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A LETTER
ON THE
INDIAN ARMY,

ADDRESSED TO THE MOST NOBLE THE
MARQUESS OF TWEEDDALE,

MAY 1842,

WITH NOTES APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT TIME,

BY
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AUTHOR OF "INDIA AND EUROPE COMPARED."

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P R E F A C E.

At a moment like the present, when India is the chief object of interest, and the reorganization of the Native Army of India becomes a subject of vital importance, it has occurred to me that I could not serve the public more efficiently than by publishing the following letter on the character of the Native Armies of India in the year 1842, addressed to the Right Honourable the Marquess of Tweeddale, on the occasion of his proceeding to Madras as Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

ORIENTAL CLUB,
30th Nov. 1857.



TO THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUESS OF TWEEDDALE,
K.T. AND G.C.B.,
GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF MADRAS.

MY LORD,

THE substance of the following communication was put into shape six years ago, on my return from India. It consists of notes made from authentic documents, which I procured before I left Madras in 1835, and the observations and opinions it contains are the result of an experience of more than forty years in the Indian Army, of which nearly thirty-three were spent in the East.

The late Sir John Malcolm, Major Badenach, and Captain Williams, have at various times described the composition of that army; and the instructive and entertaining pages of Orme give a lively picture of its history.—To understand the subject of which I am about to treat, it is necessary to take a cursory view from those materials of the early time, when the native army of India was formed, in order to comprehend the nature of the changes which have since taken place, and have brought it to its present state.—I propose, therefore, compressing, into as narrow a compass as possible, such observations on this subject, as do not appear on the records of the evidence taken in 1832, before the House of Commons, to render more complete that body of important and useful information.

Orme tells us, that, in the year 1746, the French brought a small body of disciplined natives of India into the field, in the siege of Fort St. David, at Cuddalore; and thus describes

them:—"The Sepoys are formed into companies and battalions, commanded by officers of their own nation and religion." In the next page he remarks that, "At this time the English had not adopted the idea of training the Indian Natives in the European discipline, notwithstanding the French had set the example, by raising four or five companies of Sepoys at Pondicherry." Some, however, were entertained in the latter end of that year for the siege of Madras, which were placed under the command of European officers. This measure shortly after led to the formation of regular corps. In the month of June, 1747, five independent companies, of 100 men each, from the western side of India, arrived at Cuddalore, one of which was raised at Bombay, and the four others at Tellicherry. The latter, commanded by a Mahomedan officer, (or, as Orme calls him, a *Moor*), entertained a design to desert to the French in 1748, but the plot being discovered, he was sentenced, together with ten other native officers, to be banished to the Island of St. Helena, where, in the end, they destroyed themselves out of despair.

The capture of Madras by the French, in 1748, and the removal of the Nabob to Trichinopoly, the only position, (excepting Fort St. David), then in the hands of the English, led to the necessity for supplying troops out of the natives of the country.* The first Sepoys embodied on the Madras establishment are stated "to have been either Mahomedans or Hindûs of very high caste, the latter being chiefly Rajpûts." This description must allude to the officers, as Rajpûts in sufficient number could scarcely have been procured in the Madras provinces to form any number of corps. These new levies when brought into action were, for the most part, kept in the rear at first as a reserve, both by the French and the English; but "they soon brought themselves into esteem." At the siege of Madura, in February, 1751, "they stormed with the Europeans, and went to the attack with as much spirit as them." The breach was bravely defended, and they sustained

* Each company consisted of three native Officers, a Captain termed Subadar, three Subalterns termed Jemadars, a Serjeant termed Havildar, and a Corporal termed Naig to every ten men or squad, and ten such squads formed a Company.

a "loss of ninety men and four of their captains, (Subadars,) " who were desperately wounded ;" when Captain Cope, who commanded the storm, felt it right to desist, and to raise the siege.

In the month of August in the same year (1751), Captain (afterwards Lord) Clive, with 303 Sepoys, and 200 Europeans, occupied Arcot, and defended it by incredible exertions ; and in the month of May, 1752, we find Clive at Trichinopoly ; from whence he marched with 300 Europeans, and 1,000 Sepoys, to attack the French General D'Auteuil at Golconda. On this occasion, says Orme, " the Sepoys outmarched the Europeans, " and after driving the French out of their post *at the point of the bayonet*, decided the action before the arrival of the " Europeans."

In the year 1753 one Hussein Ally is mentioned as Commander-in-chief of all the French disciplined Sepoys ; and is found at the head of an Army. This officer had already received a gold medal from the King of France for his gallantry.

In the year 1754 Mahomed Issoof (or Yusuf) is styled by Orme, Commander of the English Sepoys ; and in 1755 he was detached to the south from Trichinopoly in command of an army consisting of some *Europeans* and 500 Sepoys, where he was reinforced by 100 *more Europeans*. Colonel Heron subsequently marched to the south, and co-operated with him, but Mahomed Yusuf retained his separate command. In the end of the same year, we find a Subadar, entitled Jemal Saheb, left at Madura, in command of 1,000 Sepoys.

At this period (1755) the Madras establishment comprised 2,000 European Infantry, and 14 battalions of Sepoys, amounting to 10,000 men, each battalion had one native Commandant and an Adjutant, both mounted officers, besides one Subadar, to each company. In the field a European Commandant (usually a Captain), and several Serjeants, were attached ; one to each company, not to command it, but for the purpose of explaining the orders of the European Commandant, and of directing the movements of the corps, the internal discipline and economy of companies being confided to the native officers.

In the year 1756, the Madras Army comprised nearly all the British troops in India. There were a few independent companies of natives belonging to the Bombay Establishment; but in Bengal there were no regular troops, excepting one corps of 500 men, denominated Europeans, but which included several native Portuguese and Caffres. This body was maintained solely to protect the factory on the Hûgly. At this crisis Calcutta was attacked by Siraj-ud-Dowla, and 2,000 Buxaries (irregular matchlock men) were raised, but they were insufficient to defend the place, which fell, together with all the British territory in that quarter, into the hands of the Nabob Siraj-ud-Dowla.

At this important juncture Colonel Clive, with 500 European soldiers, two battalions of Madras Sepoys, and one Bombay independent Company, amounting in all to 1,500 natives, embarked from Madras and re-took Calcutta in January, 1757; shortly after which he began to raise native troops in Bengal. These were supplied with European officers from the Madras detachment, on the spot, and subsequently by others from the same establishment. By the month of June one of these corps (late the 2d battalion, 12th regiment) was ready to take the field, and joined the army which fought and gained the Battle of Plassey. This army consisted of Europeans from

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--|
| Madras | 500 | |
| Mixed corps from Calcutta | 400 | |
| | 900 | |
| Two Madras battalions and one Com- } pany of Bombay Sepoys | 1,400 | |
| One Bengal battalion | 700 | |
| | 2,100 | |
| Total | 3,000 | |

These Madras Sepoys continued in Bengal till 1759, when they were sent back to aid in the capture of Masulipatam.

