

## CHAPTER X

### KITCHENER AS I KNEW HIM

**M**UCH has been written about the late Lord Kitchener as a soldier, as an administrator, as a machine, and even as an impostor. It shall be my aim to depict him as the *great man* he undoubtedly was.

Mr. Hugh Bennett, of Malvern, has been kind enough to give me some detail of Lord Kitchener's early life. From this it appears that after being at school at Geneva, where he was thoroughly grounded in the French language, he passed on, at the age of fifteen, to the care of Mr. Bennett's father (the Reverend John Bennett, chaplain of Montreux), who took in, as boarders, many English and American pupils.

Herbert, as he was called, was a lanky boy, shooting up so quickly that no tailor could keep pace with his rapid growth, and consequently so thin that he earned, and retained during his sojourn at this school, the sobriquet of "Skinny." He showed marked ability in mathematics and in conversational French, but in other respects did not give any particular promise. A characteristic feature was his extreme reliability, even at that early age. A marked peculiarity was that he did not make friends easily, and was addicted to long walks by himself, instead of joining his comrades' games. At the same time he was always cheerful enough, and quite willing to be sociable, while all who came in contact with him could not fail to be struck by his kindly, helpful nature.

My first personal meeting with Kitchener was at Delhi a day or two after he reached India in November, 1902, and while he was living in his railway saloon. Being with General Hill, who was commanding an improvised division

we saw a good deal of the Chief as he rode round the outposts of the Southern Army in the manoeuvres. We thought he was very much a "live wire," and got early intimation of his very decided views on most questions.

General (now Sir James) Willcocks was one of the brigadiers and, in his zeal for active service conditions in every way, appeared at the flank of his command dressed as he would in the field; that is, a khaki muffler instead of a collar, thick shooting boots and no sword or belt. The next day we all got a reminder about the proper order of dress!

Lord Kitchener was very particular about his camp at the 1903 Durbar, and quite fussy over the review rehearsals, especially the quicker movement of the infantry at the first pivot on to the saluting base. There was so much galloping to be done for him in continual messages to go faster, that even the inspector-general of cavalry (General Locke-Elliott) was commandeered. Just in front of Kitchener was a ditch about two feet broad and the same depth. Locke-Elliott was riding a young remount which wouldn't face this. The message was very urgent; so, whipping out his sword, he gave the youngster such a rib roast with the flat of it, that he was soon the other side. Kitchener was intensely amused.

All the review orders were strictly scrutinised by Kitchener and many arrangements changed; for instance, he insisted on all major-generals not commanding troops riding on his staff and, when the directors-general of ordnance, military works, medical services, etc., had been roped in, there was a goodly array. The order, however, caused much trepidation, for many of them had failed to bring any mounted kit, and one or two had no horses!

At this camp we first realised Kitchener's intense dislike of publicity. Every order was headed: "Confidential, on no account to be communicated to the Press"—even one of two or three lines simply giving the hour the Chief would leave camp next morning for rehearsal parade. Many say he was hostile to the Press, but I doubt this, when they never ceased to belaud him. To the Press, too, he mainly owed the British public's wonderful trust and confidence in his sagacity and judgment.

Most people will remember the attack on Lord Kitchener

in the Press during the war. Being our colonel, my officers begged me to write and express their disgust. In reply FitzGerald told me it had not worried Kitchener at all or given him a single sleepless night. He added that the only result had been to get him his "Garter" rather sooner than would otherwise have been the case.

On arrival in India Lord Kitchener looked extremely fit. Indeed, during his seven years as Chief in India, he kept remarkably well, except for one or two attacks of fever. Having suffered a good deal from malaria in Egypt, he was extremely nervous about it: so much so that he went straight to bed at the very earliest indication; and, if report speaks truly, with all his clothes on!

Everyone was immensely interested in his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, and his arrival was looked upon as a red-letter day for the army in India. One of his first acts was to re-number the units of the Indian Army. This met with a good deal of opposition, but he carried it through. His methodical mind could not tolerate the confusion which appeared to him to result from having such an anomaly as the 3rd Gurkhas, the 3rd Brahmans, the 3rd Sikhs, etc. He was rather indignant when twitted with being too fond of changes, remarking, in the famous memorandum on the Kitchener-Curzon controversy, that he hated changes for changes' sake, but that he did not shrink from them when really necessary.

Some extensive touring caused him to view with dissatisfaction the organisation and allotment of the army, and seeing no method whatever in the arrangements then existing, he evolved a new allotment of troops to areas, necessitating the abandonment of many stations and the formation of some new ones. In after years, that is during the War, his plans came in for some hostile criticism which was quite unmerited.

