

The Naval and Military Resources of the Colonies.—V.

By Robert O'Byrne, F.R.C.S., in A. & H. G. Gazette.

Very shortly after the men were first recruited for regular service, these companies were formed into five battalions, one of which was afterwards disbanded, and the other four are now known as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th regiments of Madras Native Infantry. Other battalions were raised within the next six or seven years, and in 1765 the establishment stood at a total of ten regiments. Six more were raised in 1767, and the number was thus raised to sixteen; 5,000 of these troops, disciplined, trained and led by English officers, and brigaded with a thousand Europeans, met and defeated the combined forces of the Nizam and Hyder Ali—more than 70,000 strong—at Trincomalee in 1767. They also took part in the memorable battle of Wandewash in 1760, when Coote's force of 1,500 Europeans and 3,500 natives defeated Lally's, consisting of 2,500 Frenchmen and 9,000 natives. The soldiers who followed Lawrence, Clive and Eyre Coote, and who put an end to French rivalry and the pretensions of Hyder Ali, belonged mainly to the Madras establishment, and formed the nucleus of the present army. The Madras native army was from time to time augmented till there were fifty-two regiments. Subsequent reductions effected since the Mutiny in 1857 have, however, brought the number down to thirty-two, at which strength the Native Madras Infantry now stands.

No Native Cavalry was raised by the East India Company in Madras until 1780; prior to that, bodies of horsemen had been hired at various times from the Nawab of the Carnatic, and European officers had been placed over them; but, owing to a want of anything like organization and discipline and to their always being in a chronic state of arrears of pay, they could never be said to have attained any high degree of efficiency. In 1780 the Madras Government took over four regiments of Cavalry belonging to the Nawab, and proceeded to officer them and bring them into order. They were soon turned into useful and serviceable troops. By 1784 the Government saw the advisability of taking these regiments permanently into their service. One of these was subsequently disbanded, and the others are now the 1st and 2nd Madras Lancers and the 3rd Madras Light Cavalry. In 1785 a fourth was raised, and this regiment received the high honour of being called the Prince of Wales' Own Regiment of Madras Light Cavalry, after His Royal Highness's visit to Madras in 1875. The four Madras Cavalry regiments are, then, a little more than a century old. In 1786 the establishment of a regiment consisted of one commandant, one captain-lieutenant, three lieutenants, three cornets, six European sergeants, six subadars, eighteen jemadars, twenty-four havildars, twenty-four naiques, one trumpet-major, six trumpeters, one head farrier, six farriers, 408 privates, six line men, one adjutant, one quartermaster, one sergeant-major, one quartermaster-sergeant, one drill havildar, one drill major, one assistant-sergeant, one black doctor.

In the year 1784 a battalion of native artillery was formed in Madras. Prior to that native gun Lascars had been attached to the European Artillery. The battalion then formed consisted of ten companies, and its strength was—one captain, one captain-lieutenant, three lieutenants, six lieutenant-fireworkers, ten sergeants, ten subadars, twenty jemadars, fifty havildars, fifty majors, ten drummers, ten fifers, ten packallies, ten water-carriers, ten bullock boys, 650 golundanze or gunners. This battalion was, however, reduced very shortly afterwards, and the native gunners were amalgamated with the European Artillery.

In 1796 a general regeneration of the Madras army took place. The officer's position was greatly ameliorated, and the composition of the Army was as follows:—The European Infantry was formed into two regiments of ten companies each, and had one colonel, two lieutenant-colonels, two majors, seven captains, one captain-lieutenant, twenty-one lieutenants, eight ensigns, forty sergeants, fifty corporals, twenty-two drums and fifes, 950 privates, and twenty packallies.

The establishment of native cavalry is now fixed at four regiments of six troops each. Each regiment consists of one field officer, two captains, one captain-lieutenant, six lieutenants, three cornets, one assistant-surgeon, one native doctor, two sergeants, six subadars, twelve jemadars, twenty-four naiques, six trumpeters, 402 troopers, six farriers, and six packallies.

The artillery was composed of two battalions of five companies each, with fifteen companies of Lascars attached to each. The composition of each battalion was as follows:—One colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, one major, five captains, five captain-lieutenants, ten lieutenants, five lieutenant-fireworkers, one surgeon, one assistant-surgeon, twenty-five sergeants, twenty-five corporals, fifty gunners, ten drummers and fifers, 310 matrosses, seventy-five tondels, and 840 lascars.