In the latter end of 1758, the fort of Madras, which had been long before restored to the English, and had since been properly fortified, was besieged by the Conte De Lally, who brought with him all the French troops he could muster. On this occasion, Mahomed Yusuf, Commandant, was detached

from Trichinopoly, by Captain Richard Smith, with a force of 2,000 Sepoys, expecting to be aided by 1,000 Maratta Cavalry from Tanjore. In the event of this body not joining him he was authorised to raise a corps of 500 horse for the British service, which he was eventually compelled to do. On the 1st of December, 1758, he besieged and took the fort of Elvasanore from a French garrison commanded by Lieutenant Dumesnil; and on the 6th of the same month, he attacked and carried by storm the fortified pagoda of Tricolore; on which occasion he lost 75 men killed and wounded. From Tricolore he proceeded towards Madras, laying waste all the French territory on his route till he reached Chingleput, where he arrived on Christmas day, 1751, at the head of three battalions of Sepoys, and 1,000 Cavalry, chiefly enlisted by himself on the march. He was reinforced at Chingleput by two more battalions, which had been sent to join him; making his command altogether 3,500 Sepoy Infantry, besides Cavalry. Capton Preston, the Commandant of that station, jealous that so fine a force should be under a native officer, joined it with 80 Europeans, 600 Sepoys, and two brass three-pounders from the garrison. The Madras government, however, permitted Mahomed Yusuf to retain his command separate, in co-operation with Captain Preston; and shortly after Major Calliaud, having arrived from Trichinopoly, assumed charge of the whole at the Mount, where he was joined by the Prince Mahomed Abdul Wahab, the brother of the Nabob Mahomed Ali Khan.

During the siege of Madras, Mahomed Yusuf made two or three vigorous attacks on the French army in the suburbs, while Jemal Sahib who had been recalled from the South and was now within the fort, headed two successful sallies from the garrison. The one on the 16th, and the other on the 21st of December. On the latter occasion he drove the French before him out of their trenches, and spiked two guns. The siege of Madras was at length raised on the 15th of February, 1759, after a duration of forty-two days open trenches.—An example of the character of Mahomed Yusuf is afforded by his conduct in the capture of Conjeveram. This town was defended for the French by one Muzafar Beg, a native Commandant, who had deserted from the English, and whose name was held in execration by

the English Sepoys on account of his perfidy. The army destined to attack Conjeveram consisted of 1,150 Europeans, and several battalions of Sepoys, the whole under the command of Major Brereton. One of the two attacks made on the place was conducted by Mahomed Yusuf, which succeeded ; while that under Major Brereton failed. The Commandant Muzafar Beg was taken prisoner, and was about to be carried to Major Brereton, when Mahomed Yusuf meeting the party escorting him, and apprehensive that a pardon might be extended towards him, severed his head from his body on the spot with a single stroke of his scimitar, saying. " These are the only terms to which a traitor is entitled."

In the storming of the fort of Masulipatam, in the same year, Colonel Ford, who brought back with him the two battalions of Madras Sepoys from Bengal, speaks in the highest terms of their bravery. In 1760, Colonel Coote assumed charge of the Madras army ; and in his report of the conduct of the troops at the taking of Permacoil, states, " the Sepoys behaved equally well with the Europeans." On that occasion three native officers were killed while leading the Sepoys to the storm ; and their loss on that day amounted to 110 killed and wounded out of 300. Bahvani Sing Subadar, who was particularly distinguished, received a gold medal for his conduct.

Up to this time the native troops had been commanded by European officers attached to them only on particular occasions ; but their whole internal discipline was left to the native officers. In 1766, the Madras Sepoys were embodied into battalions of 1,000 strong, subdivided into 10 companies ; and one European commander, with two subordinate officers, were selected and appointed to each corps. In 1770, this number was increased to 28,000 men, and formed the native infantry which fought against Hyder, under Sir Eyre Coote.

The first corps of Cavalry raised at Madras was a regiment formed into troops under Sir Henry Cosby, in 1768 ; and to which were attached other European officers. These troops were in the service of the Nabob of Arcot, and their numbers were gradually increased, till in the war with Hyder, which broke out in 1780, they amounted to 2,000 men. They served with great credit during that war, which terminated in 1784,

when the Nabob's Cavalry were permanently transferred to the Company's service.

Sir John Malcolm has passed a very high and well-merited eulogium on this excellent body of troops, and has given examples of the distinguished character of many of their native officers, all of whom had entered the service of the Nabob, and were in it when the corps was transferred to the Company. The native officers were gentlemen of family and education, and realized the expectation which might have been formed of persons of that class. It is at this period the late Sir John Malcolm seems to think the native army of Madras had attained its highest state of efficiency. The chivalrous conduct of its native officers, the attachment of the men to their leaders, their patience under fatigue and hunger, their devotion to their European officers, and their fidelity to the state when imprisoned and cruelly treated by the ruler of Mysore—all tend to throw a lustre over the character of these faithful soldiers.

The armies of Bengal and Bombay kept pace with those of Madras. The former army, in 1765, consisted of 19 battalions of 1,000 men each, formed into ten companies, of which those on the flanks were denominated grenadiers. The native officers consisted of a Commandant and an Adjutant, mounted; and a Subadar and three Jemadars to each company. To every battalion were attached three select European officers, one to command, and two subordinates as staff. The Army was separated into legions or divisions, styled Brigades, each consisting of

- 1 troop of Native Cavalry,
- 1 company of European Artillery,
- 1 battalion of European Infantry
- 7 battalions of Native Infantry.*

In 1773, four European regimental officers were attached to every battalion. In 1781, the battalions were subdivided, and two formed a regiment; each regiment was commanded by a Major, each battalion by a Captain, and each company by a

* Some such disposition of the Indian Army, with at least double the number of Europeans, might, with a well regulated militia or police like that of Ireland, be advantageously adopted at the present period.

European subaltern *selected* from the whole body of officers, who rose in line. In 1783, the appellation of regiment was discontinued, the rank of Major was abolished, the former organization was again reverted to, and one European subaltern officer was *selected* to command each company.

