cholera followed in the track of the troops and fever claimed numerous victims. Even the wild beasts with which the country was infested took their toll from the advancing armies.

In these operations there were bold and skilful leaders on either side. Among the Mahratta commanders of horse was Gokhale, a brave and famous chieftain who had ridden beside Wellesley at the battle of Assaye in 1803. Now, fifteen years later, he rode in the ranks of our enemies, and fell fighting gallantly in the combat at Ashti when covering the retreat of his master, the Peshwa. Here the 22nd Light Dragoons and 7th Bombay Cavalry came up with the retreating enemy, when Gokhale charged the native cavalry, at the head of a body of Mahratta Horse, and caused some disorder in their ranks. But the Dragoons galloped along the rear of the 7th, and in a few minutes dispersed the Mahrattas with the loss of their leader, who fought bravely to the last and was killed by an English trooper. As he fell, the Mahratta chieftain gracefully drew his shawl around his head that his enemies might not gaze upon him in the act of dissolution.

Less chivalrous, but perhaps no less bold, was Chithu Pindari. Pursued by various detachments, the Pindaris were harried until only the famous Chithu remained with a few hundred followers. After a long pursuit all these were gradually dispersed, until their unfortunate leader was left alone in the jungles of the Tapti river, near Asirgarh. Here he fell a victim to a man-eating tiger, his fate being ascertained when the monster was followed to its lair and Chithu's head was discovered and recognized. It is related of the Pindari chieftain that his fate excited sympathy among our officers, who admired the spirit and intrepidity with which he had on all occasions braved the deepest reverses of fortune.

A contemporary of Evan Davies, and a no less gallant officer, was John Sutherland, a subaltern of the 4th Bombay Infantry, who joined the Reformed Horse as an assistant to Davies in 1816. He was placed in charge of Murtaza Yar Jung's Risala, and we find him early taking the field against the Pindaris and other marauders who infested the country. After serving through the Mahratta War, he was quartered at the cavalry station of Mominabad in 1818. This wild and rugged district, with hills intersected by innumerable jungly ravines, was a favourite haunt of bandits. The Mahratta War had come to an end. The Pindari freebooters, broken alike in organization and in spirit, and their leaders killed or captured, had been scattered to the four winds. But there still remained much to be done—forts to be reduced, marauding bands to be destroyed, and ceded or conquered territory to be effectively occupied.

On July 11th, 1818, John Sutherland proceeded to Bir with his Risala to undertake operations against a formidable rebel, Dharmaji Partab Rao, who had troubled the Nizam's Government for many years. Here he took up the pursuit, and on July 31st, after a night march of forty-five miles, came up with the rebel band at Dibi, where they had occupied a small fort. The Irregular Horse were accustomed to fight on foot as well as on horseback. Armed with sabre, lance, and matchlock or pistol they were equally able to storm a fort or to charge an enemy in the open. The men were mostly Mussuimans of the Deccan, than whom there are no more courageous or skilful men-at-arms. It was a custom of the service that no man wounded in the back should ever obtain promotion, and no man ever turned his back upon an enemy.

The fort in which Dharmaji and his men had taken refuge was of considerable strength, 150 yards square, with eight bastions. There is such a fort in nearly every village of the Deccan, and most of them have an interesting history. The place was at once invested, being first surrounded by a few men who had come up for some miles at a gallop. By three o'clock two 30-ft. ladders were constructed and preparations were made to carry the fort by escalade. Eighty mounted men were formed into eight parties, posted to prevent the escape of the garrison. Fifty match-lock men took post on a hill which overlooked the village, to cover the advance, and the remainder were formed into two storming parties under John Sutherland and Jemadar Shadi Khan.

At a given signal the two parties rushed to the assault. Sutherland made for the gate, while Shadi Khan planted his ladder at the other end of the fort, carried the wall, and advanced through the interior to meet Sutherland's party. The garrison, mostly Brinjaras, displayed a valour no less desperate than that of their assailants. Scorning the shelter of the fort, they threw open the gates, and, sword in hand, stood ready to receive the attacking party. A desperate conflict ensued. Sutherland was wounded at the gate and unable to advance, but the assailants fought their way in, and the two attacking parties drove the defenders from bastion to bastion, and killed all except Dharmaji and a few men who eventually threw down their arms and surrendered.

