

CHAPTER XIII

THE LITTLE MAN

NEARLY thirty years ago the 5th Gurkhas presented a silver model of a Gurkha in his national costume, commonly known as "The Little Man," as a challenge trophy for an individual competition by Gurkha units in a "Khud" race, i.e. an up-and-down-hill cross country run. For some time, probably owing to better ground at their stations, the competitors mainly came from the 3rd and 5th, until the 6th took up the matter so seriously, that it appears possible the trophy may remain in their mess for ever. The 3rd had a wonderful performer called Budhipersād, who won it quite six years running, partly, in the end, by brow-beating!

One year General Sir Alfred Martin, an old 5th Gurkha, and then commanding the Rohilcund Brigade, was instrumental in having the competition held at Ranikhet, only twenty-four miles from Almora. A battalion of the Rifle Brigade and one of the 60th Rifles, at Ranikhet and Chanbuttia respectively, became so bitten with khud racing that they did little else than run round and round and round the selected course.

When the actual race was over, owing to a mistake they made in the timing, it seemed to the 60th that certain of their men could easily do better time than the winner. An invitation and challenge were therefore sent to the 3rd Gurkhas, inviting a hundred men to come over, as guests, in a month's time and compete against a hundred of the 60th over the original khud racecourse. The challenge was accepted, and a time test being decided on, resulted in the Gurkhas taking the first 99 places!

It is the coming *down* hill where the Gurkha scores, and

the more precipitous the going, the more he scores. It is unnatural to him to run *up* hill, and he only does it, in a race, under protest, as it were, and of dire necessity. The Britisher can go up better, but when it comes to the descent he is left standing still. To see, from a distance, a batch of trained Gurkhas, in a khud race, coming down a really difficult bit, can best be described as reminding one exactly of raindrops falling down a window-pane.

One cannot possibly mention the "Gurkha Khud Race" without a reference to its founder, Charlie Bruce,¹ late of the 5th Royal Gurkhas, who may be fitly termed "the spirit of the race." Not that there is anything spirit-like or ethereal about his appearance, for he has always been "a fine figure of a man." But simply because it was owing to his impulse and efforts that the competition came into being. A member of the Alpine Club, mountaineering has been his hobby for years, while his enthusiasm over this particular form of sport is very great.

Of extraordinary physique and colossal strength, Charlie Bruce has always been famous in the brigade for his muscular vigour. One of his feats on a "big night" was to lie on the floor, and get the heaviest man in the room to *jump* up and down on his stomach! This was usually referred to by the heavy one as something similar to prancing on the deck of a ship. Being unavoidably absent at his farewell dinner, I enquired of a staff officer of mine—of great weight—next day if he had been asked to carry out this performance. "Yes, indeed, sir," he said, "and I was greatly afraid I should hurt him with my sixteen stone, but he only told me to jump higher."

I remember at Almora he was the only man who could lift up our celebrated brass image of "Buddha" weighing about two hundredweight. He could lift this right up, and one night another man talking a great deal of his strength, Bruce passed it to him. Being much too heavy, however, the boaster dropped it, and smashed his own toe. After that we kept it screwed down. General Bruce was always looked upon by his Gurkhas as a paragon, while his intimate knowledge of their classes, languages and customs made him the intimate friend of many hundreds.

He was always in the highest spirits and always ready to fight, laugh, balance a full tumbler on his chin, or race

¹ Brigadier-General the Honourable C. G. Bruce, C.B., M.V.O.

somebody down the khud. His everlasting juvenility and his love of a joke were contagious, and made all his associates young again. I reproduce a picture of him posing, in his pyjamas (with a big cushion to give him the requisite figure!) as "Lallā Brucirām Daftari."¹

He has added much to my knowledge of khud racing, has given me many notes, and we have discussed the vexed question of it being harmful to the men. Budhipersād ran in eleven competitions, beginning when he was seventeen and finishing when he was thirty-five. Harkia Thapa, of the 5th, and later subadar-major of the 6th, ran his first race in 1890, the first year the competition for the trophy was held, which four years later was opened to the whole brigade. In 1913 he was fourth, as subadar-major, in a double-company competition. This particular athlete never actually won the trophy, but he was in the first four no less than eight times. There are many instances of men having run in this competition for ten years on end, without the least harm being done. It is simply a matter of training them on the right lines.