The Bombay Army consisted originally of independent companies commanded by Subadars raised for service at Madras. They reached Cuddalore, as we have seen, in 1747; and one of these companies proceeded to Calcutta, and fought at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Between that period and 1780, the Bombay Army had been so increased that at the latter period it consisted of 15 battalions formed into companies, as at the other presidencies. In 1783, this army was reduced to six battalions, and was on all occasions distinguished for its gallantry and attachment to its European officers. Subsequent to the termination of the war with Hyder, in 1784, gradual changes took place in the constitution of the native army, on which I shall proceed to dilate; but as my information is more complete with regard to that of Madras, I shall treat more particularly of the effect of those changes on that body. Up to that time the discipline of the Sepoy army had been entrusted principally to its native officers, having only three Europeans—that is to say, a commanding officer and two staff to each corps, with only a few serjeants serving under the native officers, to facilitate communication with the European commander and his staff; but the constitution of the native army remained essentially unchanged. It was, in effect, the same as when first formed; improved only in its discipline and regularity. It consisted of the two classes of which all armies to be effective must be, and always have been composed:—one class derived from the better order of society, accustomed to command the services of domestics and underlings; and the other class drawn from the lower grades, who are from infancy habituated to obedience, and taught to respect the upper class on whom they are dependent.

The former class composed those officers which are the subject of our admiration in the narratives of Orme, and in the relation of the late Sir John Malcolm; to the accuracy of whose testimony there are still living witnesses. The organi-

zation of our native army differed little from that of the native Princes, which is preserved in all those distinguished bodies of irregular cavalry which were, and still continue, in our service. In this I include those corps in the service of native powers, commanded by European officers drawn from our regular army. The native troops thus organized have occasionally performed feats surpassed by no soldiers of their class in the world.

Subsequent to 1784, more Europeans were attached to native regiments; and the respectability and consequence of the native officers began to be encroached on;—so that in the next war against Tippoo, which lasted from 1790 to 1793, the Sepoys were scarcely ever employed but under European officers. The war, too, was carried on with a greater body of European troops, and Sir John Malcolm, in his Political History of India, adverting to the altered state of the Sepoy force, observes, “The native army, though improved in discipline, had in some degree become a secondary one; and the pride of those who composed it was lowered.” In a subsequent part of the same work he alludes to the more serious alteration which was carried into effect at Madras, only in 1798, consequent on the re-organization of the Indian army in 1796, and says, “The whole form of the army was changed. Instead of a single battalion commanded by a Captain who was selected from the Company’s European regiments, and a subaltern to each company, regiments were formed of two battalions, to which officers were appointed of the same rank, and nearly the same number, as to one (battalion) in the service of His Majesty.” In an essay on the native army, published in the Quarterly Review, in 1818, it is remarked—“The good effects of this change, as far as related to the temper and attachment of the native army at Fort St. George, have been questioned by an officer of that establishment, who was, from local experience, well qualified to judge.”

The most material change in the new arrangement consisted in the mode of filling up vacancies among the European officers. These were no longer the élite of the Army, *selected* for their qualifications; but promotion went on in regimental gradation, and the completion of casualties took place by the nomination of Cadets, direct from England, who succeeded to

the command of companies, as vacancies among the other European officers occurred. The patronage and authority of the native officers were transferred to the Europeans. Native veterans—perhaps covered with wounds, and distinguished in the field as officers in the regiment before many of the European striplings commanding them were born—naturally lost all their influence and respect; and from that time no men of the same class as the original race of native officers have entered the service. The transfer of the power of the native officer to the European might have been attended with an improved state of discipline, and perhaps of fidelity; but in superseding the old race of native officers, their place ought to have been filled by Europeans, for the continuation of a body of native officers necessarily derived from the lower grades of society, since they rise usually, by rotation, from the ranks, and rarely obtain commissions before 20 years' service and upwards, was a great oversight: first, because these men become discontented when they do obtain commissions on finding that they never attain command; and secondly, because, while they exist, the number of European officers are deemed by the government fully adequate to the duty of commanding the men, since in former times they were managed by a smaller number even than at present, forgetting altogether that in those times the native officers were really efficient. Each battalion, with its native commandant and native officers, had hitherto offered an honourable provision for young men of family who entered the army with the promise and hope of early promotion to a commission, owing to his having connexions in the service.

Of the Bengal Army, Sir John Malcolm and Major Badenach state that the infantry is composed, two-thirds of Hindûs, and one-third of Mahomedans; while in the Cavalry and Artillery the ratio is inverted. The Hindûs of the Bengal Army are Rajpûts, a military tribe which occupies almost all the soil in the countries in which they are recruited. They for the most part follow the pursuits of agriculture; but where the land affords them no employment, they prefer the military profession to any other. Their pay on entering the service, after making allowance for the expense of linen, pipe-clay, heel-ball,

and the stoppage made for the supply of small stores, yields them little more than a day labourer, and less than many menial servants, whose offices their pride would not suffer them to undertake. The habits of these Hindûs are frugal and sober; drunkenness is hardly known amongst them; and they are excellent soldiers, in spite of some prejudices which they inherit, and which are indulged by their European officers much more than on the other establishments. The pay of the cavalry and artillery is better than that of the infantry, and into those corps the Mahomedans, who have no prejudice against taking care of their own horses, enter more willingly than the Hindûs.*

Of the composition of the Bombay Army, Sir John Malcolm

* By a Return made to the India House in 1842, the following represented the different sects in the ranks of the regular Bengal Army.

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Regular Infantry, Christians | ... | ... | ... | 1,076 |
| Mahomedans | ... | ... | ... | 12,411 |
| Brahmins | ... | ... | ... | 24,840 |
| Rajpoots | ... | ... | ... | 27,993 |
| Hindus of inferior casts | ... | ... | ... | 13,920 |
| | | | | 80,249 |
| Regular Cavalry, Mahomedans | ... | ... | ... | 2,088 |
| Brahmins | ... | ... | ... | 1,132 |
| Rajpoots | ... | ... | ... | 789 |
| Other Hindus | ... | ... | ... | 135 |
| | | | | 4,144 |
| Total, Christians | ... | ... | ... | 1,076 |
| Mahomedans | ... | ... | ... | 14,489 |
| Brahmins | ... | ... | ... | 25,972 |
| Rajpoots | ... | ... | ... | 28,782 |
| Other Hindus | ... | ... | ... | 14,045 |
| | | | | 84,393 |

Of this body the whole of the Cavalry and two-thirds of the Infantry are in arms against the Government, and the others have been disarmed by force.