It is also interesting to note here that this new project received the unqualified approval of Lord Curzon, except that he expressed doubts as to the accuracy of the estimates submitted. Early in 1904 he even went so far as to say: "The present distribution and organisation of our military forces in India are both obsolete and faulty."

Kitchener's "scheme" aimed at providing India with a war army of nine divisions, after making proper provision for the military requirements of internal security. The components of these divisions were to be trained together in peace under the generals and staffs who would serve with them on active service.

As when K. arrived in India the potential enemy was Russia, these divisions were allotted to the two main lines of advance into Afghanistan: the northern, *via* the Khyber and Peiwar Kotal passes; the southern, *via* the Bolan and Khojak defiles.

Although an army commander was provided for each of these two armies, it was Lord Kitchener's wish that in peace time the duties of these two generals should be confined to "discipline" and "training," each separate division being self-contained in all respects, financial included, as were the old Presidency armies of Madras and Bombay.

Kitchener further desired to see India made capable of providing locally all the requirements of the army—rifles, field-guns, ammunition, clothing of all descriptions, medical stores and instruments, remounts, etc.

Before he relinquished his command, the Russian menace had to a very great extent disappeared, and Lord Morley decided to "go slow" with the completion of the programme. As a matter of fact everything was cut down to the bare bone. Such vital necessities as electric installations in British soldiers' gloomy hospitals and barracks, as well as numerous other projects, introduced by the Chief in the interests of military efficiency, or for the improved comfort of the soldier, were ruthlessly put aside. Many of them indeed had to be carried out later—such as acquisition of land—at a much enhanced cost, while the fulfilment of others, at the time, would have made all the difference as regards Mesopotamia in 1914.

On K.'s departure, he was replaced by General Sir O'M. Creagh, who had been given a mandate by Lord Morley to effect economies in the military charges. The latter indeed appeared to consider there should be no military progress in India at all on account of the understanding arrived at with Russia, followed by the appointment, as Viceroy, of Lord Hardinge, who as an ambassador had



been mainly responsible for the establishment of clearly defined and friendly relations with that country.

It was not fair to Kitchener to assert that his scheme failed when put to the test of a great war. It did not fully function, only because it had not been completed. Indeed the stress of war showed how right he was in his aims at making India self-supporting for military purposes; as well as, in his schemes, to make the Indian units, the Sillidar cavalry and the Indian infantry abandon the system by which commanding officers were made responsible for the provision of horses, and most of the requirements of their unit, other than arms and ammunition. In fact K. saw clearly that in a great war supplies of all natures—men, animals, ammunition, clothing, food, etc., etc.—must be the concern of the State.

India's shortcomings in 1914, and after, were due to Kitchener's successors, who failed either to complete his scheme or to substitute a fresh fully established one in lieu.

A new engine cannot be condemned as failing to work when the engineers who have taken over from the one who first undertook to fashion it, fail to complete its working parts.

As a matter of fact, when you look into all of Lord Kitchener's projects that were scrapped—and the number was large—you are astonished at his circumspection, prudence and prevision.

He was most anxious about the Loi-Shilman railway, which, branching off from the Jamrud line between that outpost and Peshawar, provided an extra line of communication with Landi Kotal at the head of the Khyber Pass. It would have been *invaluable* in the third Afghan War, in 1919, yet it was abandoned.

To speak of only a few other schemes. He alone was the originator of:

- (1) The cavalry school at Saugor,
- (2) Reorganisation of the Ordnance Department,
- (3) Senior Officers' classes,
- (4) Inventions Committee,

but he left India before they could be carried out, much to the detriment of the schemes.

The cavalry school was *not* to be a *Kindergarten* for

juniors, as is now the case, but a *college* where the seniors would learn and be kept in touch with all that was to be taught in regard to cavalry. A special class was to have been formed for adjutants.

The ordnance scheme broke up the department into three distinct branches—viz., manufacture, inspection, storage and issue (factories, inspectors, arsenals)—just as was done at Woolwich in the eighties, after the scandal of twisted bayonets, etc., in Egypt.

The senior officers' class had to be camouflaged as a musketry class at first, in order to get money for railway warrants, etc.!

The inventions committee was a standing board to test, at Roorkee, all inventions sent up by officers and others, and Lord K. obtained a special grant of money for this.

Lord Kitchener's successor did not carry on either the cavalry school or ordnance reorganisation on Lord K.'s lines, nor did he keep going the senior officers' class or inventions committee.

