

## The Naval and Military Resources of the Colonies.—IV.

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

Having dealt with Victoria and New South Wales, as the two greatest of our Australian resources, we now proceed to discuss, as next in importance, our Native Army in India. When it is remembered that this force has served us so faithfully and loyally, not only in our many Indian wars, but in many parts of the world, notably in Sir David Baird's expedition to Egypt, Bourbon, Seringapatam, Besi-Boo-Aki, Scinde, Aden, China, Persia, Abyssinia, and again in Egypt under Lord Wolseley, and again recently in Burmah, we may well congratulate ourselves that in the deeply-to-be desired consolidation of Imperial Federation we shall find here much to be thankful for and to be proud of.

From a lecture delivered on a recent occasion at the Royal United Service Institution by Major-Gen. J. F. H. Gordon, C.B., of the Bengal Staff Corps, we gather the following interesting facts connected with our Native Bengal Army:—

This army consists, as it appears, of twenty-four regiments of Cavalry, sixty-four battalions of Infantry, a corps of sappers and miners, and four mountain batteries of artillery. This is inclusive of the Punjab Frontier Force, which has recently been transferred from the administration of the Government of the Punjab to the authority of the commander-in-chief, but continues as a separate unit for frontier duties, and retains its local and distinctive character. It has a strength of four regiments of cavalry, a corps of guides (one regiment cavalry, one battalion infantry), four batteries mountain artillery, and eleven battalions of infantry. In addition there are also six regiments of cavalry, twelve battalions of infantry, comprising the Hyderabad contingent, the Central India horse, and local corps in Rajputana and Central India. With the exception of the Central India horse they are all organized on the old irregular systems, with two to four British officers to each corps.

Two-thirds of the Bengal Army are recruits from Northern India and Nepal, and one-third from the North-West Provinces. Many diverse and warlike races are scattered over this vast area. The chief among them are the Hindoo classes of the Sikh and the Dogra Rajput of the Punjab, the Gurkha of Nepal, and the Brahmin, Rajput, Jat, and other Hindoo classes of the North-West, while of the Mahomedans there are the Pathan border tribes of Northern India, the Punjabi and the Hindoostani classes. All are of the peasantry class, of good physique, hardy, enduring, and courageous. There is no lack of them. The military spirit still lives among them. Our service is popular, and they come forward freely to enlist. Indian history shows what good soldiers Hindoostanis have proved themselves in many brilliant actions against warlike enemies in vastly superior numbers. We know with what courage and honesty the old Sikh Army, composed of natives of the Punjab, fought us in two campaigns, and at what cost we secured victory. The Pathan, the Gurkha, and the Jat have fought gallantly against us, and as gallantly for us. Our stoutest foes have become our strongest friends, and flock to fill our ranks. The regiments have a provincial rather than a territorial character. Some are formed wholly of one class or race, and are called class regiments, but the majority are composed of mixed classes, organized in separate troops and companies, and called class troops or company regiments.

Of the twenty-four Cavalry regiments from the North-West Provinces, and fifteen from the provinces of the Punjab, five are class regiments, and nineteen have class troops. The class regiments are the Bengal cavalry (Mahomedan), the 14th Jats (Hindoo), the 15th Mooltanni Mahomedan, the 16th Sikhs and Dogra (Hindoo), and 17th Punjab (Mahomedan).

Of the sixty-four infantry battalions, thirty-one recruit from the Punjab, thirteen from Nepal, and twenty from the North-West Provinces. Of these twenty-two are class battalions, and forty-two have class companies. The class battalions comprise thirteen of Gurkhas, five of Sikhs, one of Dogras, and three of Muzbis (Punjab pioneers).

The Sappers have class companies, and recruit in Hindoostan and the Punjab. The mountain batteries recruit from Punjab.

The cavalry regiments are numbered from 1st to 19th Bengal cavalry, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, Punjab cavalry. Seven of the Bengal cavalry are Lancers.

Each regiment consists of eight troops, organized in four squadrons, and has a complement of nine British officers, viz., the commandant, four squadron commanders, and four squadron officers, one of the latter being Adjutant. It has a strength of 625 natives of all ranks, viz., four Ressaldars, four Ressaidars, one Woordie Major (native adjutant), eight Jemadars, eight Koti Duffadars, fifty-six Duffadars, eight Trumpeters, 536 Sowars. One of the Ressaldars has the rank of Ressaldar-Major, which makes him the senior native officer.