Besides the regulars there were raised for service in the Punjaub twenty-three regiments of Infantry, one corps of Guides, and five regiments of Cavalry. The Infantry and the Guides have remained loyal, and have fought gallantly against the mutineers, most of the Cavalry have proved false. The former are composed mainly of the Sikh forces late in the service of the Government, which are subverted, and who have no common sympathy with the sects of the mutineers. The latter are for the most part Mahomedans, and joined in the attempt to reinstate a Mahomedan Empire. All this class of troops are commanded by select European officers, with only three or four in each regiment.

has spoken, and Captain James Grant Duff, an old and highly intelligent regimental officer, who filled the office of regimental staff in an infantry corps for many years, says, that “They were chiefly Marrattas from above and below the ghats in the Deccan, but principally from the southern Concan” at a time when those countries were in the hands of the Peshwa. Some were Mahomedans of Surat and Bombay, from whom were derived many of the most respectable of the old native officers. Of Purwaries and D’hers, a very low caste, but frequently very intelligent, excellent soldiers, there were considerable numbers; there were also a few Canarese and Nairs from Malabar, the latter deeming themselves a military race. Besides these there were some Jews, commonly drunken, but invariably brave men. In modern times (that is to say, since the last Marratta war) the Hindûs of the provinces of Hindûstan, from whence the Bengal Army is recruited, have been much sought after for the Bombay Army. They are a taller, stouter, and handsomer race of men than the Marrattas: but after all, they are foreigners, and ought not, I think, to be too largely introduced. The proportion in 1835 was—

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|
| Hindûstanes | 12,476 |
| Concan Marrattas | 10,015 |
| Decanies including Mahomedans | 1,910 |

All the achievements of the Bombay Army (and they were not a few) were performed by the mixed classes, before the Hindûstanes were introduced; and although the latter may be reckoned as equally brave soldiers, I conceive that, unless recruits are not to be obtained in the territories of the Bombay Presidency, the recruiting from Hindûstan should be discouraged; for I think it good policy to maintain those national distinctions which exist among the different Native Armies, and which invariably lead to emulation when the troops of the several Presidencies are brought to act together. There will be fewer desertions also in the field when the men leave part of their pay with their families in our own provinces.*

* The numbers of the different sects in the Bombay Army have not been satisfactorily given in the return of 1842, and no later has been received. It is believed that the Hindûstanes considerably exceed what they did in 1835, when my return was made, and that they may be fairly

The Native Officers of the Madras Army, in early times, are said to have originally consisted of Mahomedans and high caste Rajputs. Many of the descendants of these Rajputs entered the army for the sake of promotion ! and when I came into the service, in 1801, some of the most respectable of our native officers were of this description. The Sepoys, who fought the battles of Clive and of Coote—who contributed to the humiliation of Tippoo in 1792, and to his downfall in 1799 ; and who gained laurels under the Duke of Wellington in the campaign of 1803-4—were, like the Bombay Army, of a mixed class. The infantry was composed of Pariahs, Pullers, and other low cultivators of the Carnatic, and of the northern Circars, with some few Mahomedans. The cavalry were wholly Mahomedan. In the year 1806, the epoch of the Vellore mutiny, Government, on what ground does not appear, forbade any recruit to be enlisted for the Madras Army, of the low caste tribes ; and advantage was taken of that order to discharge all those for which such excuse could be found. An old Rajput Subadar, whose company I commanded for some years, and for whom I entertained great esteem, considered the measure highly impolitic. These men, he said, have ever been faithful, obedient, and brave ; and the day will come when you will confess how much higher qualities they possess, as good soldiers, than the Mahomedans whom it is now the fashion to bring forward.

The corps of Madras Pioneers, lately converted into Sappers and Miners, has always been, and still continues to be, composed chiefly, if not entirely, of low caste men. That corps has been always commanded by European officers *selected* from the line. There has been no service since the earliest times in

equally divided into Brahmins and Rajputs. They are recruited from the same provinces which supplied the mutineers of the Bengal Army, and the several instances of outbreak in the Bombay Army have been confined to them and to those Mahomedans, who are derived from the same quarter. That the Bombay regiments have not been so successful in destroying their officers and joining the mutineers of Hindustan is to be ascribed solely to the number of Marattas and men of the lowest castes, tribes which still remain in the hitherto loyal Army of Bombay.

The irregular corps in Sind, though for the most part Mahomedans, have maintained their loyalty to the British Government.

which it has not participated; and it has accompanied every expedition by sea. The weapons of a sapper are his hoe, his axe, and his mattock. His duty is to construct roads, often in the face of an enemy, and under a heavy cannonade; to form trenches during sieges; to lead assaults; and to carry the ladders by which the troops are to enter fortifications, either at the breach, or by escalade; no duty is more harassing, nor trying to the temper, the courage, and the health of men than is the life of our Indian sappers; but this corps has on every occasion covered itself with honour. There has never been an instance of disaffection in it; and in the field it has excited the admiration of every class of the army.

Official returns are sent in monthly by Regiments of the Madras Army, shewing the relative number of Hindus and Mahomedans in each; from which return the accompanying abstract was formed in the year 1835.*

| MAHOMEDANS. | | | HINDUS. | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| | Native Officers. | Non Comsd. rank & file. | | Native Officers. | Non Comsd. rank & file. |
| Cavalry . . | 151 | — 3,518 | Cavalry . . | 7 | — 448 |
| Artillery . . | 40 | — 949 | Artillery . . | 25 | — 1,021 |
| Infantry . . | 516 | — 14,901 | Infantry . . | 375 | — 25,084 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total . . | 777 | — 19,368 | Total . . | 407 | — 26,553 |

The Cavalry and the Horse Artillery are almost all raised in the populous town of Arcot. It is, in truth, the recruiting depôt of the mounted portion of the service. The town is full of pensioned and invalid soldiers and native officers, and perhaps this circumstance imparts an "esprit de corps" which exists in no other branch of the service to the same extent. The high character this body has ever held it still retains. There are no instances of sedition, like those which have marked the corps of Infantry during the last thirty years, though those mutinies have originated in a Mahomedan spirit; and Sir John Malcolm has truly remarked, "That in punishing the mutineers of Vellore, the swords of the native Cavalry were as deeply

* This does not materially differ from the return made to the India House in 1842.

“stained with the blood of their deluded brethren and fellow-soldiers as were those of the English Dragoons.”

In the year 1831, the Commander-in-Chief of Madras was induced to call for a return of the state of education in the Native Army; and the following result of that inquiry shows how much it is neglected, and from how low an origin the Native Army is derived—a conclusion, however, which should not excite our astonishment when we reflect on the small pay the Sepoy receives. Education is very general among the people of India; all those forming the middle classes are early instructed to read and write; and few, even of the personal domestics of Europeans are so uninstructed as not to be able to keep an account.

An abstract of the return exhibits the following state of the educated :—

| | Who can read at all. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cavalry and Horse Artillery | - 726 out of 4,966 |
| Foot Artillery and Infantry | - 7,226 out of 39,985 |
| Sepoy Recruit Establishment | - 280 out of 4,321 |

The original return exhibits two very remarkable circumstances which merit notice. These are, first, that in one Regiment of Cavalry, and in the Horse Brigade of Artillery, there is not a single Native Officer, or Havildar Major (Serjeant Major) who can read;—and the same occurs in the case of all the Subadars of two other regiments of Cavalry; so that, out of eight regiments of Cavalry, and one of Horse Artillery, there are four corps in which no Subadar (or Native Captain) can write or read. The second is the very small portion of the Sepoy Recruits that can read, and for whose education Regimental Schools exist. This admirable institution consists of thirty sons of deceased Sepoys above seven, and forty above twelve years of age, in each regiment, who receive half-pay, and are trained till of an age to enter the army.

