

TAKING THE VAIL.

(From *Tinsley's Magazine*.)

The vail was taken. And her calm pale face.
Smiled sadly on me as she said good by;
No quiver on the lip my gaze could trace,
No tear drop glistened in her young bright
eye.

'Twas the black vail. And yet I could not see
Upon that radiant face one sign of sorrow.
She parted; just as oft she'd said to me,
"I'll meet you at the same place, dear, to-mor-
row."

But now the vail was taken. And she said
With just a thrill of girlish laughter,
"I can't come out to-morrow; but instead
"I'll meet you here, dear Charles, the day
after."

And so the vail was taken. All in vain
I'd tried upon her bonnet-top to cock it;
So drew it off, to kiss; ran for the train,
And took the vail—Jane's vail—home in my
pocket.

Two hair pins to her chignon fastened it,
Which very quickly I had disconnected;
On these incontinent I chanced to sit—
Then how I took the vail I recollected!

Our Indian Army.

The correspondent of the *Times*, whose letter on the subject of the Native Army of India has excited so much interest in England, has sent the following additional observations:

"I propose to complete in this letter the remarks I have been making on the state of the Native Army. I have pointed out the vices inherent in the constitution of the Staff Corps, which, in my judgment, renders its abolition an immediate necessity. I pass on now to the not less important question how the native commissioned ranks of the army ought to be filled up. I said in my last letter that, rightly managed, we might obtain in this way a wonderful increase of stability to our rule. This opinion I wish to justify and explain.

"Hitherto, in accordance with the stern democracy of our rule, all promotion in the Native Army has been from the ranks. Every one has been compelled to enlist as a private soldier, has had to work his way painfully through the non commissioned grades, till, if sufficiently tenacious of existence, he became a native officer when he had one foot in the grave, and every spark of military ardour had been long since quenched. The new army, created in 1857, gave us a far different and better order of native officers. Men of birth and position responded through the Punjab and along the north west frontier to the summons of the British Government. Each man would bring with him twenty or thirty retainers, and engage to enlist the whole provided he was nominated the native officer over them. Such gentlemen thronged in particular to the cavalry regiments. But as soon as the mutiny was quelled we hastened to put ourselves back into the old rut. Promotion is once more from the ranks, and from the ranks only, throughout the whole Native Army. The proper function of the native officer is to be the connecting link between the English officers and the men; standing by virtue of his education, rank, and general intelligence on the same level, or nearly so, as the first, and by virtue of his nationality acting as the medium of interpretation between the English officer and the native private. But how can an illiterate man who enters the service on seven rupees a month, who never from that day receives any edu-

cation, who cannot speak English, discharge, such a part? He cannot; but there is no reason to suppose that a better and higher class of native officers could not do all that is needed. To render the service more attractive to the upper classes the pay of the native officers ought to be increased. This might easily be done by diminishing the number in each regiment, and adding the money thus obtained to the pay of the officers retained. The Lieutenant-Governors and Chief Commissioners of the various Provinces might be empowered to send to the Commander-in-Chief the names of such of the gentry as desired to enter the Service. These, as vacancies occurred, might be taken on probation for a year, and if at the close of that period they were reported on favourably by their commanding officers, they should be enrolled as commissioned officers. The sole preliminary test exacted ought to be a thorough knowledge of English. Without this knowledge there is no hope of any genuine comradeship existing between the Englishmen and the native officers. They pass their lives in different worlds, and are destitute of the means of intercommunication. It is true that the English officer can to a certain extent pass the boundary which divides his world from that of the native; he knows something of Hindostanee, though in general he speaks it villanously; but to make the intercourse either useful or pleasant reciprocity is indispensable. Besides without knowledge of English it is impossible for the native officer to acquire any knowledge of his profession. The details, however, of such a reform may be safely left for consideration until the principle is accepted. It is this that I am anxious to insist upon here. Hitherto, we have allowed the upper classes to languish in obscurity, to ruin their estates, and kill themselves with extravagant, living, under the impression that it was dangerous to employ them. This policy, I am convinced, proceeds upon a false view of human nature. Men do not conspire against a Government which gives them a career in life, which treats them with honour, which makes them participators in its own greatness; but they do hate and will conspire against one which excludes them from all these benefits. There is a passage in Count Segur's *History of the French Invasion of Russia*, which may be very appositely quoted here. Prussia, as it is well known, was compelled to aid this invasion by a contingent of her troops, and this is what Segur tells us of the behaviour of these soldiers:—