The infantry regiments are numbered 1st to 45th Bengal Infantry, 1st to 5th Gurkha Regiments of two battalions each, 1st to 4th Sikh Infantry, 1st to 6th Punjab Infantry. Each battalion consists of eight

companies, organized in two wings or half-battalions, and has a complement of eight British officers, viz., the commandant, two wing commanders, and five wing officers, two of the latter being adjutant and quartermaster. It has a strength of 912 natives of all ranks, viz., eight Subadars, eight Jemadars, forty Havildars, forty Naicks, sixteen drummers, 800 privates. One of the Subadars has the rank of Subadar-Major, and one of the Jemadars is native adjutant.

The corps of Guides of the Punjab Frontier Force consists of six troops of cavalry and eight companies of infantry, under one commandant. It has a complement of fourteen British officers, and a strength of 1,381 natives of all ranks organized on the same system as cavalry and infantry regiments.

The corps of Bengal Sappers and Miners consists of eight companies, viz., six service companies; A Depot company—specially for bridging, telegraphs, submarine mining, field printing, and photographic services; B Depot company—recruits; Commandant, Adjutant, Superintendent of Park, Superintendent of Instruction, 8 company commanders, 8 company officers, 1 warrant officer attached to the Park, 1 Sergeant-Major, 1 Quartermaster-Sergeant, 12 sergeants, 14 Corporals, 14 Second Corporals of the Royal Engineers, and 8 Subadars, 16 Jemadars, 48 Havildars, 80 Naicks, 1,200 Sappers, 16 Buglers, making a total of 1,331 natives of all ranks.

Each mountain battery of six mountain guns has a complement of four British officers from the Royal Artillery attached to it, viz., a commandant and 3 subalterns, and a strength of 3 native officers, 98 gunners, and n.c.o., and 138 drivers.

A British medical officer with a native hospital establishment is attached to each regiment.

We should like very much to go into the interior economy of each regiment, its equipments, reserves, pensions, rewards and decorations, but our limits will not admit of this; we therefore pass on at once to the Madras Army, taking our facts from the evidence of Major J. Michael, C.S.I., Madras S.C., late Secretary to Government, Military Department, Madras.

From this officer, we gather, historically, that the town of Madras was founded by the servants of the East India Company in 1639, and the first Fort St. George built in the following year. Although the merchants employed armed retainers, known as "Topassas and Misticas" to the old writers, for the protection of their factories, it was not until about a century later, viz., in 1726, that any attempt was made to raise and organize troops. England was then at war with France, and in this year Madras was besieged, and capitulated to the French.

The local British Government of the day, having been compelled by this disaster to betake itself to its other settlement—Fort St. David, near Cuddalore, on the Coromandel Coast—began to entertain forces for the maintenance of its position against the French. These forces seem, however, to have possessed but little organization, and were armed with matchlocks, bows and arrows, spears, &c.; but they served their purpose, supplemented by Topassas, a half-caste Portugese, negroes and, Arabs hired from Bombay, Rajpoots, Hindoostans, and any fighting men that could be picked up.

At first these levies were composed entirely of such foreigners, and it was not till 1758, when most of the troops, which had been sent on a sudden emergency to Bengal with Clive, were still absent, and another collision with the French was imminent in South India, that the Madras Government began to raise regiments composed of the inhabitants of the Carnatic. In this way the present Madras Sepoy force came into existence.

Colonel Wilson, in his history of the Madras Army, tells us that the Sepoys thus raised were formed into regular companies of 100 men each, with a due proportion of native officers, Havildars, Naicks, &c., and that some sound rules were established for their pay and promotion.

(To be continued.)

So the cuirass is doomed, moralizes the *United Service Gazette*, and not without a reason. "The value of a weapon—and we consider here the cuirass as a defensive weapon—does not consist merely in its material power, but its value increases or diminishes according as it inspires more or less confidence in those who use it, and more or less fear in those who are menaced by it. It is the moral value of the weapon. In days gone by, when firearms were in their infancy, or at most in their childhood, in the days of the flint lock or the muzzle loader, a musket ball was seldom known to pierce a breastplate and kill its wearer, who, thus considering himself almost invulnerable, rushed to the charge and bore down his opponents with the audacity inspired by confidence. The foot soldier, armed with the musket, felt himself at a disadvantage against this foe, on whose shining plate-scales his bullet would flatten and his bayonet turn aside. But those days are gone by."