Referring to the proportion of the Hindus and Mahomedans in the Madras Army, we find the former exceed the latter in the proportion of 7 to 5 in the Non-Commissioned Rank and File; whereas, among the Commissioned Officers the proportion is nearly 2 to 1 in favour of the Mahomedans. This excess of

Mahomedans over Hindus in the Commissioned ranks is more apparent in the choice of officers to the rank of Subadar Major, where we find out of 59 there are only 16 Hindus and 43 Mahomedans.

In the case of officers who have received orders of merit for distinguished services in the field we do not perceive the same difference, for of these, though there are 50 Mahomedans, there are also 27 Hindus. Orders have at different times been issued to recommend the Hindu and Mahomedan Non-Commissioned Officers for promotion alternately, but reasons have always been found to evade the orders, nor would such a rule be just while the proportion of Hindus so greatly predominates. The promotion should rather be made in proportion to the numbers of each class. But the real cause of this partiality towards the Mahomedans arises out of a circumstance which I shall proceed to explain.

The Madras Infantry is recruited in the Provinces of Telingana north of Nellore, wherein the Telugu language alone is spoken, and in the Carnatic south of Nellore, wherein the Tamul language prevails : the Mahomedans born in these provinces speak the language of the nation as well as the Hindustani, the language of their original country, which is for the most part unknown to the Hindus. The European Officers are required to learn the latter language alone, and therefore can communicate freely only with the Mahomedans, who speak that language. In consequence of this, the European Officer and Hindû Sepoy, on entering the army, have to learn a foreign language. The European is bound to acquire it, to fit him for his duty ; but the same necessity is not imposed on the Hindû ; for the whole regiment (with the exception of the European Officers) speak his language as their own native tongue. The Telugu Hindûs, if they enter the service young, contrive to understand, and often speak Hindûstani ; though seldom sufficiently well to recommend themselves to their European Officers. The Tamul Hindûs, however, from the peculiarity of their native dialect, seldom, if ever, pronounce the Hindûstani language so as to be understood. These causes have tended greatly to retard the promotion of the Hindûs in the Madras Army. In the Bengal Army, the Sepoys speak Hindûstani alone ; but in the

Bombay Army, where the Hindûs, for the most part, are Marrattas, a knowledge of their language is required to qualify an Officer to fill the office of a perfect Interpreter, and an increased pay is given to one so qualified. The result is, that many Officers of the Bombay Army read and write Marratta with facility.

In the year 1799, the war with Tippoo was very unpopular among the Mahomedans, and some cases of desertion in the Madras Army occurred on the march from Masulipatam to the southward, brought about by the influence of some Mahomedan Officers. During the war, several Mahomedan Native Officers of Infantry actually went over to the enemy, but they eventually suffered death, by sentence of Court Martial.

In the year 1806, the mutiny of Vellore was only part of a general disaffection of all the Mahomedan Infantry, more or less, on the Madras Establishment, which had for its object the destruction of the European Officers, and the restoration of the family of Tippoo.

In the year 1812, a very serious mutiny broke out at Travancore, which also aimed at the murder of all the European Officers on the spot. The plot was discovered and checked, by the vigilance and vigour of the local authorities. On that occasion ten Native Officers were tried, and condemned to death, though not executed. Several privates, however, suffered.

In 1832, an endeavour was again made in the Madras provinces to rouse Mahomedan hostility against our power; and two distinct attempts, within six months, occurred at Bangalore, to render our Government unpopular; and in the latter case it was certainly intended to have murdered the European Officers.

It is worthy of remark that, in the whole of these instances, no Hindû Native Officer was ever implicated; the plots having been matured, and in one instance carried into effect solely by Mahomedans.

The recollections of the subversion of the power of the Nabobs of Masulipatam, of the Carnatic, of Cuddapah, of Karnool, and of the Mahomedan sovereigns of Mysore, is still fresh in the memory of the Mussulmans. Their faith requires them to convert or to slay all other sects, and their Priests or

Fakirs, to whom they are devotedly attached, inculcate these doctrines. Sir H. Russell, in his evidence before the House of Commons, has adverted to the influence of these bigoted fanatics; and from his long residence at Hydrabad no one had a more favourable opportunity of observing it. On the whole, therefore, I consider the undue encouragement afforded to Mahomedans, as non-commissioned or commissioned officers, in the Madras Infantry, is much to be deprecated.*

The numerous instances of disaffection in the Madras Infantry, in which the Native Officers have been the leaders, seems to have suggested the idea of improving their condition, or of attaching them to the State by rewards. The pay of the Subadars has been raised to three grades, according to length of service. Honorary presentations of horses and palankeens, with increased pay to maintain them, were made; and lately even native titles and insignia of rank have been bestowed on them. In some cases, grants of land to descend to their posterity have been conferred, with other rewards. The attention to the comforts, and a just reward to the claims, of the native soldiery, was never carried farther in any military body than it has been in the Madras Army; and though no troops have behaved better in the field, none have been so deeply stained with the guilt of mutiny and sedition in time of peace. The steps that have been taken at Madras to attach the Native Officers to our Government have certainly not succeeded; whilst at Bombay and Bengal, where the same class have not enjoyed similar advantages, more fidelity and less pretensions have distinguished them.

* The sanguinary character of the Mahomedans, their bigotry and their religious zeal and phrenzy are too well known in Europe to be here insisted on. Like the Jesuits, they believe that every convert made by a true believer advances him towards Paradise in the next world, and that death in the cause of religion ensures a place in Heaven. With such convictions we need not be surprised to find the Mahomedans availing themselves of every opportunity of making proselytes, and when to this is added the regret and shame attendant on the loss of their power, we must always be prepared to meet the disaffection of this body of our subjects in India. This, however, may be effected without altogether excluding the Mahomedans from the army or from civil offices, as long as we can hold out to them sufficient motives for loyalty and dread of punishment

I have already shown of what description were the Native Officers in the Madras Army, before the organization of 1796, previous to which no such mutinies ever occurred. In the present day, the native officer must rise gradually from the ranks. He enters as a private, on a pay little superior to that of the lowest domestic of an European's establishment. He serves in the ranks, as a sentry, for fourteen or fifteen years, and in as many more; if he conducts himself properly, he passes through the non-commissions till he obtains an officer's commission. Such is the career of the greater part of the native officers of our army: and the following table exhibits the class of society from whence they are derived.

It has already been seen that, among the several races of India, some are extensively educated; that in this respect our native army is very deficient, and will hardly bear a comparison with the better order of domestics; from this class the present race of native officers is derived, and a return of the crimes committed by this body will serve to illustrate, at once, the description of persons of which the native commission ranks are composed.

