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"We are judged by our deeds," says the motto of the Old Troughs, otherwise the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who in one sense of the words may be said to belong to anywhere excepting Dublin, although their record office is there. For until quite recent times they were an Indian regiment—they have nearly three hundred years of service—and they were originally called the Madras European Regiment.

In the days when Charles the First was King in Great Britain, the East India Company were striving to live up to their name and to make India their own land—an up-hill task, since in addition to disputes and opposition from the native princes, they had to wrest each inch of territory, each clause in the trading treaties, from the teeth of the Dutch and the French who were also established there.

Naturally the East India Company required an army, and a very tough and determined one at that, and in addition to its native troops it set about raising white regiments. The very first of these was that of Madras, hence this regiment which we call the Dublin Fusiliers to-day represents the oldest of all our Indian battalions besides being contemporary with our oldest British troops.

When Clive stood on his defence before the House of Commons, charged with looting—to use a modern word—his defence was: "When I recollect entering the Nabob's treasury at Murshidabad with heaps of gold and silver to the right and left and these crowned with jewels"—here he added an oath and violently struck his hand to his head—"at this moment do I stand astonished at my own moderation."

In which he was probably right. Whatever sins of robbery and misgovernment may be laid to the charge of the old East India Company and their soldiers, they governed as well, if not better, than any other Power of their time would have done.

With Clive into that gold-filled treasury; with Clive filling their pockets with royal booty; with Clive, cutting down all who stood in their way, roystering, swaggering, fighting, went the Madras European Regiment. Desperate deeds by the thousand they did, but for sheer picturesqueness few can equal that which ended the siege of Arcot, an important town held for a native prince by a strong garrison.

On the fall of Arcot almost the entire fortunes of the white population of Madras depended, and Clive had but a miserable force—two hundred Old Troughs, with three hundred Sepoys—all badly equipped and armed, while for officers he had only eight in all, of whom six had seen no active service, while four were actually merchants' clerks who had volunteered at his call but had not even given any military training whatsoever.

It was at the head of this "contemptible little army" that Clive marched against invincible Arcot. And Fortune justified the motto by favouring the brave, for when the fortress came in sight the brooding heat of the Indian day was torn by a terrific thunder-storm. In the face of the lightning the garrison cowered in terror.

The gods were abroad, they said, and no man might lift his head. Then a cry of wonder went up, for, peeping stealthily through the storm, they saw a band approaching, striding forward with pale, set faces that knew no fear though

the heavens crashed their loudest and earth rocked. "These are not mortal men," said the guard; "they are of God." And so the gates of Arcot opened and, without a shot being fired, Clive with his Madras Regiment swept as conquerors through its streets.

Wandewash, another name emblazoned on the banners of the Dublins, tells of a very different attack, made in the days when Clive was no more and Warren Hastings governed India in the Company's name. Hyder Ali, ruler of Mysore, swore to sweep the white conqueror from Madras, and gathered his men in a mighty mass for the great attack. News of his rising reached the city, but with curious blindness the authorities ignored all warnings, refusing to bestir themselves until the vanguard of the rajah was dashing down the mountain passes which commanded the presidency. To quote cold history:—

"The outer frontier posts, held by Sepoys, surrendered with but slight resistance, and his (the enemy's) onward progress was marked by fire and sword. From the summit of St. Thomas' Mount the people of Madras could see, on the horizon, columns of dark smoke ascend from burning villages. . . . On the 10th September the troops of Baillie were overwhelmed and cut to pieces. A similar fate would have befallen Munro had he not saved himself by a precipitate retreat, casting his artillery into the tanks and relinquishing baggage and stores. Thus only the walled towns remained to the English; all the open country was, or would