What is so marvellous, with all these progressive, and so necessary, changes introduced, is the fact that—putting aside the expense of great schemes such as re-armament of artillery—the normal cost of the army increased very little, owing to economies effected.

Kitchener was always anxious to save—was always finding out sources of expenditure which were justified in their day, but for which no necessity still existed. Many petty useless charges were done away with under his keen eye.

After his second cold weather tour, Lord Kitchener came to the conclusion that the standard of efficiency of infantry units was very uneven. Casting about for the reason—as was his wont—he rightly saw that the weak point was the instruction and supervision given by generals and their staffs to the training of their commands, and especially the want of soundness and uniformity in their annual inspections.

To come to a reasoned conclusion and to act, being one and the same thing to Lord Kitchener, we soon learnt that in the cold weather of 1904-5 we should be subjected to a very comprehensive test, or tests if we survived the first one. It was to be a matter of competition, Lord

Kitchener giving a trophy to the best British and Indian infantry unit. At the same time an Indian Army Order gave details, which are briefly as follows, and simply meant a sound and thorough inspection on uniform lines :

(a) All infantry units, except Pioneer battalions, would carry out the same test all over India.

(b) This would be conducted personally by the G.O.C. and his staff, who would mark for each event according to instructions detailed.

(c) The unit which obtained the highest marks in each brigade would be re-tested to ascertain the first in the division ; the first in the division would undergo a further test by the G.O.C. Command, and, finally, those placed at the top of each command would be tested by the Chief's own Board, consisting of Major-General Stratford Collins, I.G. Vols., as President, and Colonels Beauchamp Duff, Parks and William Capper, of Army Headquarters, as members.

(d) The curriculum consisted of—

(1) A fifteen mile march in field service order, carrying a hundred rounds of ball ammunition.

(2) To be followed immediately by an attack, with ball, on a position prepared by another unit, and to include reconnaissance, writing of orders, etc., etc.

(3) A bivouac camp, with outposts, which would be attacked.

(4) A night operation, probably opposed.

(5) Preparation of a defensive position to be assailed by other troops.

(6) A retirement of at least ten miles followed up by another unit.

Active service conditions to be maintained throughout in every way. In the final test each event followed immediately on completion of the last, the whole period lasting from fifty to fifty-five hours.

The 1st Battalion 3rd Gurkhas, to which I then belonged, got placed at the top of the brigade, division and command, and when Lord Kitchener came to stay with us at Almora, in circumstances related later on, Hubert Hamilton, his military secretary, gave him the telegram announcing the final result, Indian Army, as he got to the top of the steps

reaching my house. After reading it, Lord Kitchener handed it to me with his customary sweep of the arm, and I read :

“ Result Chief’s Cup, Indian Army : first, 130th Baluchis ; second, 1/3rd Gurkhas, five marks behind ; third, 55th ‘ Coke’s Rifles.’ ”

Seeing my face fall, Lord Kitchener said I ought to be very proud ; and walking into the house told my wife the news, adding that I didn’t seem to look very pleased.

“ No wonder,” she said, “ for it is a great blow to be so near and yet to miss your Cup ; and fancy being beaten by Baluchis ! I never even heard of them, what are they ? ”

Tucked away with a localised corps in a corner of the Himalayas, she had little knowledge of any class except Gurkhas, though she would have known what was meant by Punjabis, Sikhs, Dogras, or Garhwalis.

At tea Lord Kitchener tried to explain the composition of the 130th, but was not very illuminating. Finally he said he did not see her argument, as Coke’s Rifles would be equally justified in objecting to being beaten by Gurkhas. “ Oh, no ! ” said my wife in her loyalty and ignorance, “ they would know before they competed that Gurkhas would certainly beat them ! ” at which K. looked up with his cross eye, with a puzzled expression, as if being chaffed, and then laughed.

In a subsequent conversation, K. asked me if I had found the tests too strenuous and whether we were quite “ fed up ” with them. When I answered that, on the contrary, we had never enjoyed anything more in our lives, especially the final one, he said it had been represented to him that some units had almost broken down under the strain and had found even *one* test, let alone *four*, too severe. Suggesting hesitatingly that perhaps some *generals* didn’t like them—

“ Exactly, that’s it,” he said, looking up quickly, “ but I shall keep them on the books all the same, though without any competition in the future. I’ll keep them on the books because they are very good for generals and their staffs ” (which he always pronounced as if the word rhymed with “ gaff ”).