This action was typical of many that took place during the next forty years, especially interesting in the storm and capture of forts by dismounted cavalry. In January, 1819, Sutherland was wounded at the siege and capture of Nowah, and we find him at the head of his Irregular Horse frequently engaged during the next few years. His last recorded operation was against the fort of Dandoti in 1828, after which there is no record of his career; but he was perhaps the Lieut.-Colonel Sutherland who was Resident at Gwalior in 1842.

The brave and skilful leaders whose deeds have been recorded had many worthy successors, especially among those who proved their worth during the great Mutiny.

About ten years ago there died at Mominabad, known also as Amba Jogai, in the Nizam's dominions, the oldest Indian officer who

had served in our Army, and who had long even after his retirement, been an "institution" in the Hyderabad Contingent. Ahmad Bakhsh Khan was about ninety-three years of age at his death. He had the title of Nawab, was a Sirdar Bahadur of the First Class of the Order of British India, and held a *jagir* or estate granted by the Nizam in recognition of his long and faithful services. His father was a Nagar from Rajputana who owned the best part of a squadron in the Nizam's cavalry. When he (the father) entered the service it is impossible to say; but it must have been very long ago, for the subject of this memoir was born about 1812. Very probably he marched against Seringapatam when Mir Alam took a body of horse and foot in motley and mediæval array against Tipu Sultan in 1798.

Ahmad Bakhsh Khan became a Ressaïdar at four years of age, or the year when Evan Davies began the regeneration of the Nizam's cavalry. We have heard frequent complaints regarding the system of giving direct commissions in the Indian Army, but in this case it was eminently successful, for no finer soldier than Ahmad Bakhsh Khan ever drew sword in any country. Probably no younger native of India has ever held a commission, although we have heard of a Scottish Major whose roars came from the nursery where he was "greetin' for his parritch." No doubt the future leader of horse inherited his rank with his troop in his father's *risala*.

When the Mutiny broke out in 1857 Ahmad Bakhsh Khan was a Ressaïdar in the 3rd Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent, which has been evolved from Murtaza Yar Jung's *Risala* of the Reformed Horse. He had already seen much fighting in the turbulent days of the pacification of the Deccan. Seldom a week passed between 1816 and 1860 without the trumpet calling to boot and saddle for active service against the numerous bands of Rohillas, Arabs, and Bhils who infested the Nizam's territories. The Irregular Horse rode on quilted cotton-stuffed saddles called *koghirs*, and with full appointments the trooper averaged only 13½ stone. They were remarkable for their mobility. They would start at an hour's notice; ride off a hundred miles; fight at the end of the march; and return fresh to camp or cantonments with prisoners and booty. In this force the younger generation lived with their fathers, grew up in the lines, and with their first accents learnt to lisp of war. They were early trained to ride and to wield the trooper's arms, and at times accompanied their fathers in the field or in the chase of the great wild beasts with which the country abounded.

The Mutiny found Ahmad Bakhsh Khan a leader of men and an accomplished swordsman, one of the finest fighters in India, although he probably weighed something under nine stone. Moreover, the native officers of the Hyderabad Contingent had more self-reliance and power of initiative than most of their class, for there were only three English officers in each regiment, so that the native leaders were thrown largely on their own resources and were accustomed to assume responsibility.

Ahmad Bakhsh Khan accompanied his regiment with the Malwa Field Force in June, 1857, and in the investment of the fort of Dhar

in October killed several of the rebels with his own hand. In the following month he displayed great gallantry at the battle of Mandesaur, and was specially promoted Risaldar-Major for his services, in which his personal combats with individual rebels formed a prominent feature. In the ensuing campaign in Central India, under Sir Hugh Rose, he was in the forefront in every action—at Jhansi, Betwa River, Kalpi, and Gwalior, receiving the Order of Merit for conspicuous bravery at Kalpi.

