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INDIA: ITS FIGHTING RACES AND ITS ARMY.

PART II. OF A LECTURE.

(Continued from p. 1356 of the November JOURNAL, 1901.)

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Medallist U.S. Institution of India.*

Delivered at Gibraltar, 11th and 18th February, 1901,
Before His Excellency General Sir GEORGE WHITE, V.C., G.C.B., etc.,
and Officers and N.C.O.'s of the Garrison.

In my last lecture I told you something of the past history of India and its people before the advent of the European; something of the birth of our Indian Empire and of our struggles for supremacy with the Native chiefs and with the French; something of the commencement, progress, and ultimate strength of our land forces in that country, with a short description of each particular force in so far as the Native troops are concerned (Regular and Irregular), Imperial Service troops, Military Police, Frontier Militia, and Volunteers.

Now we will go rather more into detail as regards the organisation of each arm of the Native Army.

The Native troops in the four commands, viz., Punjab, Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, and those under the Government of India (that is, not including either Military Police, Frontier Militia, or Imperial Service troops), consist briefly of:—

- 41 Regiments of Cavalry and some Irregular Corps, such as the Deoli Irregular Force.
- 4 Field Batteries Artillery (Hyderabad Contingent).
- 10 Mountain Batteries.
- 1 Garrison Battery.
- 3 Battalions Sappers and Miners.
- 127 Battalions Native Infantry and some Irregular troops, such as the Meywar Bhil-Corps.

Being a total of roughly 145,000 (or approximately double the number of European troops in India).

A regiment of Native cavalry consists of 4 squadrons, 1 commandant, 4 squadron commanders, 4 squadron officers, about 4 attached officers, and 1 medical officer, all European; of these, 1 is adjutant and 1 quartermaster, 4 risaldars (Native squadron commanders), of whom 1 is

risaldar major, 4 ressaidars (Native captains), 8 jemadars (Native subalterns), of whom 1 is woordi major (adjutant), 8 kote duffadars (troop sergeant-majors), 56 duffadars (sergeants), including 1 farrier major, and 1 salutri (shoeing smith), 8 trumpeters, 536 sowars (troopers), including 1 assistant salutri, 16 farriers, and 8 camel sowars. Total 625 Natives.

The establishment of a Native mountain battery is 1 commandant, 3 subalterns (of Royal Artillery), 1 subadar (Native captain), 2 jemadars, 1 havildar major, 1 pay and quartermaster havildar, 6 havildars (sergeants), 6 naiks (corporals), 2 trumpeters, 88 gunners, 3 havildars of drivers, 6 naiks of drivers, 138 drivers, 1 farrier, 1 salutri. Total, 260.

The armament of all, except the battery in Burmah, is six 2·5 R.M.L. screw guns. This one battery has a slightly different establishment, and is still armed, I believe, with the old 7-pounder "pop-gun."

European mountain batteries have, in addition to the officers and gunners of Royal Artillery, 148 Native drivers and non-commissioned officers. They are also armed with the 2·5 screw gun, though I understand another mountain gun (a 10-pounder B.L. jointed gun, 400 lbs. cordite charge, M.V. 1,200-1,300 f.s.) is under trial.

A Native infantry battalion consists of 1 commandant, 2 wing commanders, 5 wing officers (of whom 1 is adjutant and 1 quartermaster), about 4 attached officers and 1 medical officer, 8 subadars, 8 jemadars, 40 havildars, 40 naiks, 16 drummers, 800 sipahis (privates).

Native officers are, as a general rule, promoted from the ranks by selection after having passed a qualifying educational test; though now and again, especially when new regiments are raised, commissions are given direct.

I should here add that the increase of British officers all through the Native Army is and has been for some time under consideration, and I believe at last there is really some attention being paid to this all-important question by the home authorities. Your Excellency will doubtless correct me if I am wrong.

His Excellency: "No; you are quite right, at least I hope and believe so. I may add that Lord Roberts himself fully appreciates the necessity of an early increase in the numbers of British officers serving with Native regiments." (His Excellency's remarks repeated to the audience.)¹

A sipahi or sowar enlists for twenty-one years' service with the colours in India or beyond the seas, after which he is entitled to a pension. Subject to certain restrictions he can claim his discharge, or his commanding officer can get rid of him after three years. Lately a system of Reserves has been introduced, but the provisions were, when I left India in '94, more or less recent, and I am not prepared to say how they have worked.² The principle was that a certain percentage

¹ Since this lecture was given I have learnt that the number of officers has been and is still being increased. It varies also in different commands.

² I have since been told that the system is working excellently.

(25 per cent., I think) of sipahis were allowed to return to civil life after between five and twelve years' service with the colours, and form an Active Reserve, which is embodied for a month every year with one or more of the linked regiments; and a Garrison Reserve composed of pensioners, who were not liable to service outside India.¹

I do not think, from what I gathered myself and from what commanding officers have told me, that the sipahis either understood or appreciated at first what the Government was aiming at. The Native's idea of soldiering is that he devotes the best years of his life entirely to it, and I fancy they thought that returning to their villages before their time might give the appearance of having been dismissed the Service. I know I had great difficulty in trying to make my orderly understand it. He was a well-to-do zemindar (landowner), whose father had just died, and his family were anxious for his return to his acres, which his commanding officer and I both persuaded him to do, but without effect.