The establishment of Native Infantry was fixed at eleven regiments, each composed of two battalions of eight companies, and constituted:—One colonel, two lieutenant-colonels, two majors, seven captains, one captain-lieutenant, twenty-two lieutenants, ten ensigns, twenty subadars,

twenty jemadars, 100 havildars, 100 naiques, forty drummers and fifers, 1,800 privates; 160 recruit boys, and twenty packallies. The staff consists of two adjutants, one paymaster, one surgeon, two assistant-surgeons, two sergeant-majors, two quartermaster sergeants, two native adjutants, and two native doctors.

Having thus shown the growth of the Madras army during the first fifty years of its existence, a statement will now be made of its strength after another half century, which brings us to Her Majesty's jubilee year, and the present strength of the Madras native army is:—Four regiments of light cavalry, of which two are lancers, the Queen's Own sappers and miners, thirty-two regiments of native infantry, of which two are designated "pioneers," and three "light infantry."

There are no regiments in the Madras army raised entirely from one caste or nationality, such as in the Bengal army. The cavalry is mainly composed of Mussulmans, but there is a considerable mixture of other creeds. We think in this respect Madras should follow the excellent example set by Bengal.

We now come to the Bombay native army, and the practical remarks made on this subject by Major-Gen. W. E. MacLeod, of the Bombay Army.

The Bombay army, between June, 1838 and 1878, sent across the seas to Scinde, Afghanistan, Aden, Burmah, China, Persia and Abyssinia, on foreign service, without murmur, let or hindrance, many regiments of native infantry, in addition to three regiments of cavalry and the native artillery (golundanze), and native sappers and miners. Of these regiments several served beyond the Bolan Pass, and others held all the positions from Kurrachee and Tatta upwards, across, and on the desert to the foot of Bolan, and here they remained under trying circumstances incidental to sickness, heat, cold and isolation.

In 1838 the Bombay native artillery, consisting of golundanze, recruited similarly to the native infantry but of superior standard. These men well maintained the character of Bombay artillery, and their good services are still remembered and testified to by some of their old officers who knew them well.

The same remarks apply to the Bombay sappers and miners as to their constitution and good service; but owing to the generally small number of engineer officers available, their regimental and field duties, under the commandant (an engineer officer), are often carried out by British officers from the native infantry of the service.

The regular cavalry was represented by three regiments. Their dress—light grey—and their equipment generally kept pace with those of the light cavalry of the British service. They were enlisted in all parts of the Bombay and Bengal limits. Their interior economy and discipline were excellent; and wherever they served they gained, deservedly, the good opinion of all arms of the service. We do not believe that in any army, home or Indian, were ever seen finer specimens of British cavalry officers—taken as a whole—than the officers of the three old regiments of Bombay Cavalry, either as gentlemen, sportsmen, or soldiers. The men were all faithful to their salt.

In addition to the regular cavalry regiments, the Poonah Irregular Horse formed then, as well as now, part of the Bombay Army, its colours and records bearing "Kooregaun" in 1818, and later on the additional honours of Afghanistan, Ghuznee, Scinde and Persia. It was officered from time to time from each branch of the Bombay Army.

The Bombay native infantry consisted in 1838 of twenty-six regiments of "Regulars," one marine battalion, and some local irregular corps, such as "Guzerat Provincial," "Bheel," Corps, &c.

The strength of the Bombay army was increased in 1849 by the formation of the Scinde (or Jacob's) Irregular Horse, two Belooch battalions, and the Scinde Camel Corps, all of which corps were officered from the different branches of the Bombay Army.

In 1846 the Bombay native infantry was increased by the 27th, 28th, and 29th Regiments, which were formed by proportionate contributions from the other corps, and by drafts from the two general recruit depots formed, under experienced British officers at Poona and Mhow.

The general equipment and dress of the Bombay native army, under the old organization, were almost similar to those of their British comrades, and keep pace with the periodical and subsequent changes therein. In due course the "flint" was superseded by the "percussion" musket, which later on was replaced by the rifle; change in equipment, etc., naturally followed. In the present day each regiment, instead of helmets, wears a puggaree of prescribed regimental pattern.

"Apropos of their equality among themselves," a correspondednt of the *Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette*, writes: "A British naval officer, engaged by the Chinese to get their fleet into something like discipline, found no sentry at the gangway of a man-of-war, and going in to point this out to the Chinese Admiral, found him in the Admiral's cabin playing dominoes. 'The fact is,' said the Admiral, 'I find it so dull alone here aft, that I asked the sentry to come in and have a game.'"