When the campaign in Central India was over, the embers of insurrection had still to be quenched in many parts of the country, and Ahmad Bakhsh Khan with his regiment formed part of a force of the Hyderabad Contingent operating in Berar under Brigadier Hill. On January 15th, 1859, the force advanced against a body of rebels, Arabs, Rohillas, and Deccanis, who had plundered Risod, forty miles west of Hingoli. Here another gallant leader, Captain Clogstoun, comes upon the scene. This brave officer, with only eight men, had ridden on ahead, and rounded up the enemy, four hundred strong, whom he drove into the village of Chichamba. In this encounter Clogstoun, who was awarded the Victoria Cross, was wounded, while four of his men were killed and three wounded. When the remainder of the force came up the village was surrounded; an attempt to storm the fort failed, one officer being killed and several wounded, and the troops then picketed the surrounding ground.

In order to prevent the enemy from escaping, the Brigadier directed the line of cavalry posts to be withdrawn just before sunset, as though with the intention of retiring, but as soon as it became dark they resumed their former positions. The moon rose and shone upon the plain, lighting up the scene, outlining the scattered trees and bushes and the more distant hills. No sound broke the silent watches of the night, and friend and enemy alike appeared to have retired to rest. But the sentries were alert.

Between nine and ten o'clock Ahmad Bakhsh Khan heard a dull murmur arise within the walls of Chichamba. The sound gathered and increased in volume as the insurgents broke from the village and began their retreat across the plain. They marched in a dense phalanx, sullen and fierce, and bristling with arms. The cavalry, eager for the fray, closed in upon them on every side, followed them with difficulty across the plain, which was intersected by numerous ravines, and pressed on in pursuit up the hill, where a plateau offered more favourable ground for their action. From the dense mass of the enemy the flash of musketry pierced the shadows of the night, the rebels firing with steadiness, fighting with the greatest courage, neither asking nor receiving quarter, and resisting to the last with sword and dagger. But the troopers were no less courageous, Ahmad Bakhsh Khan and his son Wazir Khan being ever foremost in the fight, which was carried across the hills until the shattered remnants of the enemy were driven headlong into a deep ravine, impassable for the pursuers on horseback, where they dispersed and made their escape into dense jungle.

The fight had been short and fierce, the insurgents losing a hundred killed and the cavalry twenty-eight killed and wounded. Of the leaders in this fight, the gallant Clogstoun died a few years later and was buried at Hingoli. Ahmad Bakhsh Khan lived for many years, as already related. This gallant soldier was also a fine sportsman, and speared many a boar and many a bear in the Deccan jungles. On one occasion he attacked a tiger with no other weapon than a sword, while the spearing of panthers was no uncommon feat. One of his sons was severely hurt in an encounter with a bear, and afterwards died from the effects of his injuries; he himself broke a leg when out pig-sticking, and was afterwards a cripple, but he continued to ride, with one stirrup shortened, almost to the day of his death. So recently as the year 1900, when close on ninety years of age, he accompanied some officers of his regiment out pig-sticking.

Ahmad Bakhsh Khan sleeps with his fathers at Mominabad, where the gallant Davies was also buried. There the sound of the trumpets of Davies' cavalry, ringing out each day across the plain, for close on eighty years sounded his solemn requiem. But the station was abandoned some fourteen years ago and the place is now silent for ever. There, in silence and in peace beneath the shadow of the cypress and the acacia, the gallant dead await the sound of a louder trump.

Among the officers of Irregular Cavalry present at the action of Chichamba was Geoffrey Nightingale, who was not only a fine leader of horse, but a celebrated sportsman, who, perhaps, killed more tigers than any officer of his time. The tiger-hunter has more hold on the imagination of the native of India than any soldier or sportsman. His deeds are recalled and recounted with many additions and exaggerations long after he has passed to the Happy Hunting Grounds. When engaged in the same pursuit of the great beasts of prey, the present writer found Nightingale well-remembered in many a remote hamlet from thirty to forty years after his death. In those forests, seldom visited by any but the wandering sportsman, far from the haunts of man, where no sounds save those of nature strike upon the ear, and where the wild beasts wander in peace over almost untrodden solitudes, the names and the deeds of the mighty hunters who have passed for ever from those regions may be heard at night round the camp-fire on the lips of the jungle men.

Nightingale was said to have been first attracted to the Irregular Cavalry when he was on a shooting expedition in the Deccan. With him was an escort of the Nizam's Horse, and he observed how, on arrival at a village where they were to encamp, the Duffadar set up his spear in the ground as a sign that the place was "held up" until all the supplies he required for the party were produced.