A sipahi's pay is 9 rupees per mensem. (I see the text-book provided for instruction of British officers gives 7 rupees, but this is wrong.) Calculated at 1s. 4d. to the rupee, this works out at 12s. a month, or about 4½d. a day, out of which, the soldier has to feed himself. He gets a full uniform on joining, and renewals at certain periods. He has to nominally build his own barracks and keep them in repair, for which hutting allowance is drawn; but this is too intricate a question to go into in this lecture. He also draws (what is dearly loved by all Native soldiers) "compensation for dearness of rations," which practically means that anything over 3 rupees 8 annas a month charged to him for rations is refunded. There are certain other deductions from the sipahi's pay, too complicated to go into here, but roughly he clears about 5 rupees (or 6s. 8d.) pay per month. This ration allowance, which has become a necessity owing to the rise in price of food-stuffs all over India, is by way of compensating the soldier for the consequent loss, his pay (when it was 7 rupees) having been originally calculated when *ata* (flour) was at about half its present *nerik* rate. Practically on this system all the Native troops are paid except the Punjab, Bengal, and Bombay Cavalry.

As regards the Native cavalry in the Punjab, Bengal, and Bombay, it is maintained on what is called the *Zilladar* system—that is to say, the sowar on joining finds everything himself: horse, saddlery, uniform, and sword—he also has to pay for feed and upkeep of his horse, the Government supplying him with carbine, lance head, and (I believe) pennon, and for this he draws 32 rupees per month (46s.), and, of course, as in the infantry, compensation for dearness of rations and hutting allowance, which latter is higher than in the infantry, to allow for extra cost of horse lines. This was the old system of raising irregular forces in different *zillas*, and the theory is still maintained, though in practice what it amounts to is that the young sowar recruit (who is as a rule a man of influence or means) pays to the regimental funds on joining a certain fixed sum (about

¹ I have since been told that the Garrison Reserve has lately been done away with.

250 rupees, or £16) and subscribes monthly to the Chunda Fund (about 2 rupees per month in most regiments, I think), and he is supplied with a horse, saddlery, arms, and accoutrements; his uniform, etc., he purchases from the regimental shop.

In rich regiments like the 11th and 19th Bengal Lancers (late Probyn's and Fane's Horse), which made their pile in the China War of 1859-60, the regimental funds are in a very flourishing state, and the men are splendidly mounted; in the 19th Bengal Lancers chiefly on "walers" (Australian horses), though the advantage for these for Native cavalry I have never been able to see, for the country-bred and Arab carry them perfectly well, and on service at a pinch will live on an odd blade of grass or two and a pinch of "bhusa" (chopped straw); while the waler, unless he gets his meals regularly, is apt to fall to pieces. The 11th Bengal Lancers have a horsebreeding farm of their own at Probynabad, and turn out a very good class of "C.B.'s," with a strain of English, Arab, Persian, or Baluch blood in them, and I hear that other regiments have lately started horse farms on the same lines. Other regiments that are not so wealthy buy their remounts from breeders and at horse fairs. The Remount Department of the Government of India owns a certain number of stallions whose services are obtainable by breeders to cover mares.

The late General Parrott started years ago at Karnal a horsebreeding establishment, and should have made it pay well, only he bred too fine, too much of the thoroughbred about his foals, and the farm became more or less a breeding establishment for race horses.

Bazaar funds and grass farms are also sources of income to cavalry regiments, all of which assist in keeping down the expenses of sowars.

As regards uniform, the Native soldier of all arms has a working kit of khaki and a swagger kit for ceremonial purposes, scarlet, blue, green, light blue, drab or yellow, as the case may be (the 1st Bengal Lancers, Skinner's Horse, are the "Yellow Bellies"). Off duty he does not wear uniform, but dons his mufti (desertion is almost unknown), and you will see in the afternoons, strutting through the bazaars, Sikhs, Pathans, Baluchis, and others, in all the splendour of their flowing robes, always magnificent, always tastefully arranged, and always spotlessly clean; for, mind you, the soldier of the Emperor in India is a man with a position to keep up, and be he sipahi or subadar, he considers himself (and rightly too) above the ordinary mortal.

They wear medals in mufti, but not on their breasts, but strung round their necks without the ribbons; and a man who can swagger about with two or three portraits of the Queen on his manly bosom is a "bara bahadur" (*i.e.*, great person) among his countrymen.

On this subject of medals, Egypt has unfortunately started a grievance with the native soldier, and I expect China will intensify it. He doesn't understand our system of medals; you see, for every frontier campaign—and most of their service is on the frontier—after his first he only gets what he calls a "4 anna clasp." A Sikh subadar once, in introducing his young brother to me, who had served in Egypt and on one frontier campaign, said:—"Sahib, he is a very fortunate youth; he possesses three

medals, has only been on service twice, and has never been wounded; whereas I, as your honour knows, have served in five campaigns, have been three times wounded, yet I have but one medal!"

Every British officer in the Staff Corps has to pass both lower and higher standard examinations in Hindustani before he is permanently admitted to the Indian Service. He has also later on to pass in the language used in his regiment, Pukhtu for Pathans and Baluchis, Parvatia for Gurkhas, Tamil for Madrassis, etc., but all words of command are given in English, and all instruction is according to the artillery, infantry, and cavalry drill books, which are published in English on one side and in the vernacular on the other.