From a review of the native courts-martial, I find that between the years 1800 and 1830, there were 331 native officers of the Madras Army brought to trial; and that of these 267 were convicted and sentenced, on the following charges:—

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Drunkeness on duty | 127 |
| Insubordination | 29 |
| Mutiny and sedition, with the intention of murdering their officers (all Mahomedans) | 46 |
| Bribery, usury, and peculation | 26 |
| Perjury, and subornation of evidence | 5 |
| Absent without leave | 3 |
| Robbery, burglary, theft on liquors and public stores | 16 |
| Assaults and affrays | 12 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total* | 267 |

In considering this part of the subject, we can arrive but

* This number, out of about 1160 native officers, during thirty years is

at one conclusion ; namely, that the race of native officers who so distinguished themselves under Clive and Lawrence, under Coote and Cornwallis, under Harris and Wellington, no longer remains in our regular army.

The effect of the organization of 1796 on the native commissioned part of our army, was not foreseen. The native officers, compared with their predecessors, have dwindled into a low, degenerate race, superior in no respect to Havildars or Serjeants ; and it is not asserted, by the most experienced European officers, that they fulfil any duty that the latter might not equally perform. The number on the Pension and Invalid Establishment, at Madras, amounted, in 1831, to more than two-thirds of the effective strength ; and, indeed, the inducement to retire is so great, that it is difficult to retain any Subadars of the higher grades in the service.

The necessity for keeping up this useless and expensive class is urged as presenting a final reward to the native soldier in order to secure his fidelity and attachment ; but it appears to me that the continuance of the present system, with all its evils and defects, is an error, and that the same end may be attained in a less expensive manner. Few if any Sepoys on entering the service, have any expectation of becoming Officers. The contingency is so remote, the time of probation in the junior grades is so long, and the chances of success among so many is so small, that the abolition of the *commissioned ranks* altogether would, I believe, have little or no effect on the temper of the Sepoys, if it were attended with any plan for improving their own present condition. The only part of the army likely to complain would be the Native Officers themselves, and the non-commission ranks : and it is these classes which it would be politic and important to reconcile to the adoption of any new measures that may be desirable. The measures I propose are of a character that would, I think, have that effect, without involving the state in much expense ; but I shall defer the subject for the present, till I have said something concerning the European

infinitely small. It is a singular fact, also, that while the mutinous spirit has been confined to the Mahomedans in the Madras Army, there does not appear a single instance where it has been necessary to bring a native officer of any sort to trial for misconduct in the face of an enemy.

Officers. Sir John Malcolm, in his Political History of India, observes, "It is to our European Officers we must chiefly trust for the safety of our Empire; in case of any division among them, it will soon verge to its decline. The competency, the spirit, and the loyalty of this class constitute our strength." Every day brings with it a confirmation of the justice of these sentiments.* During the time I served in the Native Army, two events have occurred which created a clamorous disaffection among the European Officers. I allude to the period of Sir George Barlowe's government at Madras, in 1809; and to the half-batta question in Bengal, in 1829. On both these occasions the grievances complained of were partial, and, in some measure, unreal. Such, however, was the general excitement produced, that I question if there had been even one hundred Officers, of rank and influence, born in the country and attached to the soil by ties of consanguinity, whether the division alluded to by Sir John Malcolm would not then have taken place. It is awful to contemplate the consequences that might ensue in such a case. Let us imagine, for instance, one or more of the subsidiary forces intriguing with, and eventually transferring their services to, the native Princes, and securing a tract of country for their support. Imagine, I say, if at the same time the whole body of Officers in the Army were discontented, and a large portion disaffected, what might be the result. It is through the leading men of communities whose masses are directed or controlled; and the officers, both European and Native, must be kept in humour, if we expect to govern India through the agency of our army. As Sir John Malcolm has justly observed, our Eastern empire has been gained by the sword, and can only be sustained by it, in spite of the most just and excellent laws. Our rule must for ever be offensive to the people. Composed as the European part of the native army now is, England has little to apprehend from the defection of her sons: the connexion with the mother country is too close and too firmly rivetted to be broken asunder. The

* To the number of European Officers who were separated from the mutinous regiments, and became available as volunteers with the loyal troops, is due the success which has crowned the efforts of our small but gallant bands at the present crisis in different parts of India.

prospect of pensions in their native land, the land with which all their early associations are connected; the land in which their relatives reside, and in a climate to which all more or less must resort for health; these are the ties which now secure the loyalty of the European officer to the British government, and which scarcely anything can unbind. In proportion as these ties are strengthened, the safety of India will be secured, and it has been justly said that "the competency, the spirit, and the loyalty of this class, constitute our strength." These sentiments are, I believe, those of every statesman who has made the Indian government his study.

I have shown that, before 1796, the efficiency of the Native Army was preserved by *selecting* European officers to command single corps, and by the nomination of other *select officers* of experience to aid them in each; and that then was the period when the Sepoy Army was most efficient. A material change, indeed I may say a totally new organization, of the constitution of the Army took place at that time: when half the number of field officers allowed to regiments in the Royal Army, and half the number of European regimental officers, were appointed to the Sepoy Army, who virtually took the place of the old native officers. The advantage of selecting European officers for Sepoy corps was greatly diminished; but there still remained the alternative of filling up vacancies in one battalion, by selecting officers from the other.

In the year 1824, an entirely new scheme for remodelling the European branch of the native Army was adopted. The plan of the regulations of 1796 was lost sight of, and battalions of infantry were formed into separate regiments. Instead of the European officers bearing a proportion to the number of companies, that is to say, one Captain and three subalterns to each squadron of Cavalry, or grand division of Infantry, an equal number of every rank was distributed to regiments, without reference to the number of men, of troops, or of companies.

To each regiment of Infantry and Cavalry, and each battalion of Artillery, were attached

- 1 Colonel,
- 1 Lieutenant-Colonel,

1 Major,
 5 Captains,
 10 Lieutenants,
 5 Ensigns ;

as if each regiment of Infantry and Cavalry, and battalion of Artillery, consisted of an equal number of companies and troops ; whereas at the time a regiment of Infantry consisted of ten companies ; a regiment of Cavalry of six troops ; and a battalion of Artillery of four companies.

If the regulations of 1796 limited the selection of European officers for native corps, from the whole line to the two battalions of each regiment, the arrangement of 1824 narrowed the field still more, since, in the event of a corps being weak in European officers, either in taking the field or during a campaign, the vacancies can only be supplied by raw youths from England—youths without experience, or knowledge of the language or habits of the men, or of their own duty. It is true that on such occasions officers on the general staff (two out of each regiment) are, in all practicable cases, directed to join ; but their long absence from regimental duty, their ignorance of the men, and the consequent want of confidence of the latter in such officers, render them less valuable than if they had been all along performing regimental duty.