Look at General Bruce himself. He has climbed mountains and run up and down hills all his service, yet this summer, when over fifty-five, he tells me he went better in Switzerland than he has gone for the last ten years. As he has just been selected by the Royal Geographical Society (Nov., 1921) to lead the Mount Everest expedition in the spring, I hope to hear of him, next summer, as being on top of the highest mountain in the world.

Khud racing was first introduced by him partly because years ago Gurkhas were supposed to be inferior in physique and stamina; and partly to create a higher standard of manœuvre. Pace in hill fighting is everything. That is to say, there are often occasions when, if you can go *fast*, you have the finest weapon possible at your hand. The Gurkha scouts in the Tirah Campaign under Lucas, Bruce, Tillard, Nightingale, etc., proved this. They had to carry out almost daily the most difficult of all hill manœuvres, viz. retirement under fire; yet they never failed, and introduced a new standard of pace of manœuvre.

Every young officer joining a hill regiment should be taken into mountainous country to learn the meaning of *pace*, and the ordinary rules of scouting. Moreover occa-

¹ A man who looks after any clerical office.

sionally, he should carry a rifle and full weight of accoutrements so as to judge for himself the tasks he sets his men.

It is not only as a climber that General Bruce deserves a niche in the temple of fame. He is the inventor of "shorts"! I can find no earlier record of them than 1897 with the Gurkha scouts in the Tirah Campaign. For a long time many of us thought that Hugh Rose, of the 3rd Gurkhas, was the first to introduce them, about 1900, as a service dress for a battalion. But as Bruce assures me the 5th Gurkhas adopted them in 1898, Rose must give way.

The dress was speedily adopted in India for work in the hills by British infantry and mountain gunners, and soon, although for years unrecognised officially, became universal for dismounted soldiers. Finally they obtained a grudging admission into the list of items of military supply, as "shorts, khaki, pairs."

Even now, although the war was won in "shorts," their position is still far from secure. The late Commander-in-Chief in India would have abolished them, had he dared; but on his Q.M.G. telling him he had the whole army against him, he refrained.

Those who rail against "shorts," khaki stockings and brown shoes as "uniform" in the tropics, should be made to take long dusty motor journeys, and work in a mud-hut office, say, Tank, on the North-West Frontier, for a whole summer, while forced to wear Bedford cord breeches and leather gaiters. As one somewhat notorious for his strict views on dress, I submit that, with a well-cut khaki frock and a Sam Browne belt, the turn-out is particularly smart.

Each of the five old regiments, raised in India, had its characteristic, for which it was famed in the brigade. The 1st at Dharmasala was renowned for its shooting, marching and band. The 2nd for polo and a wonderful esprit de corps. This, though by no means wanting in the others, was so particularly marked at Dehra Dun, that if the men were all dying of scurvy, they would still perform prodigies for the good name of the "siccon," as the Gurkhas call the regiment. The 3rd was remarkable for its football and, later, its excellent training; the 4th, at Bakloh, for its dress; and the 5th at Abbottabad, for the good pro-

fessional knowledge of the officers, their mountaineering prowess and greater experience in hill warfare.

An outsider, talking to an officer of Gurkhas, was always immensely struck by two things: firstly, by the affection he displayed for his men, and, secondly, at the assured manner in which he let it be known that his own battalion was by far the best of the bunch. At only one period during my long service with Gurkhas did I know of any exception to the latter idiosyncrasy. This was during the tenure of command of the 1/3rd Gurkhas by Hugh Rose, when it was quite common, in any discussion of proficiency in some matter of training, to hear the remark: "Splendid at hill work (or whatever it was), couldn't be beaten, except of course by the 1/3rd."

For many years it was a sort of unwritten law, not to be found in regulations, that a very tall officer should never be appointed to Gurkhas. It is supposed to have originated in the Bombay command at the time when the Commanders-in-Chief of Bombay and Madras had a few nominations. It was not, however, really very strictly enforced until the great height of Ivor Philipps, of the 5th, called particular attention to the anomaly of a man of, say, six feet four inches, working on the hill-side with Gurkhas of five feet. Lord Kitchener took up the matter keenly and laid down a maximum of five feet nine inches, though that, too, I have known evaded. His successor (O'Moore Creagh) annulled the order altogether.

"K." was very jealous of his patronage regarding first appointments to Gurkhas, and like Lord Roberts always made them himself. He told me, personally, that the "Commands" had put up a suggestion that they ought to be allowed to make those appointments to their own areas.

"I told them," said K., "that I quite agreed, but wasn't going to let them!"

