

EXTRACT from a LETTER from General Sir *C. J. Napier* to the Duke of *Wellington*, dated Simla, 15 June 1850.

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13. I MUST now come to the Bengal Native Army, which is said to have much fallen off from what it was in former days. Of this I am not a judge; but I must say that it is a very noble army, and with very few defects. The greatest, as far as I am capable of judging, is a deficiency of discipline among the European officers, especially those of the higher ranks. I will give your Grace an instance.

14. The important order issued by the Governor-general and the Commander-in-Chief to prepare the Sepoys for a reduction in their pay, I ordered to be read and explained with care to every regiment, with the exception of three or four commanders of regiments; none obeyed the order; some gave it to pay-sergeants to read, and others altogether neglected to do so, such is the slackness of discipline among officers of high rank, and on an occasion of such vast importance. This want of discipline arises from more than one cause: a little sharpness with officers who disobey orders will soon correct much of this; but much of it originates in the great demand made upon the troops for civil duties, which so breaks up whole regiments, that their commanding officers lose that zeal for the service which they ought to feel, and so do the younger officers. The demand also made for guards is immense. These guards are sent too far off to be relieved, and mount for weeks, and more frequently for months; of course every man not on sentry goes to bed. I will not lengthen this letter by entering more into such details, but enclose as a sample, a report made to me a short time ago by Major Rowland Hill.

15. His corps has lately been made over for civil duties, and each, in its turn, of these regiments, so employed, and so ruined, in executing duties for doing which I have every reason to believe that there are from 300,000 to 400,000 "Chuprassee Burkindauses" paid by Government. However, whatever the exact number may be, it is enormous, and under proper arrangement more than sufficient to execute all the civil duties which are thrown upon and injure the troops both in health and discipline. I cannot believe that the discipline of the Bengal army will be restored till it is relieved from civil duties, and those duties performed by police battalions, as was intended by Lord Ellenborough.

16. The next evil which I see in the Native army is, that so many of the senior officers of regiments are placed on the staff or in civil situations, and very old worn-out officers command regiments; these carry on their duties with the adjutant and some favoured native officer. Not above one or two captains are with the regiment, and the subalterns being all young, form a society among themselves, and neglect the native officers altogether. Nothing is therefore known as to what is passing in a native regiment. It is difficult to apply a remedy to this evil, but I think it can be done.

17. With regard to drill, it is very far from good among the majority of native regiments. This is the fault of the officers who command divisions and brigades. I am doing all in my power to correct this evil, and I have been well aided by many of those commanders.

18. The last and most important thing which I reckon injurious to the Indian army is the immense influence given to "caste;" instead of being discouraged, it has been encouraged in the Bengal army. In the Bombay army it is discouraged, and that army is in better order than the Bengal army. In this latter the Bramins have been leaders in every mutiny. In the last mutiny about pay, and which, I may say, was general through the Bengal army, though it appeared

in six regiments only, all appeared to be governed by the Bramins; and seeing the great danger which existed then, with permission of the Governor-general I disbanded the 66th Native Infantry. I seized the opportunity which accident produced, and transferred a regiment of Goorkas into the vacancy; had I not done this, it would have been vain to disband the 66th Regiment, for plenty more were prepared to revolt had I not shown them that other troops were ready to take their places. The mutineers had said openly, "Wait till we all act together;" others had said, "How can they replace us?" It was a crisis of great peril, and I thought a strong measure alone could meet it; I therefore showed the Sepoys that we could "replace them," and that if they all "acted together" I had the force to coerce them, for they dread the Goorkas. Lord Dalhousie said, that I ought to have consulted the Supreme Council at Calcutta before I introduced the Goorkas. My Lord Duke, when 40,000 men were in a state of smouldering mutiny, and many in open mutiny, and 60,000 armed Sikh soldiers ready to rise, how could I lose five weeks to consult the Supreme Council at Calcutta? And what advice could these gentlemen have given to me in a moment of so much danger? In all I did to quell that mutiny, I had no choice but to act on the spur of the moment according to the best of my judgment. I believe that the sudden and (by all) unexpected appearance of the Goorkas at the fortress of Govindghur put an end to the danger; but for that step, some 12 or 20 regiments would have piled arms and demanded their discharge. Had this happened, bloodshed must have ensued. I was successful—the army is now quiet—and a good spirit reigns in it. But as at any time there may be some change made in the pay or allowances, I cannot say that such may not reproduce disturbance.

19. The greatest deficiency in the Company's army, and it daily becomes more important, is the want of a sufficient number of engineer and artillery officers. It is notorious, and must soon be remedied.

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INDIAN ARMY.

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Sir C. J. Napier to the Duke of Wellington,  
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