I don't think Hindustani proper is a difficult language, especially when one is living in the country. Most Staff Corps candidates manage to pass the Higher Standard in from 6 to 18 months. The only real difficulty is the exercises, English into Hindi and Urdu, which the examiners are very strict about. Officers of European regiments, save those who hope for Staff employ, for which the H.S. is a *sine qua non*, don't as a rule bother themselves about examinations; and their colloquial, though good enough for servants, is at times unwittingly apt to cause offence when they address Native officers or men of position. The British subaltern's Hindustani is all in the imperative; he is surrounded by many a servant to whom he saith go, and he goeth; come, and he cometh. On the rare occasions when "he cometh not" I am afraid the subaltern takes other means than the vernacular to make him come, which is really a thousand pities, though he won't believe it. Now there are various ways of saying the same thing in Hindustani, and one has to be careful when dealing with higher class Natives, e.g., we'll say a Subadar wants to call a sipahi to him, he would say, "Oh, Hari Singh, idha aao"; but to a Jemadar he would say, "Jemadar sahib, hier ana," using probably the infinitive; while to his colonel he would say, "Sahib, hazur ki parwasti, ap ke tashrif hier liye," which, being literally translated, means: "Sir, by your honour's kindness, will you be pleased to bring your highness' presence here?"

A distinguished friend of mine, whom I see here this evening, asked me the other day if I was going to tell you anything about recruiting in this lecture. I will try and do so briefly—I say briefly, because it is a very large and, just now, much discussed subject.

At first sight it would appear that in India there should be no recruiting problem, for, roughly speaking, we want only 160,000 Native troops (*i.e.*, including military police), and we have a population of 300,000,000 to supply them. If we were not so very particular and exclusive as regards our recruits, if the same class of men contented us now as contented Clive and Lake, we could increase our Army fivefold without much difficulty, for the Service of the State has a great charm for the Native. Gradually, however, since the Mutiny, a system has obtained of eliminating from our Army a large percentage of the older fighting-classes and all the lower castes of Hindus; the result is, that we are now making fresh calls on Sikhs, Gurkhas, Pathans, etc., not only for service in India, but also for military police and for Colonial service abroad; and it is

beginning to dawn on the authorities that the whole recruiting system will require more consideration than has hitherto been given it.

Before 1891-92 the system of recruiting was practically twofold: first, by the commanding officer's "Umedwar" book, in which the brothers, sons, and cousins of influential zemindars and men in the regiment were entered for admission so soon as they attained manhood and there were vacancies—a system that still practically does most of the recruiting for some of the favourite regiments; and, secondly, recruiting parties under a havildar, who proceeded to the district whence the regiment recruited and collected suitable youths, had them passed by a doctor, attested at the nearest cantonment magistrate's office, and sent off to the regiment.

Since 1891-2, with the object of more effectually obtaining the best men of the most warlike classes, recruiting depôts have been established at various stations, and special officers have been appointed as recruiting officers for certain districts, e.g.:—

Peshawur	for	Pathans.
Amritzar	„	Sikhs.
Sialkote	„	Dogra's.
Lucknow	„	Hindus.
Gorakhpur	„	Gurkhas, and so on.

Owing to the size of the districts, assistant recruiting officers were later on appointed from regiments to help the recruiting officers.

On the whole, the scheme has worked well, though many commanding officers are still of opinion that the old system was preferable.

There is no difficulty in recruiting just at present, but there might be, especially if from any reason recruiting beyond our frontier became, owing to war, impossible; and this is where the crux of the whole question comes in.

I am not alone in thinking that Army Head Quarters, India, take it too much for granted that *Pax Britannica* has destroyed the fighting instincts of many of the old warlike races of Hindustan. I allude more especially to the Rajputs, Indian Mahomedans and Mahrattas (for I do not believe that the lower classes like the Tamils, and Talingas, of Madras, and the low caste Chumars, coolies, etc., would ever be worth their salt as fighting men). We do not enlist Rajputs, Indian Mahomedans, and Mahrattas in anything like the numbers we could. You remember what I told you in my last lecture of the men who fought for us at Arcot, Palasi, Seringapatam, and Assaye? Well, these are the men whose descendants we now look on as the poorer fighting classes of India, who are supposed to have, to a great extent, turned their swords into ploughshares, though in reality I believe it is the Government itself that is assisting and encouraging the ploughshare by their neglect of these races, and by so seldom when enlisted sending regiments of this class on service. If we fostered the warlike spirit in these races—Sir Power Palmer, the present Commander-in-Chief, has made a good move in this way by his varied selection of regiments for China—there is no reason that I wot of why in time they should not again emulate the deeds of their forebears.

I believe that had we stopped recruiting Sikhs and forbidden Singhism, as Lord Lawrence actually did just before the Mutiny, which order, luckily for us, had to be cancelled because of the Mutiny and the assistance we wanted from the Khalsa, the Sikhs would also have lost their fighting instincts and sunk to the level of an Oudh ryot, whereas we have kept him well to the forefront, with the result that he is the finest fighting man in Asia.

Where I think the point is of such importance is that we are gradually neglecting the classes in India whom, in the event of a big war, we should in all probability have to enlist from to fill up the wastage. For instance, presume a prolonged war with Russia in which we met with reverses to start with across the frontier. This would certainly go badly with us as regards Pathans, Baluchis, and other trans-frontier tribes, and it might close the door of Nepal for Gurkhas. I do not think such a supposition probable; but with the surprises of 1899-1900 fresh in our minds, we should consider possibilities as well as probabilities.