The first time K. saw Gurkhas was at the Delhi manoeuvres, shortly after landing in India, and I happened to be present. We were going round the outpost line of the army defending Delhi. While watering horses and eating sandwiches at midday in a "bagh" (grove of trees), Smith-Dorrien, the adjutant-general, told him there were a lot of Gurkha mounted infantry close by, and would he like to see them.

"Yes," said K., "send for the O.C."

Now Gurkhas are not, and never will be, horsemen. Their thick legs and rounded thighs were not meant for gripping the sides of a horse. This does not mean they are not good horse *masters*, for they are, when properly instructed (as evidenced by the reports from the M.I. schools), but proficient, graceful and pleasing mounted soldiers they are *not*.

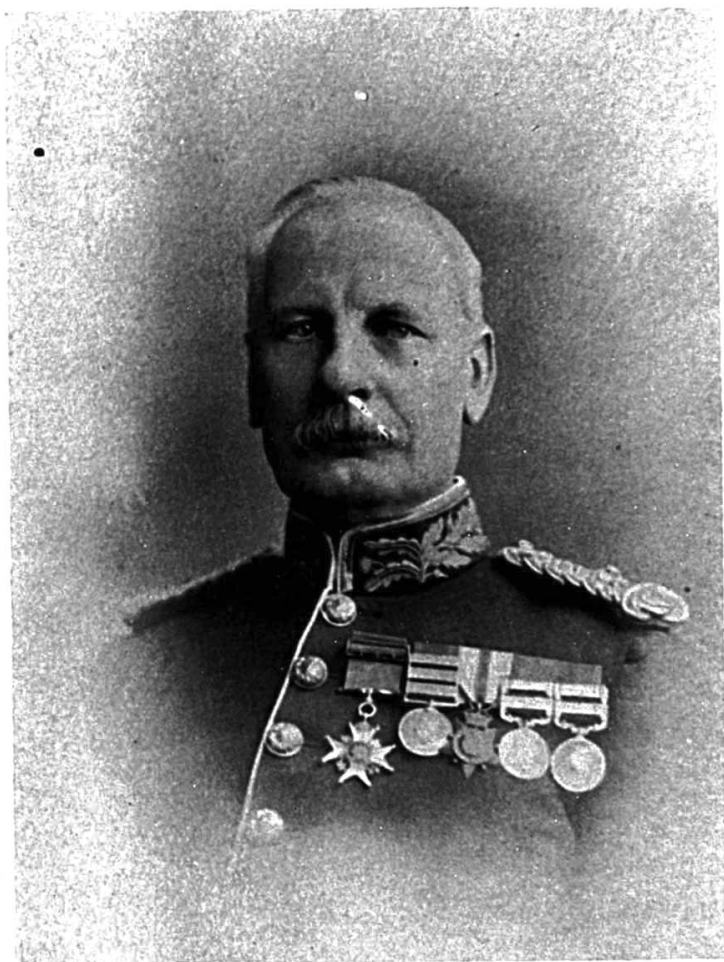
However, this was just after the South African War. The decree had gone forth that every infantry unit was to have a proportion of trained mounted infantrymen, and no exception was made for the poor little Gurkha! He was therefore issued with drawers, riding breeches and spurs, and sent off in batches to the M.I. school. Just one of those stupid, undigested orders so apt to be issued, where the good old motto "*In medio tutissimus ibo*" is entirely ignored, and slavish *adoption* of a rule held in much higher estimation than skilful *adaptation*.

It was a little hard on the Gurkha that his first introduction to the great K. of K. should be on the back of a pony! Presently the O.C. (Porteous, of the 9th) arrived and walking outside the copse with him, K. said:

"Take your men a good half-mile over there, gallop up to about here, and come into dismounted action against that mound, some eight hundred yards away."

Now K. liked everything done rapidly. If you covered the ground *quickly*, every fault was forgiven. The first time he saw my battalion in the field at Quetta, it was executing a flank attack on an enemy in position. We went much too fast, quite unrealistically so, and I expected to hear about it. However, when the "Stand fast" sounded he sent for me and said: "Your men move very well, Woodyatt. They went fast, I like a good pace."

Porteous could hardly have known this, but he hadn't many flies on him, and they galloped up like the devil. A bit ragged, but the men were soon out of the saddle, the led horses nicely handled, and the attack on foot very well carried out, though absurdly fast. K. was delighted and began to ask Smith-Dorrien about Gurkhas. Spotting General Hill, the Divisional Commander (a great personality and one of the best known and most brilliant of all Gurkhas), the A.G. called him up and I heard the following conversation:



To face page 176

MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM HILL, C.B.

