

the Punjab and the North West frontier are the preponderating element in the Native Army, and these territories form, without doubt, the finest recruiting ground in India. A finer soldier than a Sikh, better behaved in time of peace, braver, more faithful, and more enduring in time of war, there is not in any country in the world. But the better the materials of which the Native Army is composed the more need is there to keep a strict watch over its discipline and loyalty. A brave, well instructed soldier makes, of course, the most formidable mutineer. Now I do not mean to say that there is at this moment any active spirit of disaffection working in the army. I know nothing about that. The danger is that, should such a spirit spring up anywhere, the army is so constituted that we could not hinder its spread through its whole extent. There are two ways in which we can construct the army. We can make each regiment a miniature representation of the different races that people the empire—one company Punjabees, another Afghans, a third Hindostanees, and so on. This, or rather something similar to this, was the constitution of the old Sepoy Army, and the consequence was that by constant association all the national and religious angularities of the different races were rubbed away. The Mahomedan adopted Hindoo habits; the Hindoo worshipped at Mahomedan shrines; and both flung themselves as one man into the conflict against the British Government. The difference in religion had ceased to act as a non conductor from one to the other. The other method is to divide the army into divisions, recruited from particular nationalities. The experience of the mutiny shows that our safety lies in this. The Punjab regiments, constituting as they did a distinct force, having traditions and interests of its own, held true to us when the Sepoy regiments were breaking up in every direction; and similar lines of division enabled us to check the spread of mutiny to Madras and Bombay. Since that time every officer of experience has counselled that this principle be made the basis on which to construct the Native Army. I give the names of a few—Sir Neville Chamberlain, Sir Herbert Edwards, Lord Sandhurst, General Thesiger (late adjutant general of the army), Brigadier-General Wright (late deputy adjutant general), and Colonel Chesney, the author of "Indian Policy," in which work, I ought to say, the advantages of this principle are drawn out and commented on at length. Yet in the face of this wonderful consensus of opinion—I can remember no single problem in Indian politics where a like unanimity is to be found—the army is recruited on the principle that prevailed in the old Sepoy Army, and which broke down with such disastrous results in 1857. The endeavour is to make each regiment in the Bengal Army a microcosm of the whole Presidency, and the consequence is that we can never even guess how far disaffection spreads. This was the case when the Kooka Insurrection broke out some years ago. As it turned out, this was only an isolated outbreak, attended with no ulterior consequences. But there was at that time a very uneasy spirit prevalent in the Punjab. The people, it was known, were dissatisfied at the neglect with which their services in the mutiny had been treated, and for a time the Government of India was seriously alarmed. Perhaps, for all they knew, the army might be tainted with a similar fanaticism; and, as in almost every regiment on the Bengal side there were some Sikhs, they could not judge when the next explosion would occur, or to what extent other creeds and casts

might have made common cause with them. The advantages of the other methods of organization are thus set forth by Lord Sandhurst. He writes,—

"As the Supreme Government found it necessary to divide the immensely swollen Presidency of Bengal into three governments to insure the reality and limitation of local authority, so I believe it to be necessary to divide the Bengal Army into three *corps d'armee* for the maintenance of discipline and of personal command. Had the army of Bengal been so divided before 1857, it admits of a doubt whether the mutiny of one portion of it would have entailed the spread of disorder throughout other corps. Our experience of the manner in which it was possible to hold the Madras and Bombay Armies together in spite of the example and propaganda to which they were exposed seems to show that safety would have been found in that division of commands and *corps d'armee* which has now been recommended.

"The fact is that the motive to loyalty and good faith arises as a national consequence from the constitution of a provincial *corps d'armee*. Such a force officered and composed of men whose families are engaged in the production of wealth, either as agriculturists or traders in the towns and country around them, and who must be the first and heaviest sufferers in case the army declared war against Government, has the strongest of all inducements to remain at peace, because it is virtually their own interest and fortunes that are placed in jeopardy by the anarchy of a mutiny. Moreover every provincial army would act as a counterpoise to every other. Say the Punjab force mutinied; it would not plunder its own towns and villages. It would attempt that work in some neighbouring province. But there the troops, however little they cared for Government, would not allow their own relatives and friends to be killed while they stood passively by, or made common cause with the killers.