The next morning, early, he saw the battalion on parade,

when they were at the top of their form. At breakfast he told my wife that he had inspected the 130th, and now he had seen the 1/3rd, adding with a shake of his head: "And if I had been told to choose, I should have selected the 1/3rd."

"I'm awfully glad," said my wife, "then of course you will reverse the decision of your Board."

"Oh, no," answered the Chief, "I can't do that."

• He told me he was very puzzled as to what kind of trophy to present, as he was so tired of cups and bowls and wanted something more uncommon. Mentioning that he was dining in mess that night, I suggested a scrutiny of "The Little Man," i.e. the 5th Gurkha Khud Race Challenge trophy, a silver model of a Gurkha in his national costume, which was then in our possession, and which he'd see in front of the Colonel. The result was the gift of a silver model of a R.W. Surrey soldier to the 2nd Queens, and of a Baluchi to the 130th.

Amongst a number of cantonments to be abandoned, under Kitchener's new scheme, was Almora, in Kumaon, for nearly a hundred years the station of the 3rd Gurkhas. Under a convention signed by Queen Victoria in the sixties, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Gurkhas had been allotted to the cantons of Dharmsala, Dehra Dun, and Almora respectively: "in perpetuity" as the words ran, continuing somewhat as follows: "and although the regiment may be moved at any time, and for any period, according to the will and pleasure of Her Majesty's Government, it will always eventually return to Dharmsala, Dehra Dun, or Almora, as the case may be."

Lord Kitchener did not like conventions; he was also bent on moving Gurkha battalions to various stations in peace time. At first he was inclined to ride rough-shod over these documents, but, later on, apparently, thought better of it. Visiting Dehra Dun, the 2nd Gurkhas showed him their copy, which he is supposed to have thrown on the floor, saying it should never have been drafted!

Later he came, as I've said, to Almora, where we had been asked if we would agree to leave the place. The answer was "Yes," provided we were stationed with our 2nd battalion, then at Lansdowne.

The Chief rode over to Almora from Ranikhet, a matter

of twenty-four miles, and went straight to the barracks before coming on to my house. Getting off his hill pony, and glancing up at the fine double-storied buildings, he walked backwards and backwards and backwards until we thought he would certainly fall over the edge of the plateau.

At last he stopped and, still looking up, asked who on earth built them. The colonel told him the men had done so, with expert assistance and under the supervision of the resident sapper, at which Kitchener snapped out that it was inconceivable why they had ever been constructed at all in a place so remote from anywhere. Then, mellowing a little, he kept on repeating: "How can I take you away from this? How can I take you away from this? And yet I must." However, as things turned out, he never did!

After a very thorough inspection of the whole lines, Kitchener came on to our house, where an early tea awaited him, with my wife slightly perturbed because of his reputation of being somewhat brusque with ladies.

It is most strange how this rumour emanated, for we found him a very charming guest, and most easy to please. Still, there is no doubt it was currently believed to be true. Indeed, we are told it was even mentioned to Queen Victoria, who remarked: "He was always very nice to *me*!"

Kitchener was not in the least shy with ladies, nor did he dislike them. Some of them undoubtedly bored him, while others, overstepping all limits, were very promptly sat on. It was not at all an uncommon thing to see him in ladies' company enjoying himself immensely.

At the 1903 Durbar at Delhi, my wife and I were sitting close behind him at the investiture ceremony. During the long interval, while Lord Curzon changed his robes from one Order to another, K., talking to Lady Powis, told her a diamond ornament in her hair was coming out.

"Push it in for me, please," said Lady Powis.

K. was taken aback, but certainly didn't look shy. Now the thing wanted handling, but, after some hesitation, he simply made a sudden dart at it with his finger, and missed it altogether. Then they both roared with laughter, and K., refusing to have anything more to do with it, Lady Powis had to arrange it herself.

He looked magnificent that night, did K., in his full dress, with all his medals and Orders glittering in the electric light.

A well-known lady, who was a great friend of his, was twitting him one day with his dislike of the fair sex, when he interrupted her by saying he did not dislike them at all.

"Anyhow," said his friend, "you must confess you always keep them at a distance."

"Perhaps," answered K., "but you know the old proverb, 'Familiarity breeds contempt'!"

"Well, Lord Kitchener," remarked the lady, "it takes a certain amount of familiarity to breed anything!"

When paying an afternoon visit at Normanhurst in 1909, Lady Brassey, knowing I came from India, of course asked me if I knew Lord Kitchener.

"Dear me, yes," I replied, "why he is my colonel!"