In spite of the extra numbers of Pathans (Afridis, Orakzais, Khuttaks, etc.) now required by us, we have little or no difficulty in obtaining them. A Native officer wrote to me after the Tirah Campaign and said they had more Afridis than ever coming in to enlist, mostly from the tribes we had been fighting a month previously. The reason is that we were successful; had we failed, enlistments would have ceased and desertion begun. It is a curious, but a pleasing fact, that the tribes we have had the hardest knocks with before we conquered them, namely the Sikhs, Gurkhas, Pathans, and Baluchis, are the pick of our Indian Army now.

The classes we now enlist from are as follows:—

Bengal and the Punjab.—Brahmans, Rajputs, Jats, Dogras, Garhwalis, Gurkhas, Sikhs, Hindustani and Punjabi Mahomedans, and Pathans.

Madras.—Tamils, Talingas, other Madrassis, including Mahomedans, and a few Mahrattas.

In the Burmah Battalions.—Punjabis, Dogras, Rajputs, Sikhs, and Gurkhas.

Bombay.—Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, Mers, Mahrattas, Sikhs, Brahuīs, Baluchis, Hazaras, Wazeris, Pathans, and Central India Mahomedans.

Thus briefly you will observe that nearly all the fighting men in all four commands come from the N.W. portion of the continent and from across the borders.

Now I know all these names are a bit puzzling to most of you, as is also the system of Hindu caste, so I will endeavour to throw a little light on some; but I cannot take all of the seventy-eight different divisions in India.

I will take the Hindus first, as they form two-thirds of the population.

When about 1000 B.C. the priests began to obtain a decided ascendancy over the people in India, the population became divided, through their initiative, into four chief castes:—

1. The Brahmans, the priestly caste, the so-called heaven-born, who are noble by birth, whether they be kings or beggars,

and who are revered by the lower castes almost as though they were gods. These are they that wear the Brahmanical thread across their left shoulder.

2. The Kshatriyas, or Rajputs, that is "sons of kings"; also nobles, but a degree lower than Brahmans. They are the fighting class.
3. The Vaisyas, or agriculturists and farmers.
4. The Sudras, or menial class, supposed to be the original inhabitants of the country before the Aryan invasion.

To these must be added yet another class, which is sub-divided into no less than thirty-six castes, which originated in this way. The four original castes before mentioned were by the Institutes of Menu strictly forbidden to inter-marry, and the offspring of a father and mother of different caste, no matter whether his father was a Brahman or a Rajput, became an absolute outcast—a pariah. These outcasts increased enormously, and to remedy this state of affairs (known as *Burran Sunkur*) some Hindu potentate decided, with the approval of the Brahmans, to convert all progeny of mixed unions into another class below that of Vaisyas, but above that of Sudras, which was sub-divided into various useful castes, such as workers in brass, iron, wood, leather, earthenware, carriers of water and hewers of wood, herdsmen, pig-keepers, boatmen, washermen, etc., hence the many castes we know and are accustomed to in India, such as Manjis, Bhistis, Gwalors, Dhobis, Gujars, Ghunaks, Mistris, Chumars, and many others.

The fact of a man being a Brahman or Rajput does not mean nowadays that he is a man of high worldly position: he may be a millionaire, he may be a beggar, he may be a priest, a prince, a tiller of the fields, a clerk, a doorkeeper, or a wandering mendicant; he must not do, however, what the native considers menial work. On the other hand, many rajas and princes are of very low caste. Salivahama, the great Mahratta chief (A.D. 1) was the son of a potter; and the ancestors of both Holkar and Scindia were Sudras, while that of the Gaikwar was, as his name shows, a herdsman.

Of all these many castes of Hindus proper (that is not counting Dogras, Gahwalis, Mahrattas, Jats, and Gurkhas, who are all Hindus by religion), the only ones we now enlist are the two highest, viz., Brahmans and Rajputs. Before 1891 many regiments like the 39th and 40th Bengal Infantry had an admixture (as suggested by the Royal Commission of 1858) of many of the lower castes. The result was not altogether satisfactory. I have myself seen Brahmans of the old 39th Bengal Infantry going off in a body after parade to wash their clothes and persons because they had touched a low caste sipahi at drill. The Brahmans would obey the orders of a low caste Native officer on duty, but more or less sullenly, while in the bazaar the low caste Native officer would make way on the road for his Brahman subordinate.

Regiments like the 2nd, 7th, and 11th Bengal Infantry, now composed entirely of Rajputs, are undoubtedly fine battalions, and have done

good service in Burmah and elsewhere, as I think His Excellency will admit.