In the two wars that are now waging, in Affghanistan and in China, it will be found that in almost every regiment some companies of Infantry are wholly without European officers ; and after the review I have taken of the organisation of the Native Army, I would submit to any officer who ever served a campaign, what can be expected, even from the best troops in the world, so destitute of efficient officers. With regard to the European regimental officers, it is notorious that the best of them are selected for staff duties or for civil employ ; that the least efficient of the seniors are left with the corps, and the great mass of them consists of the youngest and least experienced. I leave out of view the native officers who, I have shown under the present system of recruiting and promotion, can never stand higher, in point of respectability, than serjeants ; and who, from the very circumstance of holding com-

missions, become discontented, and are more noxious than useful.

It will naturally be asked what remedy I propose. In reply, I beg to be understood now to confine my remarks to the Madras Army.* I would require, as a general rule, that the promotion to the grade of lance corporal (confined by regulation to the recommendation of the officer commanding the company) should be made with reference to the proportion of the Hindûs and Mahomedans in each regiment, a rule not to be departed from except in very special cases of good conduct; that the same rule should extend to Subadars Major, who should be selected from the line in each branch, and be liable to removal from one corps to another. With respect to European officers, it ought to be a standing order that no officer should have charge of a company, *or draw the company allowance*, till he had passed an examination in the *vernacular* language of the regiment. This order, I feel confident, will be the only effective mode of securing equal justice to all classes and races in the army. I would by no means suggest any sudden innovation into the existing state of things: we ought

* The late events confirm rather than shake my opinion of the necessity of abandoning the system of raising Native officers from the ranks. I am also of opinion that it is inconvenient, if not dangerous, as it has proved in Bengal, to fill our ranks with what are deemed men of caste. The lowest tribes,—the Agrestic slaves, namely, the Pariahs and Pullers of the Carnatic,—formed the great mass of the Madras Infantry till 1806, before which time mutinies were unheard of. The Parwarries, or Nags of Bombay, formed a large portion of that army, till the rage for Hindûstania prevailed, after the Marratta war of 1817-18, and no more loyal or efficient troops ever existed. In India, where the pay is, and always ought to be, higher than that of an unskilled labourer, we shall have no difficulty in obtaining recruits from the lower classes. Neither agricultural Hindûs nor Mahomedans need be excluded; but we have seen how dangerous it is to give a preponderancy to the Mahomedans, or to permit the priesthood, with all their power and prejudice, to enter our army at all. Let priests confine themselves to their clerical duties, but not wean men's minds from their secular duties to the Government they serve, and which feeds them. Every native regiment in India should be composed of those castes or sects who have the fewest prejudices against Europeans or their habits, who should be prepared to perform the duties required of soldiers under all circumstances which should be clearly explained to every recruit on his enlisting. The articles of war should be periodically read by companies on parade.

to avoid by all means evincing distrust towards any particular class; but justice and policy both require that we should restrain that overweening disposition towards the Mahomedans, who from habit, religion, and past reminiscences, are by far the most discontented and dangerous portion of the community in the south of India.

I have exhibited, I think forcibly, that which has been so repeatedly brought before the home authorities—the total want of European Officers with our native Army in India; but I maintain that it is not so much the want of European Officers as of *efficient Officers*, in whom the men might confide. Time was, as has already been shown in the early part of this letter, when in the days of Mahomed Yusuf, Jemal Saheb, and Clive, no troops could be more efficient than the Sepoys under their native Officers, directed only by European minds. Whoever has served of late years with those bodies of Cavalry denominated Irregular Horse, whether exclusively raised for our service in time of war, or acting as auxiliaries and furnished by our native allies, and directed by one or two European selected Officers, will bear testimony to the chivalrous spirit of those troops on several occasions, and to their fidelity and discipline on all. It is not necessary, therefore, that if a change of system be adopted, we should incur the heavy expense of filling the ranks of the Native Army with the same number of European Officers as exists in the other armies of the world, but that the masses should be commanded in detail, by persons of a higher order than those which now compose the Native Officers of the Army, who are neither respected by those above them, nor by those over whom they are placed. I have no hesitation in saying that unless this be effected, our Native Army will, from day to day, decline in character and lose its utility.

The question is one of immense importance, and must not be passed over cursorily. The late Sir Thomas Monro, a high authority on almost every question regarding India, was of opinion that the proportion of European to native soldiers ought to be as one is to ten; and speaking of the former, when he served with them, this number would have been sufficient; but I should think, *constituted as the army now is*, more than

double that proportion of Europeans in India will be desirable.*

Still it would be a fatal error to suppose that we ought to desire to lessen the number of our native soldiery in India. In the first place, their expense is as one to three compared with Europeans. In the second place, the natives are alone fitted for the fatigue duties of campaigns in the tropics, where the constitutions of Europeans must too soon fail. But above all, the great moral influence obtained over the people by having so considerable a portion of the population dependent on, and attached to our Government, ought not to be lost sight of. There are now not fewer than 270,000 native soldiers under arms in India. Every Sepoy is married, and most of them have

* Unfortunately the mad conduct of the Bengal army must shake the confidence of their surviving officers, and even those of the other Presidencies, in the fidelity of native troops. It becomes very important, therefore, that the cause or causes of the outbreak should be satisfactorily traced. My own conviction is, that nothing short of religious phrenzy was first communicated by their priests (the Bramins) to the Hindûs of the army; and when we know that nearly half of this body was composed of the priestly order, we may easily conceive how readily they succeeded in inspiring their comrades with an apprehension of loss of caste by applying to their lips the fat of an animal whose life they hold sacred, and with which it was stated their rifle cartridges were greased. Finding the Mahomedans in the regiments did not sympathise in this feeling, they added to the report of beef suet, an admixture of hog's lard, though in reality the Government caused the cartridges to be made up in the regimental stores with a composition of vegetable oil and bees' wax. The apprehension of a design on their religion spread through the army, and might have extended to the whole population, but for the circumstances which led to the mutiny at Meerut on the 9th of May and the flight of the insurgents to Delhi. There the rebellion assumed a new feature. It became a political movement in favor of the Emperor of Delhi, whose dynasty had been extinguished by the Mahrattas three generations ago. The great bodies of the mutineers were landholders under the Mahomedan King of Oude, recently deposed, whose cause they openly espoused, and the original religious feeling of the Hindûs fortunately became absorbed in a war for the restoration of the deposed Mahomedan Princes.

In this object the Sikhs of the Punjab, the Hindû Princes of Upper India, Hindustan, Malwa, and Rajputana felt no interest, the great body of the Hindû population of our own territories afforded our troops all the aid they dared to do, and the great danger of an extensive religious insurrection, which might have spread throughout India, was averted by the turn given to the rebellion by the mutiny at Merût.

families;* to these may be added the numerous sutlers and camp followers, with their families; and thus we shall find that not fewer than two millions of individuals in the army alone are interested in the welfare and prosperity of our Government. It is to this circumstance mainly we owe the fidelity of a large portion of our native population; and to which we may ascribe the prompt intelligence we obtain of plots and conspiracies that are and will continue to be daily concocted against us, but which are now nipt in the bud before they arrive at maturity. We have lately had a fatal example of the absence of such motives of attachment, in the want of information in Affghanistan, where a whole nation rose in arms against us, while the ruling authority had no intelligence of the wide spread disaffection till after it burst forth at once in all directions.