After this there was a pause, for it was not understood how Lord Kitchener could be a colonel. Eventually, looking at me rather doubtfully, Lady Brassey remarked on the extraordinarily silly rumours which surrounded his personality. She told me she stayed a week-end in the same house-party with him in Ireland. That, although she never spoke a single word to him all the time, she found to her horror that they were leaving by the same train on departure, which meant a very early breakfast together before starting.

"You can imagine my feelings," said she, "for, knowing what most men are like at breakfast, I trembled at the thought of having that meal alone at 7.30 a.m. with the redoubtable K. of K. Not only that, but to accompany him afterwards in the same conveyance to the station." She added that he was just enchanting, looked after her most carefully all the journey, and she was never more delightfully surprised in her life.

So it was with us, and as for *talking*, he never stopped! He came three days after the severe earthquake of 5th April, 1905, which played such havoc with Dharmasala and damaged other hill stations as well. My own house had been mauled with a long zig-zag open crack from the roof downwards, which I pointed out to him as we approached, saying it had been "vetted" by an engineer, who gave his opinion that there was no danger.

"It will last a night or two, anyhow, I fancy," remarked K.

There were rumours of bad accidents at Simla and elsewhere, and a friend of the Chief's at the Grand Hotel, Simla (a very stout lady), was reported seriously injured. He told his staff the morning he set out for Almora to wire condolences and ask for details. The reply came at tea-time, saying the lady was quite uninjured, but the floor had given way and she and the bed had gone right through the ceiling into the room below. Handing it to his military secretary, the Chief said: "Send an answer simply saying, 'Poor bed.'"

After tea and a change, my wife escorted Hubert Hamilton and the A.D.C. to the club for tennis, etc. Taking K. into the verandah, where there was a lovely view of the snows, I put him on a comfortable couch where he could rest his leg, broken the year before, and about which his doctor said he was making a good deal of fuss. Getting a book, I sat near, prepared to read if he didn't want to talk. After a little humming of no particular tune, he began to talk, and went on for some hours with hardly any cessation. It was all so intensely interesting that I sat up very late that night, and the one after, recording all he had said, and now repeat it.

He was very down on *localised* units, and told me so, adding that he was astounded at the number of places he found in India where certain cavalry and infantry units had apparently taken root. In such places, he said, they were cut off from their brigadiers, were very difficult to move in cases of emergency, and were bound to suffer in efficiency from want of supervision and lack of rivalry and competition.

I ventured to suggest that some of these localised units, such as the Central India Horse, Deoli Irregular Force, Gurkha Regiments, etc., were pretty useful; that they gave a very good account of themselves when brigaded in the field with other troops; that their record in competitions, contests and games was no mean one, and that didn't he think there were many advantages that counterbalanced the disadvantages? Instancing as proof the fact that their splendid record made them jealous of their reputation, and anxious to keep up their good name, while isolation



helped the officers to concentrate more on their work, and give deeper study to their profession.

"Hum," said the Chief, "I'll admit I may have to modify my views, especially after what I've seen here!" A pause now occurring, as he appeared to be ruminating, I took up my book, when K. suddenly began again:

"I suppose you are one of those who believe in the Russian bogey?"

• Though somewhat taken aback, I had to confess I understood all our training and military preparations were undertaken with the main view of preventing the Russians from entering India.

"That's all an exploded idea," said K. "We have nothing to fear from Russia, it is the German wolf and not the Russian bear we have to watch. I shall not be a bit surprised if some day you find yourself, with your Gurkhas, advancing in Persia alongside the Japanese."

This was in 1905 and was the first time the German menace had been brought home to me at all. But Kitchener was always looking ahead. A year afterwards, Sir Beauchamp Duff, then Chief of the Staff, told me how greatly impressed he had been with this characteristic of the Chief. How time after time he would take him up some case, with what he thought was a well-considered reasoning noted on it, and "K." after ejaculating his favourite, constant, and long-drawn-out "H-u-m," would say: "Yes, but have you thought how this will affect matters ten years hence?" Duff confessed he had not, and found much difficulty in always doing so.

The word "Chief" is mentioned several times, and it is worthy of note, as a rather curious fact, that Lord Kitchener was hardly ever referred to as "The Chief." He was always alluded to as "K.," or "K. of K." Of the eleven commanders-in-chief in India I have served under, all were invariably referred to as "The Chief," with the exception of Lord Roberts and Kitchener. The former, of course, was generally spoken of as "Bobs," or "Bobs Bahadur," a title of affectionate regard he much valued.