K. "What sort of shots are these men?"

Hill. "None better."

K. "Have they good eyesight?"

Hill. "Can see through a brick wall."

K. "How do they stand hardship?"

Hill. "They'll stand anything, except abuse."

K. "Humph! A pretty useful sort of soldier, apparently."

General Hill then saluted and walked off. That was absolutely all that occurred. It is typical of K., who seldom wasted words, and also very typical of Hill.

The temperament of the Gurkha soldier reminds one of our public schoolboy. The same light-hearted cheerfulness, hatred of injustice, love of games and veneration for superior ability or skill. There is the same tractability, with dogged affection (if well treated), and also, like the schoolboy, he works best and hardest with a firm controlling hand. No punishment, however severe, is ever resented if thoroughly deserved; but with us, punishments, I am glad to say, are usually few and far between.

The Gurkha cannot stand "nagging." Once get the men sulky owing to continual "nagging," and it is well-nigh impossible for the aggressor himself to put matters right again. Many years ago it was the fashion to assert that the Gurkha should not be made smart; his worth was so well known that he might slouch about with impunity, and look generally untidy. A great mistake, I am sure, for now no battalion permits this, and the result is most satisfactory in drill, discipline, field work, and appearance.

Unlike most soldiers, Gurkhas seem to rather enjoy the many changes that have taken place in late years in drill, manœuvre, etc. It is something new! In the early nineties free gymnastics were a great joke, and they were immensely amused at "knees up." One often noticed at these exercises small batches of their women-folk perched on surrounding eminencies, evidently much entertained at the antics of their lords, as, stripped to the waist, they developed the muscles of their legs and arms.

On manœuvres they show themselves born scouts, with a wonderful eye for country, especially in the hills. The art of skirmishing is to them second nature, and beyond the broadest principles, any attempt to teach from the drill

book is unwise. On the range they are good shots—some of them particularly good.

When sick, the Gurkha is *very* sick, and in hospital he looks the picture of woe ; but about going there, or reporting himself ill, he is very whimsical. Be the medical officer, or his native assistant, not to his taste, he will probably do his own doctoring, in spite of exhortation to the contrary. On the other hand, should either, or both, have gained his confidence, then he puts himself readily under their care ; nor does it matter a bit to what faith the native doctor, or "doctor Baboo," as he calls him, belongs. I knew one fine specimen of the subordinate medical establishment, a Mahomedan, who was immensely liked and looked up to by the men.

It is extraordinary how easily Gurkhas, of whatever class, adapt themselves to European companionship. One can go further and say they possess a marked faculty for hitting it off with people of all nationalities. I mention elsewhere how a Gurkha detachment at Amritsar, in 1920, were received at first with black looks and offensive remarks, when shopping in that city ; how they smiled it all down until, after a month or two, relations between them and the Sikhs of the city were quite amicable. Here is another instance :

At Quetta, about 1910, half my battalion was told off to garrison for six months the outposts of Robat on the Eastern Persian frontier. This meant a short rail journey to Nushki, followed by a desert march of some three hundred miles across the Baluchistan district of Chargai, then administered by a Lieut.-Colonel Webb-Ware, a distinguished frontier officer of the Political Department. He also controlled numerous bodies of tribal levies garrisoning Nushki and each post beyond.

On arrival of the detachment at Robat, Webb-Ware wrote to tell me how well the men had behaved and what a good impression they had made by their genial manners and prompt payments. Also how much the inhabitants had taken to them, although of an entirely different sect to themselves. At the end of their stay I received further eulogia, but my gratification was still greater when he wrote me, after their return journey, saying, so much were they liked that the levies had sent in to ask permission to turn out guards of honour for them, a thing he had never

known them even hint at before. He added: "In their petition they also begged me to inform the writers what kind of people are Gurkhas? That they were said to be Hindus, but the levies declared that they had never seen any Hindus at all like them before, and were sure they were some 'Naya kism Mussulman' (new kind of Mahomedan!)"

The sequel to this is also amusing.

The last portion of Webb-Ware's letter was reproduced in a battalion complimentary order. The result was that a few days later my Gurkha officers, headed by the Subadar Major, came to see me. Looking very solemn, they informed me that the Gurkha officers of our sister battalion were much upset about this order, as it would get about in Nepal that some of the 7th Gurkhas had turned Mahomedan, and there would be dreadful complications. My brother commandant and myself had a good deal of trouble getting into their heads the meaning of *façon de parler*.