The Rajput is a proud, somewhat haughty but brave soldier, and has fought for us from the days of Clive up till now. I do not think the Rajput of to-day, however, is quite so fearless of death as were his forebears, and he is not such a good man under reverses as some other of our fighting troops. His caste is also greatly against his roughing it with other troops on the frontier. You see a high-caste Hindu must strip to the waist and wash ere he can cook and eat his food. I remember in 1891, after three days' incessant rain and snow, a Hindu-stani regiment we had on service with us were in a very poor way, in fact, half starved. Then their water has to be carried in metal vessels instead of the usual "mushk" (if made of cow-hide), and it is only recently that the thousands of brass cooking utensils and lotas that used to be carried for Hindu regiments have been reduced, the Government insisting on men messing together on service. Caste does not fit in with modern active soldiering. However, there is no doubt that after a few weeks of active service their caste prejudices and rules do get rubbed off a bit, for caste, owing to war and civilisation, is undoubtedly dying in India, but by very very slow degrees; still the more we employ Brahmans and Rajputs on service the more we help to eradicate caste prejudices as they affect soldiering.¹ The Rajput, although he has become more of a man of peace during the last half century than heretofore, is a high-bred and courageous soldier; and coming as he does from an ancient race of warlike and chivalrous ancestors, he is a man not to be despised among our soldiery.

In the Jats we have another fighting race (according to Cunningham, half Afghan, half Rajput), of Hindu religion. A Jat, or Jat, means villager, rustic, and they are essentially of the ploughboy type, although they boast that their ancestors were numbered among the 36 Royal races of Rajputana. Not a very quick-witted man, nor should I say a very dashing fighter, though they are courageous and reliable men, and did very well in the Afghan War 1878-80, when the 14th Bengal Lancers (all Jats) distinguished themselves by their very gallant behaviour round Kabul.

The Dogra is a useful fighting man also, he too is of mixed race with Rajput blood in him. A smart, somewhat slightly built, but wiry hill man; rather of a retiring disposition, quiet and well disciplined; Hindu prejudices affect his life to a certain extent, but he casts them off on service with less qualms of conscience than the Rajput or Brahman. He comes from the neighbourhood of Sialkote and Jammu. We have enlisted Dogras lately more than heretofore, a brave race, and they can fight well.

I remember the first time a Dogra regiment went on service, and the first fight they ever had. I allude to the attack on our advanced post at Ghazikote in 1891, and a good fight they made of it too, though things

¹ I have since been told that in China they did to a wonderful extent throw off their caste prejudices.

got a bit mixed at times round the mosque as it was pitch-dark and hard to distinguish friend from foe. Our telephone communication from headquarters to this post was cut by the enemy, and the G.O.C. sent me when the firing became heavy to see what was up. When morning dawned we collected around the mosque alone 30 bodies of the enemy (all Chagarzai Ghazis) and more were left on the line of their retreat. Our losses, I'm sorry to say, included a very fine soldier, one of their most promising jemadars. There were no less than five Orders of Merit bestowed on the regiment in connection with this post and its defence, and I think they were all well won; for, although practically driven in by overwhelming numbers, they stuck to their post and eventually cleared the village.

The Mahratta is a mixture of Scythian, Aryan, and aboriginal blood. He is also a Hindu with Hindu castes, but is, or rather, I should say, has been, a nation to himself, a nation that at one time ruled the greater part of India. Now, Kolhapur, in the Deccan, is the only remaining pure Mahratta State in India, though Holkar, Scindia, and the Gaikwar are all Mahratta chiefs. The Mahratta is by nature a freebooter of predatory habits, but a fine soldier withal, and still inherits the equestrian aptitude of his forebears of the famous "Mahratta Horse," whose proud boast it used to be that they had watered their steeds at every river in India.

Now let us take a man you all hear most of, namely, the Gurkha, who, as you know, is recruited in Nepal. What is he? Well, to look at, you would say he was a curious admixture of Tartar, Chinese, and Hindustani. He himself will tell you that he is of pure Rajput descent, and can trace his ancestry to the old Rajput princes of Oudipur. As a matter of fact, I and many others do not believe him. Undoubtedly the Gurkhas (a Rajput race), who were driven out of India by the Mogul Empire, and who eventually, under Purthi Narain, conquered bit by bit the whole of Nepal, were of Hindu descent; but the race of Gurkhas, as we now know them, have a large percentage of Mongolian blood in their veins. Of the races in Nepal, the Newars, Bhotjas, and Lepchas adhere to the Buddhist religion, while the Magars and Gurungs profess Hinduism, though in reality it is much mixed with Buddhism. It is the last two castes we enlist under the general name of Gurkhas.

The Gurkha is, as you know, a fine, cool-headed fighter, a short, sturdy hill-man with a ready smile and cheerful countenance, not tied down with over much consideration for the rules and regulations of his Rajput ancestors. He is the "Greenjacket" of the Indian Army, and is clothed like our rifle battalions, in dark green with black belts. Not quick at learning, and to those who know him not he appears at times dull, stupid, and phlegmatic, but he has ever been in the forefront of the Empire's battles, and has never failed to cover himself with glory and gore.