"What sort of a fellow is Brown?" asked Kitchener suddenly.

Now we had a Captain W. M. Brown, a county cricketer, and a fine athlete. Thinking he referred to him, I began

explaining what a marvellous eye he had for games, when I was sharply interrupted.

"I mean your brigadier Browne."

"Oh," I said, "I'm sorry; yes, of course, very nice fellow, knows his job, is an old 3rd Gurkha, pleasure to be inspected by him, etc."

"Well, I've never met him," said K., "but I like his confidential reports better than those of any general in India."

He was talking of Brigadier-General A. G. F. Browne, afterwards a Major-General, a K.C.B., and one of my predecessors in command of the Lahore Division. He certainly had that wonderful faculty of so writing confidential reports, as to put the officer straight in front of you, and that's just what K. wanted.

Kitchener then asked me if I didn't think an Indian career was simply a continuous camp life, for he had been out two and a half years and felt exactly as if he had been in camp the whole time. I told him it had never struck me.

"Oh, I forgot," he said, "I suppose it wouldn't, as you are in a *localised* corps." He was continually rubbing that in.

He then turned the conversation on to cholera. I had some experience of it, and he seemed interested. Then he told me that an epidemic of it occurred amongst his British troops, when concentrated for his advance against the Khalifa in 1898. The matter was very serious as the moment was most inopportune, for a postponement would have upset all his plans. On the second day, at dawn, he had all tents struck, turned inside out and spread on the ground, all clothing scattered over the camp, and every man *stripped naked*. Thus they remained in the sun all day long. There were some very sore skins, but it cured the cholera.

About this period one of those epidemics of unrest and dissatisfaction which roll up from time to time in all armies, attacked the British officers of the Indian army. Just before this time it had got to a pretty bad stage, and quite wrongly many officers, who should have known better, voiced their grievances in the public press. Under the Chief's instructions, Hubert Hamilton wrote semi-officially to every C.O., telling him to call his officers

together, find out exactly what was wrong, and then let him know.

The discontent was mainly confined to the slackers, who, realising they would have to work harder and really study their profession, caught fright, saw their promotion stopped, and were in a deadly funk of what the great K. of K., in his zeal for efficiency, might not do next. In addition, there was an undoubted feeling of uncertainty amongst all field officers regarding the time scale of promotion to lieutenant-colonel. This, it was reported, K. intended to ignore, if not satisfied with a man. Indeed, it had already happened in half a dozen cases of rotters, who had been plainly told they would not be promoted, and must go.

Kitchener got quite excited over this matter and, after asking me if I had seen the military secretary's letter, enquired whether I, too, had understood that, whether my work was good, bad, or indifferent, I should be promoted to major in eighteen years and lieutenant-colonel in twenty-six? In fact, that, when joining the Indian Army, I had made a contract with Government? There was nothing for it but to confess that such had been my impression.

"I call it monstrous," he said, "perfectly monstrous, that such a pandering to inefficiency could ever be conceived. Anyhow I've had the Royal Warrant amended by the Secretary of State and the words 'if well reported on' added. As regards Hamilton's letter, I have the answers from all C.O.s with me now, and, on the whole, I am very fairly satisfied with them. Still there is a very prevalent idea that officers *did* enter the Indian Army under a contract with Government, and that idea must be disabused."

He went on to say that he was disappointed with the officers of the Indian Army, and thought them very ungrateful. He mentioned the letters to the newspapers, saying they were disgraceful. He referred specially to one letter signed "Adjutant," adding that the man ought to be deprived of his appointment, as he did not know the regulations.

He talked about new leave rules granting combined leave for eight months to England, two months being on full pay and the remainder on furlough allowances. He had been told, he said, that officers required more than that period

when serving in India. He wondered why, as he had never taken more than six months himself. He mentioned one objection raised, that, the period being restricted to the months of March to November, no officer of the Indian Army would ever be able to hunt at home. He wondered how many officers of the Indian Army could afford to hunt at home; but anyhow the concessions regarding longer leave, under certain conditions, had been purposely ignored in these letters.

"What do you suppose I did about this leave question?" he asked. "Why it is actually stated that Government is trying to make money by it. What I did was to get hold of one of your own fellows, Birdwood, to thrash out the rules. My only instructions to him were to make them simple, and make them liberal, but to have them the same for all. A more hopelessly intricate and ununiform set of rules than those existing could hardly be conceived, unless it's the present Indian Army pay regulations.