"They fought like lions upon all occasions. . . . They expressed themselves anxious to wash out, in the eyes of the French, the shame of their defeat in 1806 to reconquer our esteem, to vanquish in the presence of their conquerors, to prove that their defeat was only attributable to their Government, and that they were worthy of a better fate. . . . In fact, as they were united with the conquerors, and shared the rights of conquest with them, they allowed themselves to be seduced by the all-powerful attraction of being on the side of the victor."

This passage exactly describes the feelings with which the soldiers of the Punjab hastened to take part in the siege of Delhi. The recollection of former defeats had not embittered them against the English; they respected them, and rejoiced under such leaders to prove their prowess in the battle-field. When the mutiny was quelled these soldiers were enthusiastically loyal, proud of their own achievements, and proud of

the officers who had led them to victory; a very little warmth and generosity on our part would have bound the Punjab to us for ever. But from England no sign came. There were no special thanks from the Queen to the brave Punjab soldiers who had helped to storm the breaches of Delhi and poured out their blood like water in our cause; no special honours or rewards for the native officers who had led them. To this day not a single Punjabee who fought in the mutiny bears Her Majesty's commission.

"Such, however, as the feeling of the Punjab was, such I am convinced is the feeling (though latent) amid the aristocracy of India. They dislike us because we will not allow them to do anything except dislike us; but they would infinitely rather be permitted to work with us as our friends and associates and recognized servants of the Queen. It is we and not they who have been arrogant and exclusive. At present there are only eight English officers to each regiment; a single severe engagement would be sufficient to sweep away the whole, and it is admitted on all hands that the present native officers are quite incompetent to act independently. The only alternative that remains is either to increase the number of English officers or greatly to improve the quality of the native. The former would involve a great increase in the Army Budget, and may, therefore, be dismissed as impracticable, the latter would be a great political reform, and would cost nothing. No one acquainted with the history of India will deny that there is abundance of military capacity among the people; but at present, in recruiting for the army, we look for it in the wrong places. By compelling every one to commence military life as a private we have limited our choice to a single class, with much the same results as if in Europe, during the Middle Ages, the leaders of the Crusades and the members of the various orders of chivalry had been rigidly debarred from military service, and an army recruited exclusively from the serfs and villains."

Resuming this subject, the *Calcutta* correspondent of the *Times* says:—

"If I recur again to the condition of the Native Army I am aware that I run the risk of wearying your readers. I must ask them to bear with me in consideration of the extraordinary importance of the subject and the not less extraordinary difficulty of attracting attention to it. The last is mainly due to the confusion into which things have fallen since the mutiny. There have been so many changes and counter changes, such repeated partial reconstructions, that independent external criticism has been forced into silence in sheer bewilderment, and criticism from the army itself is not to be had. It is not too much to say that the peace and progressiveness of our Indian empire are inseparably linked to the loyalty of the Native Army. It exists in our midst, either as the strongest guarantee we can have for the stability of our rule, or as a mine charged with explosive materials that at any moment may shatter all our plans to pieces. It certainly is not the first at the present moment, but it might easily be made so. I have in my former letters treated of the officers—English and native; I come now to consider the rank-and-file. The soldiers that compose the present army are, I believe, finer and more effective than any we have ever had. They have been instructed with far greater care; arms of precision are about to be served out to them, and they are diligently drilled in the knowledge and use of them. Men from