He is a bit of a savage at heart, and when his fighting blood is up he combines a good deal of cruelty with his bravery, though, do what you will, you cannot persuade him to see the error of his ways. In that pestilential country, Lushai, in 1889, owing to the dense undergrowth, the tribesmen managed at times to stalk up at night and stealthily

knife a sentry or two of our Native troops or a follower who had perhaps strayed from the stockade. There were no European troops employed up in those hills (N.E. Frontier) owing to the prevalence of malaria in its worst form. The Lushai's mania was head-hunting, so one night the General Officer Commanding requested his Staff officer to sound the officer commanding Gurkha battalion as to the advisability of sending out a Shikar party of Gurkhas to try and catch or kill the head-hunters. A smart havildar and three sipahis were selected; they said they would prefer to leave their rifles behind, and took only their kukris. At 4 the next morning the Staff officer was awoke and told that a Gurkha havildar wished to see him. The non-commissioned officer was beaming all over; "bahut atcha shikar, sahib," he said, adding with a grin that his colone sahib had sent him, and behind him were three smiling Gurkhas with two ghastly Lushai heads in a blanket. No one could well object; they had after all only done their job rather satisfactorily; but the officer wished the sportsman had left his trophies down the khud; anyhow, he was told to bury his "bag" before sunrise and to say nothing about it; luckily we were not much troubled with newspaper correspondents up there.¹

The Garhwali is a hill-man from Garhwal in Kumaon, near akin to the Gurkha, in fact Kumaon, until after General Ochterloni's defeat of the Gurkhas in 1815 was part and parcel of Nepal. The 39th Bengal Infantry, which used to be a mixed Hindustani regiment when I knew them at Jhansi in 1888, are now a class regiment of Garhwalis. They are good men, I'm told, but I know little or nothing about them. I dare say if some of you met a Garhwali you would very likely mistake him for a Gurkha, as they are not unlike and wear the same sort of pork-pie caps.

From Baluchistan we obtain both Brahuïs and Baluchis, both tribes being Sunni (orthodox) Mahomedans. The Sheea are the "heterodox," except of course to themselves, when they are the only "orthodox" section. To put it briefly, Sunni Mahomedans recognise the sayings (sunna) of Mahomed as supplementary to the Koran, and Abu Bekir, the father-in-law of the Prophet as Khalif in preference to Omar and Ali, the latter of whom married Fatima, daughter of Mahomed, and is recognised as a Khalif by the Sheeas. Hussin and Ali, who were murdered 680 A.D., were the sons of Ali and Fatima. The Brahuïs are the dominant and aboriginal race, hospitable and generous; the Baluchis are nomadic freebooters, but make the best soldiers of the two. The Baluchis are of mixed descent, with a good deal of Tartar and Jewish blood in their veins, and are of finer features and taller than the Brahuïs. They are brave good fighters; we know how well they fought against us

¹ It is only right, in justice to the gallant Gurkha, that I should add that an old friend of mine who has served for many years in a Gurkha regiment, on looking over this lecture, remarked as follows:—"I know it is generally believed that the Gurkha is a fierce devil when his blood is up, but after 23 years' service with them I have formed a very different opinion. I have heard about those 'heads' and other stories like it but I don't think the race can be judged by such."

in the Scinde War, and Sir Charles Napier was eulogistic as to their fearless bravery at Meancee.

Both tribes wear their hair long, often done in curls, and in their native attire, with skull cap, calico tunic, and full trousers fastened at the ankle, they present a fine picturesque and barbaric appearance, and would be invaluable as a troop of 40 thieves in a pantomime of Ali Baba.

Across the frontier only he who speaks Pukhtu is a Pathan (Paythan, as the British soldier calls him), be he Afridi, Orakzai, Khuttak or what not, though generally speaking every Afghan is called a Pathan. This is a full-length portrait of an Afridi Pathan (portrait exhibited here by lecturer), a piper of the 40th (Bengal Infantry) Pathans, a regiment which was converted in 1891 from a mixed Hindu regiment into a class regiment of (all) Pathans, as which it still figures in the Indian Army List, but which I believe has been again quite lately made into a class company regiment of Pathans, Sikhs, Punjab Mahomedans, and Dogras. I mention this, as it is somewhat interesting when considered along with my remarks in my first lecture on the resuscitation in 1891 of class regiments and the diverse opinions on the measure.¹

This piper is, I consider, a typical Afridi. You'll observe his "kiss-me-quick" locks, not unlike those of an Espada of the Ring. The Afridis are first-rate pipers. All wild hill-men, you know, play the pipes, be they Pathans, Gurkhas, or Cameron lads, though their instruments vary from the Highland pipes of Scotland with a bass and two tenor drones, to similar pipes with only one bass drone down to the Eastern "sernai." The music of all is equally sweet and hard to distinguish. I have known Scotsmen scoff at this notion; but then I have known them so often mistake one for the other, that I fancy it must be the case; some of the Afghan melodies are not unlike those with which the Cameron lads soothe our troubled spirits here, though really, without chaff, the Afghan air (the polite name of which is "zakhmi dil," the "wounded heart") runs some of Scotland's sweetest melodies very close.

The Pathan is also a Sunni Mahomedan, but his religion is fanatical to a degree, and when he swears himself as a "Ghazi" whose sole aim is extermination of the Kafir (we are the Kafirs generally), I think the material form of his belief greatly assists him in meeting death so fearlessly, for the Mullah tells him that the faithful who die fighting for the cause are taken straight to heaven, where their immediate wants are attended to by at least 30 beautiful maidens.