"Yet for all this I get nothing but abuse, and that is why I say you are very ungrateful. Look at my Quetta Staff College. Could any other Commander-in-Chief have got that? Lord Roberts couldn't. Its vast expenditure was only sanctioned because it was realised that coming out here, as I did, with an open mind, and no previous leaning towards India, I saw it was absolutely essential and said so. Look at my interchange of staff duties between staff officers at home and out here. No other Chief could have got *that*."

Seeing me look up quickly, he asked if I did not agree, and I said, "No, because few of us could afford to hold a staff appointment at home, where we should be forced to go on to English rates of pay."

Being really warmed up now, he said he was not referring to men of *localised* corps in a good climate, but had in mind, say, a lieutenant-colonel, on the staff in Madras, with a wife and two or three children at home who must be separated from him for years, for educational reasons. This man, whose health had suffered from the climate, could now exchange with a similar staff officer, say, at Aldershot who might like some Indian soldiering.

I suggested the pay question would come in here badly, but he wouldn't listen and went on:

"Not only are you very ungrateful, but you have no *esprit de corps* whatever."

At this I demurred, giving instances of my own corps and others.

"You are referring to *regimental* *esprit de corps*. That is not enough. I am alluding to *esprit d'armée*. What have you in common with an officer, say, in Madras? Nothing."

Here I had to subside, for I felt he was quite right. It had not occurred to me before; possibly one of the disadvantages of being localised! He then lit a cigarette, looked for a while at the reflection of the sunset on the glorious eternal snows, and then continued on the question of the pay of officers of the Indian Army.

He told me he was changing our pay regulations, for he thought there was nothing so absurd as the way our present emoluments were made up of pay proper, staff pay, tentage, charger allowance, etc. He declared there would be no regimental staff-pay for anything except the appointments of C.O., adjutant and quarter-master, which would be *so much a day and drawn invariably by the man actually doing the work*. All other officers would draw uniform rates of pay of rank.

He said he had spent several nights after dinner working this all out on foolscap with a blue pencil. (Anyone who has had to deal with K.'s rough workings in coloured pencil will appreciate the task in front of the pay people to understand and decipher them!) He told me he sent for the officer at the head of the Pay Department, and asked what he thought of the scheme. This officer, after some hesitation, said he didn't think it would work. The Chief told him he had expected that reply, because it was much too simple and didn't give enough occupation for his baboos, with their everlasting objections. He added that finally he had got it through, and it would soon come out, the extra cost being small.

He then asked what I thought of it. This was rather a poser to answer straight off, and I said so, adding that it seemed all right, but I was uncertain regarding two points: (1) If a man lost all his staff pay when he went away, a great many C.O.s, for instance mine, would never take any leave at all! (2) I could not understand the cost being *small*, especially as affected by furlough pay.

"I'm not touching furlough pay," said K. "I purposely left it alone and it remains unaltered."

I explained that it *must* affect the question all the same, instancing the existing rule that if my C.O. went on furlough I drew half of his command allowance of six hundred rupees a month and half my own staff, while the other half of his command allowance was taken by Government towards the cost of his furlough pay. I enquired how this would now be met if the second-in-command was to get the whole of the C.O.'s allowance of, say twenty rupees a day in full? K. seemed a bit nonplussed and, after being silent a little while, said jerkily:

"Well, I don't care a damn. I've got it through, and they say it will only cost ten lacs. If they've made a mistake, that's their look out."

Apparently there *was* some big mistake, for although that evening the Chief gave me distinctly to understand the matter was settled, and that the new regulations would be promulgated shortly, nothing more was ever heard about them!

The next point K. referred to was his scheme for the special promotion of a certain number of selected officers of the Indian Army annually, which he had got sanctioned by the Secretary of State; asking me if I didn't think it very sound?

I told him frankly that I didn't like it at all, because it was bound to act unfairly in a huge country like India. Adding that all the promotions were bound to be given either to fellows at Simla, and immediately under the eye of the authorities, or, to possibly mediocre men pushed forward by interested generals. All to the detriment of just as able, if not better men, whose good fortune did not take them to Simla, or whose ill-luck had placed them under commanders disinclined to push them.