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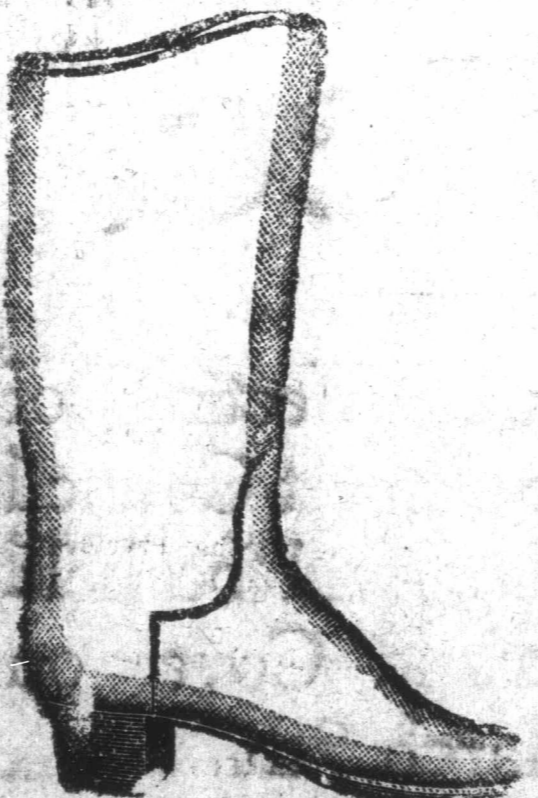
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be, Hyder's."

Wandewash was one of the walled towns thus besieged, and to the relief of Wandewash the Madras Regiment rushed, saving the garrison with its women and children, and then swinging off to take a glorious part in the decisive engagement which put an end to Hyder Ali's hopes.

When Wellington was rising into fame in India, Tipoo, Hyder's successor as Rajah of Mysore, was the great enemy of the British, and presently the Madras Regiment was led into the heart of the enemy's country to the very walls of Seringapatam, the chief stronghold, where Tipoo and his men, at bay but confident, laughed at their approach. Even when a breach was made in the outer fortifications they laughed still.

"Seringapatam is invincible," they said. "These stranger men cannot reach our heights."

Their confidence seemed justified, for two and twenty thousand veteran troops formed the garrison, bastions and walls were of remarkable strength, and no less than two hundred and forty pieces of artillery were ready to thunder on the foe, all well found with ammunition. Against this the British general could only bring two thousand five hundred Europeans and two thousand native troops, a small enough force for such an undertaking.

Cold history becomes cold no longer when it tells of the struggle, the deed is so great it would thrill the baldest print:—

"On the British rushed, followed by their brave allies, through the deadly storm. In five minutes the river was crossed, in five more the beach was mounted. . . . a shout and the waving of the British flag upon its summit announced that the fortress was won, the capital of Mysore had fallen."

In the days of the Mutiny, Lucknow added to the honour of the regiment. Tradition tells us—on doubtful authority—that the pipers played "The Campbells are Coming" as they rushed to the relief, and if so it is certain the drums and fifes of the Madras Regiment shrilled and echoed to the strains of the "British Grenadiers," for that melody had been adopted as their regimental march, and to its music they helped to save Lucknow.

Perhaps the greatest compliment ever paid them was spoken by Nana Sahib, the fend who was responsible for the horror of Cawnpore.

The Madras Regiment were with those who rushed into that silent compound, they saw the blood splashes low on the wall telling how women had crouched to receive their death blow at the hands of the butchers; they saw the well, choked to the top with bodies of those dead women, and heard how little children had run round and round the shaft, screaming for their mothers who had been cast within—and they heard how those children had died.

Then the Old Troughs set out upon the work of vengeance, and said Nana to his followers: "Above all, beware of those men in the blue caps, they fight like devils."

"The Blue Caps," became one of their nicknames after that, and when they are not in khaki they wear the blue cap still, though their official headdress is raccoon skin with blue and green plumes.

In 1868 the Old Troughs came home for the first time in their history and from then were transformed from the Madras European Regiment, to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. But change of name did not change their heroism; and the successors of the men who had fought under Clive and Wellington, distinguished themselves under Roberts in South Africa, just as they are winning fresh glory to-day in the great war.

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