It has been said of the Pathan that "nothing is finer than his physique, nothing worse than his morals," but nevertheless he is undoubtedly a fine soldier, though you cannot trust him very far out of sight, and he requires a firm hand over him. He loves fighting, and has fought for us right well on several occasions, though he has been known

¹ Since this lecture was given I have been told with reference to my remarks on purely class regiments as re-organised in 1891 that "a further change is now in operation: several class regiments composed since 1891 of classes that have proved unsuitable for that formation are being re-organised as class double-company regiments of different races," this therefore bears out my remarks on the subject.

to desert and betray his employer on service more than once. You all remember the Peiwar Kotal incident; I myself know of more than one. Still, these are but the black sheep of the fold, and we must not tar them all with the same brush, for as a rule the Pathan has been true to his salt (rimak halal), even when fighting against his own kith and kin on our behalf—a rather high test, you must admit, even for the most mercenary of soldiers. You've probably heard the story, a true one, of the sipahi on an advanced post being told by his British officer to try and pick off a Pathan behind a rock who was doing good execution with his rifle, and who replied, "Sahib, I've had several shots, but cannot hit him. I think it must be kismet. The man is my brother; but I'll try again."

Once out with my escort, as Field Intelligence officer, we had a parley with the enemy. The uncle of a Naik of my party happened to be the enemy's envoy. Two hours after they were shooting at each other.

The Afridi Jirgas (councils) that came in during the Tirah War to try and make better terms, generally numbered at least one greybeard with a medal or two of the Queen's round his neck, as there were lots of old soldiers fighting against us in '97; for although while in our active pay they will be faithful to their salt, when their time is up and they retire to the mountain fastnesses, they will throw in their lot with the tribesmen against the infidel, though it must be admitted that their influence at tribal councils has often been in favour of their old masters.

It used to be said by our neighbours here in Spain that "a contra-bandista of Andalusia is unworthy of the name unless he can conceal himself behind a brick." Well, the same may be said of the Pathan, only with him it must be a pebble or a blade of grass; and many a British sentry on the frontier has felt the Afghan blade between his shoulders ere he knew the snake-like form of his foe was within 100 yards of him.

As a fighter, when things go well, when "forward" is the word, the Pathan has all the *elan* of a French soldier of the First Empire, all the courage of a Tamerlane, the agility of a cat, and the fierceness of a tiger; but when things are not so rosy—well, there are some other races I prefer.

In addition to these classes and tribes, we have the Mahomedans of all India (the Mahomedan population of India proper is fifty-seven millions), commonly divided as regards recruiting into divisions such as Punjabi Mahomedans, Hindustani Mahomedans, Rajput Mahomedans, Madrassi Mahomedans, Deccani Mahomedans, etc.; the descendants of Afghan and Mogul invaders and of those Hindus who, during the Mogul period, embraced Mahomedanism. In religion akin to their co-religionists trans-frontier, but by no means so fanatical, while Hindu customs have to a certain degree permeated their lives. Good soldiers they make, intelligent and trustworthy. Perhaps the Punjabi Mahomedans are preferred to those of Hindustan and down country as being the braver. Few regiments have better fighting records than those containing Punjabi Mahomedans, and certainly *Pax Britannica* has not eradicated

the fighting instincts of the followers of the Prophet in the Land of the Five Rivers. The Punjabi Mahomedan still holds his own with the best of our Asian fighting men, while as regards the other Mahomedans of India, though they are undoubtedly good, smart, clean, and reliable fighting men, I think they have lost some of the dash of their ancestors, which dash, I am of opinion, could be brought back—it is still in the blood—if we enlisted and employed on active service more of the race.

I have left to the last what I consider the first of our fighting men in Asia—the Sikh, the type of all that is noblest and best in a soldier and a gentleman. No finer foe ever crossed swords with British soldier than he of the Army of the Khalsa, and no better fighter has ever died for his Empress than the Sikh who affixes the title of “singh” (soldier) to his name.¹

The Mahzubi (commonly called Muzbi) Sikhs, are a lower class of Sikh, descendants of Mahomedan and low caste Hindu converts. They are sound good fighters and excellent pioneers. The 23rd Bengal Infantry (Pioneers) are composed entirely of Mahzubi Sikhs—but the mainstay of our Indian Army are the Sikhs proper.

Now, some of you may ask, What is a Sikh? (“Sik” is the correct pronunciation). I will tell you. A Sikh is, as the term implies, one who learns, a disciple or follower. They are the descendants of those who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries A.D. followed the reformed Hindu religion as preached by Nanak, Govind Singh, and others. A Sikh, though born of Sikh parents, is not actually a “Sikh” himself until he has taken the “pahul.”²

Nanak was born in 1469. He was a Hindu of the once warlike Katri caste. Like Buddha of old, and Rama Chund of Benares, he preached the true religion of Brahma and aimed at the emancipation of the people from priestcraft and idolatry, and the worship of one invisible God. He was followed by many other Gurus (teachers), but it was left to Govind Singh (son of Teg Bahadur Singh, who was murdered by Aurungzebe, the Mogal Emperor) to form the Sikhs into a real commonwealth (Khalsa) about 1680, and they remained a nation by themselves, with head-quarters first at Amritsar, then at Lahore, until the “*Khalsa* of the Lion of the Punjab” eventually gave way to the Queen of England, after the battles of Chillianwalla and Gujrat, in the second Sikh War of 1849.

¹ *Singh* means literally a “lion,” and metaphorically a “champion” or “warrior.”

² “*Pahul*” means literally a ‘gate,’ a ‘door,’ and thence ‘initiation.’ The essentials of the *Pahul* are that five Sikhs at least should be assembled, and it is generally arranged that one of the number is of some religious repute. Some sugar and water are stirred together in a vessel of any kind, commonly with a two-edged dagger, but any iron weapon will answer. The novice stands with hands joined in an attitude of humility and supplication, and he repeats after the Elder the main Articles of his Faith. Some of the water is sprinkled on the face and person and he drinks the remainder and exclaims ‘*Wah Guru*.’ Sikhs are not ordinarily initiated until they reach the age of discrimination, and remembrance, or about seven years old.”—CUNNINGHAM.