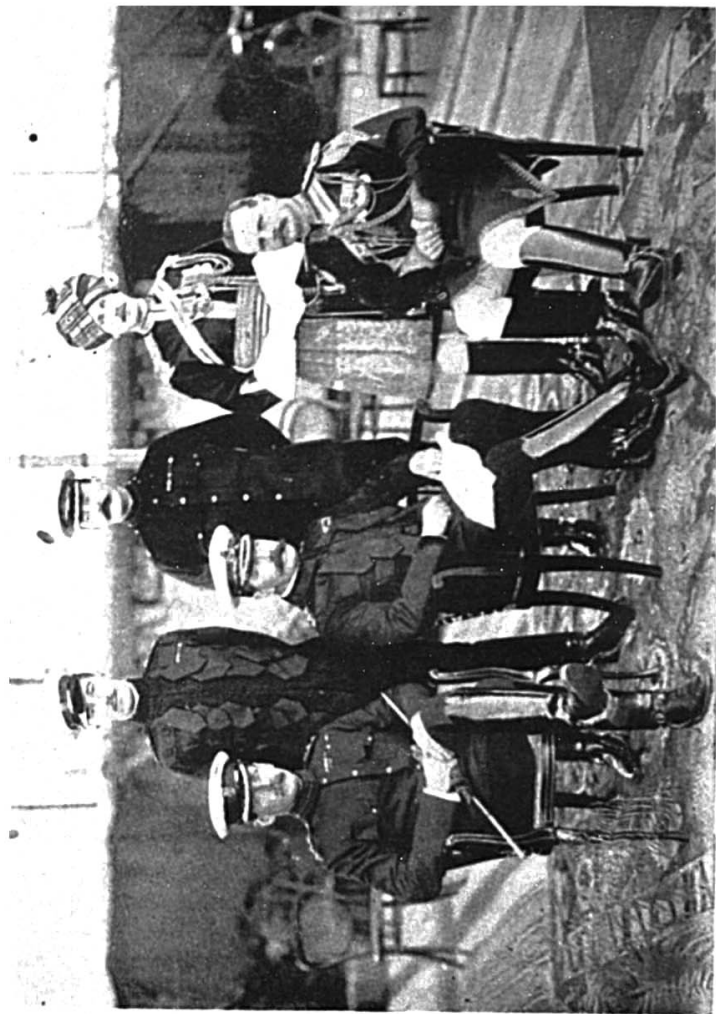
Saying this with a good deal of diffidence, K.'s reply pleased, though it rather astonished, me.

"You are quite right," he said. "It was entirely my own idea, based on my Egyptian experience, but even before I got it through I realised that India was too big a country, and it was therefore unsuitable. I then decided to make none at all, and informed my staff accordingly."

Victor Brooke

M.G.

Frankie Maxwell



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Robert Hamilton

K. of K.

Buckie

LORD KITCHENER AND HIS PERSONAL STAFF, DELHI, 1903

Next day, however, Elles<sup>1</sup> came to me and said I had already promised him one, and that on the strength of this he had actually told one of his officers—Moberley—that he was to get it.”

K. told him he was certainly not going to give one to his blessed department only, but if he had promised, then it must hold good. Eventually the Chief made them all for that first occasion. He told me he did not intend to make any more, but having got it sanctioned, he would leave it on the books as an incentive.

He added he was sorry, for the idea came to him mainly on account of his own case. That he was over ten years a subaltern, and had then realised how hopeless it all was trying to get on, when you were up against slow and stereotyped promotion. However well you did, and however hard you worked, you were forced to wait for the vacancy, or for the time laid down, just the same as the man who never did a stroke more than he was obliged to.

Next he mentioned the great difficulty he found in getting his orders understood. This is a trouble many of us have encountered, and would be emphasised in the case of Kitchener, because his big brain and clear-sighted vision were denied to lesser mortals.

He quoted a recent case where he had told his staff he wanted a manœuvre map made for the whole of India. It was to be completed by the staffs of brigades, divisions, etc., to ensure that they, and their generals, learnt a little more about the country within their areas. There was no particular urgency, but so great was everyone's awe of K., that the commands marked it *urgent*, divisions *very urgent*, and brigades *immediate* with a two months' time limit for completion. The order happening to reach brigades in the monsoon, a fact no one seemed to have anticipated, was of course an impossible one, for you cannot do outdoor sketching during the "rains." K., hearing about this accidentally at Simla, was furious, and the order was cancelled altogether.

Meanwhile my wife had returned, and seeing us in the verandah, went to K.'s room to inspect it. She found his servant squatting outside, but all doors and windows

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edmund R. Elles, the last military member of Council in India.



tightly closed. Opening the long French windows, she explained to his man the working of the "jinmills" or shutters. These, when closed at night, prevented the entry of stray dogs, etc., and yet gave plenty of air. The servant, however, told her that the "Lord Sahib" never had anything at all open at night! Truly he was a veritable salamander, for it was mighty warm weather.