"Let me now sum up what I have been saying in this and my three preceding letters. The present Native Army in Bengal is composed of admirable materials, but from lack of proper organization it is sinking into a state of inefficiency. There is absolutely no doubt about this. I have talked with officers of every degree of age and experience; the remedies they proposed to apply of course differed, but I never met one who was not completely convinced that the army as it exists at present stands in need of thorough reconstruction. And it must be remembered that on such a question as this special weight attaches to the convictions of men in personal contact with native troops as regimental officers. The decay of efficiency in an army is like the progress of some insidious disease in the human frame. The sufferer can trace its growth by indications by which he alone is capable to see and feel. Happily, in the present instance the remedies are all at hand and easily applicable. It is necessary to restore to the English officers the confidence of security and the encouragement of hope, without which it is idle to suppose you will get zealous and efficient servants of the State. It is necessary to improve the quality of the native officers, and the only conceivable method of accomplishing this is to attract into the army the gentry of India. There is no class that possesses both the military spirit and the means of educating itself, but so long as we insist that all promotion must originate from the ranks we do by our own act exclude it from the army. Lastly, we

must give up the system of recruiting which broke down in 1857, and adopt the principle of provincial armies, which has been repeatedly urged upon the Government by so many eminent authorities.

"I cannot refrain from fortifying all that I have said by extracts from the letters written by Sir Henry Lawrence. Sir Henry was one of the few eminent Indian officials—at least in modern days—who have had sufficient breadth of view and imaginative sympathy to be able to look at our rule as it strikes a native. This was the cause of his quarrels with Lord Dalhousie. Lord Dalhousie was an imperious, hard headed man, with enormous powers of work, but utterly incapable of understanding the sensitive mental organization of the Oriental, or the important part which the imagination plays in his scheme of life. Sir Henry Lawrence understood this as hardly any Indian statesmen has done except Sir James Outram, Elphinstone, Munroe, and Malcolm, and his official life may be said to have been one passionate endeavor to get some scope and breathing space for Indian ability and Indian ambition to exert and develop itself in. The following are the extracts I have referred to—the italics are my own. In 1853 Sir Henry writes to Lord Hardinge as follows:—

"The native army wants reform even more than the native civil branch. *It is not too much to expect from human nature that men should, under all circumstances, be faithful in an army.* . . . *wherein the highest attainable rank is that of a subahdar major or resaldar?* No doubt the service is an excellent one for ninety nine men out of every hundred, but we sadly want an outlet for the one bolder and more ambitious spirit which *must* exist in every hundred; and for want of this legitimate outlet we may some day meet with a great catastrophe, or be content to go on with a system that *does not* get out of a native army half what might be got. *I cannot perceive the danger of making subahdars and jamadars of irregular corps captains and lieutenants. They virtually are such but without the pay. Let the army be officered (regimentally) by three or by one European officer, so as to give openings for adjutant or second in command; or even of commander occasionally to natives.* Such a scheme may appear over liberal, because we have hitherto gone on a different system; but how we have gone on, and how nearly we have more than once been extinguished your lordship knows.

"Again he writes to Lord Canning in 1857:—

"We measure too much by English rules, and expect, contrary to experience, that the energetic and aspiring among immense military masses should like our dead level and our arrogation to ourselves, *even when we are notorious imbeciles* of all authority and all emolument. . . . Unless we treat natives, and especially native soldiers, as *having much the same feelings, the same ambition, the same perception of ability and imbecility as ourselves, we shall never be safe.*

"These wise and weighty words were written about twenty years ago. The truth of them is obvious, but they have borne no fruit. We are jogging along contentedly in the ancient ruts, and not even the warnings of 1857, delivered one would think with sufficient emphasis, have availed to startle us out of our optimism, which is not more unjust to the people we rule than detrimental to ourselves."