The foregoing reasons appear sufficient for keeping up our Native Army in India, the question of restoring it to efficiency, by supplying it with officers, is our present difficulty.†

Amongst all the persons examined before the House of Commons in 1832, the sentiments of the late Major David Wilson, of the Bombay Army, coincided with an opinion I ventured to suggest to the present Governor-General of India, when President of the Board of Control, more than twelve years

* This is only applicable to the lower tribes of aborigines and Hindûs of which our Indian Army ought in future in a great measure to be composed. The Mahomedans, the Bramins, and the Rajputs, leave their families at home. Those of the other classes which accompany their regiments are useful to their male relations in preparing their meals, procuring fuel, and even in earning a livelihood as camp followers. They will always form a restraint on the men in preventing mutiny at the risk of their own lives in its suppression. If the Bengal mutineers had had their families with them they would have afforded an effective check against the commission of the enormities perpetrated by their savage husbands and relatives, and the mutiny in the shape it assumed could not have occurred.

† The number of our army in India, as compared with that of England, appears large; but as the area and population of the former are more than six times greater than the latter. it ought, for the ordinary purposes of securing internal tranquillity and protecting its vast extent of position, to be more than thrice as large as it has ever been. In comparing the British forces of India (native and European) according to its area and population. with those of Europe or the United States of America, the army of India is infinitely small.

ago. Admitting the inefficiency of the actual practice of providing the Indian Army with native officers, it occurred to me that we should improve this branch of the service by partially reverting to the system which prevailed before 1796, when our Sepoys were most efficient. That is to say by gradually restoring to the native officers those motives for the better classes to enter our army which then existed, but which have since ceased. I have been long enough in the Army to recollect some of those respectable officers who were still in the service when I first entered it, and who had fought under Sir Eyre Coote in the wars with Hyder Ali. They have since gradually become extinct, and their places have been filled up from the ranks. In order to afford an opening for the entrance of young men of family, or in easy circumstances, to the service, we must ensure them higher pay and more rapid promotion ; but above all, that kind treatment which is certain to follow if commanded by a few well selected European officers, as is at present the case among the irregular troops. To effect this, a gradual reorganization of the Infantry might take place by transferring the Native Officers of a few regiments into an equal number of others, and doing the same by the European Officers, selecting four European officers for the corps in which then would be the native officers. Two of which European officers should officiate as field officers and two as regimental staff. The number of Native Officers to each company should consist of one subadar or captain, and two jemadars, to be denominated 1st and 2nd, as subalterns, with a native subadar major and an adjutant, both to be mounted officers. I would require that in future no Native Officer should be promoted till he had passed an examination, which should comprise an acquaintance with the regulations of the service, together with so competent a knowledge of reading and writing as to be able to read the articles of war and keep his company's books and accounts. That this qualification should be required of serjeant-majors of companies, from which body might in future be selected all Native Officers.

In such case young men of family might be received into the army as *volunteers*, with an understanding that, according to their merit and standing, they should succeed to commissions. No *volunteer* should be eligible for his commission before he had

served at least two years as a private, one as a corporal (or naig), and one as a serjeant-major or havildar-major of a company. To form a regulation of this sort would necessarily involve many considerations and arrangements, the details of which could not be discussed in a letter.*

Although I have long thought that some such measure was absolutely necessary to provide for the deficiency of officers in the Native Army of India, yet it appears to me there never was a time when this subject demanded more attention than the present. That army is at this moment distributed over a space from Aden in the Red Sea, and Carrack in the Persian Gulf, on the west,

* It has been frequently asserted, that whereas the native army was never so faithful or so efficient as in early times when there were but three or four European Officers to each regiment of a thousand men, and as no greater number is now requisite for the irregular corps, either of infantry or cavalry, the necessity for an increased number of European Officers is not apparent.

Those who argue in this way overlook two very important points. The first is, that till the organization of 1796, the Native Officers were of a superior class, enjoying considerable patronage in their corps, and privileges of enlisting relatives often too young to do duty, of having private servants from the ranks, and of providing for their families and dependents by other indirect means. These were abuses, but they sufficed to make up for the small pay the Native Officers received, ensured their importance, and made it worth their while to enter our armies.

As regards the European Officers too, the officers of every branch of the service rose in one line, and none but those who possessed due qualifications were attached to native regiments.

The organization of 1796, as has been stated p. 11, changed all this. The native country gentry left the service. An insufficient number of Europeans took their places, and it was long before the latter were fit to occupy them. There was no longer a line of succession from whence to select officers for the military and civil departments of the army and other duties; recourse was had to the regiments. These became the school for the general staff, and latterly for the supply required for the irregular corps. The latter have since been framed on the same principle as our early native battalions. The officers are the gentry of the country, and the privates partly their own followers or peasantry, and of the class accustomed from their position in civil life to look up to them with respect. But as I have said before, (p. 27,) we never can have an efficient native army without efficient officers, and we cannot have efficient European Officers without being first trained in regular native corps.

The present system would have worked well enough if the vacancies caused by permanent removal from regiments were filled up, and the regular corps kept at all times complete in European Officers.

as far as the China seas, and the Islands of the Pacific on the East, over an extent of 50 degrees of longitude, equivalent to about 3,000 miles.*

When I reflect on your Lordship's extensive military experience, on the momentous duties which you have undertaken as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Madras territory and army ; and when I connect these circumstances with your Lordship's character, I cannot believe the topics I have ventured to discuss can be viewed with indifference.

I still feel, however, that some apology is due from an individual who is wholly unknown to your Lordship, for having obtruded, unsolicited, his opinions on your Lordship's consideration.

That apology will, I trust, be found in the magnitude and importance of the subject, and in the disinterested zeal I feel in promoting, as far as my humble talents and experience permit, the welfare of Her Majesty's magnificent empire in the East, and the future efficiency of the services to which my life has been devoted.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's faithful

And devoted, humble Servant,

JOHN BRIGGS.

* This letter was written when the news of the disastrous retreat from Affghanistan had not yet reached England.

The organization of the Bengal Army has first to be considered, and when that is completed the gradual corresponding alterations might be introduced into the armies of Madras and Bombay, but above all things let us never forget how dangerous it would have been had the three armies been amalgamated, or had the tendency to enlist the whole from the North Western provinces, and from Oude, with Brahminical priests and their fanatical devotees, extended to the armies of the Madras Presidency.