"That," he said, "is the service for me"; and he forthwith joined the force on the first opportunity. Nightingale had not much chance of war service, for the Mutiny was over, and the Deccan had been generally pacified by the efforts of his predecessors. But his name was one to conjure with, and his personality was no doubt remarkable. He died literally in the saddle when in the act of spearing a panther on the Bolarum plain in 1868, and never was an officer more lamented by his men.

Among his contemporaries were many bold leaders of men who fought throughout the campaign in Central India in 1857-58. There were the three brothers Orr, of whom Surgeon John Orr wielded a sabre or the surgeon's knife with equal skill, and generally rode in the charge with the regiment to which he belonged. The elder, William Orr, was Major in command of the Hyderabad Contingent Field Force in the campaign in Malwa in 1857. This detachment formed part of a force which punished the Mehidpur rebels, captured Dhar, fought the battle of Mandesaur, and re-established English influence at Indore after a series of arduous operations. With it also was Captain S. G. G. Orr, of the 3rd Cavalry, a fine swordsman whose personal encounters with individual rebels formed a remarkable and picturesque feature of the operations. The action at Dhar was noteworthy for a fine charge of the 14th Light Dragoons, who took the rebel guns which were then turned on the enemy by sepoy of the 25th Bombay Infantry.

With this force also was Captain H. D. Abbott, who subsequently greatly distinguished himself at the head of a regiment of horse in the campaign under Sir Hugh Rose, who designated the Irregular Cavalry as "the wings of his army." Abbott headed many a charge—at Garhakota, Madanpur Pass, Jhansi and Betwa River, Kunch and Kalpi, and Gwalior, the Irregular Cavalry being in close association with that fine regiment, the 14th Light Dragoons. There, too, rode Dowker in many a fight, including the pursuit, after the capture of Jhansi, of the Rani, the most skilful and boldest of the rebel leaders.

Jhansi was carried by assault on April 3rd, 1858, and that night the intrepid Rani fled northwards in the direction of Bhandar. Next morning the pursuing cavalry of the Hyderabad contingent, under Lieutenant Dowker, passed through the town and found traces of her hasty flight, including an unfinished breakfast. A few years ago the late General Dowker told the present writer that on the other side of the town he came up with and cut up some forty of the enemy, consisting of Rohillas and Bengal Irregular Cavalry. He was gaining fast on the Rani, who with four attendants was escaping on a grey horse, when he was dismounted by a severe wound and would have been almost cut in half but that the blow was turned by the revolver on his hip. He was thus obliged to give up the pursuit.

The Rani herself, of whose career an account is to be found in the *United Service Magazine* for December, 1916,¹ was one of the finest leaders of those times. Brave, energetic, and resourceful, possessing a fortitude which no reverses could shake, and animated by bitter hostility, she was a formidable adversary and the soul of the rebellion in Central India. The rebel cause was not lost until she fell at Gwalior in June, 1858, when, riding at the head of her troops, she was killed in a charge by the 8th Hussars.

Certainly the leaders of Irregular Horse deserve a high place in the annals of India, a country in which the nature of their men and their enemies rendered their operations of peculiar importance and effect.

¹ "Women Warriors in India." By Colonel R. G. Burton..

The deeds of Evan Davies, John Sutherland, Murtaza Yar Jung, Clogstoun, Nightingale and Ahmad Bakhsh Khan, who rode so often through the Deccan at the head of their gallant horsemen, who made great marches and performed great acts of valour, illuminate the page of history and lend a spirit of romance to the story of the campaigns in which they bore so conspicuous a part. The story of those times abounds with glorious episodes in which both officers and men of the Irregular Horse were distinguished for gallantry and devotion to duty. Each village of the Deccan contains its fort, sometimes breached by our guns and assaulted by our troops, now no longer required, and fast crumbling into dust, often with a rusty gun resting upon their tottering battlements, or lying amid the rank undergrowth that springs beneath. Around them the husbandmen till their fields in peace on the plains which once shook with the thunder of guns, the tramp of armed battalions, and the shock of charging cavalry. Only the rough leaden and hammered iron bullets serve to remind them that their predecessors found safety alone behind the walls of the village fort.