At Lahore we now have a Chief's College, which in my time was under the supervision of Sir Benjamin Bromhead, a fine old soldier, who had been badly wounded on our frontier, and that is where the youths of the Sikh aristocracy are educated nowadays.

It was Govind Singh who abolished caste in the *Khalsa*¹ (Sikh community). It was he who first instituted the germ of the Sikh Army which later, under Jassa Singh, in 1748, became such a power in the Punjab. It was he who wrote the Tankha Nameh, or Book of Rules, which instituted the bathing pilgrimages to the Sacred Tank at Amritsar, where the Golden Temple still stands, the reverence of the Grunth (or Sikh Bible), which is still carried with pomp and ceremony in all Sikh regiments; the wearing of uncut hair, the frequent combing and cleansing of the same, the wearing of steel on the person (you may have noticed the steel representation of a quoit on or around the pugris of Sikh infantry battalions, which quoit used to be an implement of war, and the throwing of which is still an event at Sikh games); the forbidding of the use of snuff, tobacco, and spirits, and the practice of charity. 1764 saw the consolidation of the Sikh power, and in 1799 Runjit Singh reigned at Lahore; he died in 1839.

Thus you will see that, unlike though they seem to the Hindus of India, the Sikhs are but a young nation, but a recent offspring from the Hindu religion, though as warriors and chiefs they are far far above the caste-ridden followers of the unreformed Hindu religion.

Splendid horsemen as were the old Sikh horse of the forties, good shots, of fine features and clean proportions, tall and active, proud, but not overbearingly so like the Rajput or Brahman (you saw two good specimens of the Sikh soldiery in the Duffadars who accompanied the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, on his visit here); they are, I think (not excepting even Gurkhas), *facile princeps* of our Indian troops. Who is there who has fought alongside the Sikh who does not admire his sterling qualities? Personally, I myself have been in a rather hot corner with Sikhs, and my admiration for them is immense.

Who has not heard of the little garrison of Sikhs on the Samana, who fought bravely on until but one was left to guard the bodies of his comrades, the flag of Great Britain, and the honour of his race, when he himself fell, the last of that little band of heroes?

Who has not heard of the wounded Sikh subadar at Chitral, who in the darkest moments, when relief seemed almost impossible, cheered up the rest with the remark that "Although the Sirkar's arm was slow in moving, it was far-reaching and sure," and fought on bravely in spite of his wounds, until he dropped from sheer exhaustion?

¹ *Khalsa* or *Khalsa* is of Arabic derivation and has such original and secondary meanings as "pure," "special," "free."

"Khatiri, Brahman, Sudra, Veisya, whoever remembers the name of God, who worships Him always, etc., shall attain salvation."—*Ram Das, Bilawul*.

"The four races shall be one,
All shall call on the Guru."

—*Govind in Rahet Nameh*.

To see a Sikh at his best one should see the last company of a rear guard (I'm thinking of a Sikh battalion on the frontier) in rather a tight place, and one can but admire their unswerving discipline, devotion, and fearlessness.

Were I to tell you all I know about the *K'halsa* and its warrior disciples, I should go far beyond the limits of my lecture, for, to me, he is the ideal of a fighting man, a kind courtly gentleman, brave to a fault, and no matter whether the war trumpet rings with seeming sounds of defeat or with clarion notes of victory, the Sikh has ever been the same, true as the steel he wears, true to his officers, true to his Empress, true to the faith of his fathers, aye, true, true till death !

So much for the characteristics of some of the fighting races of our Indian Army. There is, however, one more powerful and valuable characteristic of all Native soldiers that I must mention, and that is their unbounded admiration for and belief in their British officers; and I am not surprised. The Staff Corps officer is as fine an example of a British officer as can be found anywhere; his bringing up is perhaps better than ours in the British service (where we are only now beginning to get rid of the poisonous system of apron strings), for he, from his youth upwards, has to act on his own, oftentimes in matters of grave importance; how well he has done so, even in the case of subalterns suddenly called to command their regiments on an isolated post on service, events of recent history tell us; and it is only proof of the soundness of the Native soldier's admiration for his British leader.

My lecture must now close. I had hoped to tell you something of the training of this Army and the system of district concentrations, and camps of exercise; something of Staff work in India in peace and war, and something of the system of transport, which is not wholly without interest; but I have already monopolised more of your time than I should have, and so I will now close. Thanking Your Excellency and the officers and non-commissioned officers for their kindly attention to my remarks, and hoping that I may have been instrumental in some small way in instilling into some of you a still greater interest in India, our chief (I was almost saying our only real) training ground, its people, its fighting races, and its modern Army—an Army that has under successive chiefs been kept up to such a state of efficiency and preparedness that it has never failed us yet, nor, please God, will it ever do so; but, when the blast of war again blows in our ears, whether a hurricane from off the shores of civilisation or a breezy zephyr from the recesses of our rugged borderland, it will be found ready and strong as ever to uphold the honour and glory of the Empire, and the noblest traditions of the Army in India.

“GOD SAVE OUR KING THE EMPEROR.”