On two or three occasions General Bruce has brought Gurkhas home with him, and also taken them to Switzerland, etc. He tells me he was astounded how easily they got on with all the races met with. It did not matter whether it was a case of French *poilu*, Swiss guides, British gamekeepers or English maidservants, the Gurkha smiled at them all, and made friends. But in England he much preferred the gamekeeper's cottage to the servants' hall.

Even the millions at home, who hardly know the position of India, have some vague feeling that Mr. Thomas Atkins—especially the Highland Atkins—and the Gurkha are great friends. They fight together, take walks together, smoke together and drink together, the while the Gurkha copies his paragon in all he does, even to learning his bagpipes. That they are quite unable to converse does not seem to matter in the least. Their tastes are similar, and they are just attracted to one another and become pals.

• In the second Afghan War (1878-80) Colonel Jack Strachey was riding one afternoon through the streets of Kabul, when he came upon an excited crowd gathered round a gigantic Highlander of the 72nd, just in front of a shop. On pushing up to see what was the matter, Strachey observed that the Highlander was quietly puffing at his pipe and looking on, while a Gurkha, who reached up

to about his waist, was holding forth in his own lingo, which was as intelligible as Gaelic to the Afghans. Enquiring what was the matter, the Highlander replied: "Well, sir, I don't rightly ken. There's a deal of trouble about some money I paid, but my little friend here is seeing to it, and it's bound to be all right, sir."

The Gurkhas and the 72nd, in Kabul, used to go about in pairs, sometimes jabbering fluently in their respective tongues, although well aware the other did not understand a single word. More often, though, they sat together in silence, smoking. The fact that both smoked pipes may have brought them into companionship. I wonder if it was the sight of these pairs, in his daily rides through Kabul, which gave Lord Roberts the inspiration of a Highlander and a Gurkha as "supporters" in his coat-of-arms.

This trait of attractiveness served Gurkha prisoners well in the war. I had long talks in 1920 with an old batman of mine in the 7th, who was three years with Germans and Turks. He said all Gurkhas were well treated, except during the march from Kut. Another, Kulbahadur Gurung, had an account of his wanderings written. He was taken prisoner in Gallipoli on 4th June, 1915, and spent three and a half years, as a prisoner of war, in different parts of Turkey. There he lived and worked with Australians, Italians, French, etc., and sailors as well as soldiers. His story shows that he was received with extraordinary sympathy everywhere, and entirely as one of themselves.

The Gurkha is a very cheery little fellow, and many think he is full of wit and humour. I agree with General Bruce that this is not exactly the way to put it. What he has really is an enormous sense of the ludicrous, and anything ridiculous or comic excites laughter from him at once. General Bruce gives me two instances:

The first Gurkha he took home sat with him to Vereker Hamilton for the Kandahar picture. One afternoon Hamilton took him to the Zoo, and suddenly introduced him to the giraffe. It was such a surprise that, although in uniform, he fell into so immoderate a fit of laughter as to finally collapse on the ground! The same man on a difficult climb on the Baltoro Glacier, at a particularly dangerous place, roped another Gurkha round the neck with a slip-knot. Then, what with laughing himself, and the tightness

of the slip-knot, they were eventually extricated with extreme difficulty.

In Gallipoli two Gurkhas, having captured a Turk, put him up in the corner of a trench and took alternate charges at him with a fixed bayonet, missing him by an inch or two each time. After having satisfied their bent for something ludicrous by reducing the Turk to chewed string, they took him away and fed him.

At Almora once, on the occasion of our annual inspection dinner, a new orderly had been put into the mess, whose duty it was to dust officers' Wellingtons, in the porch, with a long feather brush. When the general arrived the little Gurkha, getting somewhat excited at his exalted rank, rather rushed at him. The brigadier being much surprised by a man running at him with a stick, involuntarily stepped away, when the long brush got between his legs, and, tripping him up, he fell over backwards. The boy being intensely amused burst into laughter! The moment was a most awkward one, and it took all the colonel's tact, and much champagne, to prevent the battalion getting a bad report!

The Gurkha is very fond of a looking-glass. He always has one handy. Knowing this weakness, one of our officers tried the effect of his much magnified shaving-glass on his batman. Struck dumb at the sight of his own familiar features so grotesquely enlarged as almost to be unrecognisable, the little man turned it first this way and then that in dead silence, and then promptly sat down convulsed with mirth.

Every Gurkha wants to go to England, and to *London*. They think the world of London, and "the bridge that breaks in half" as they call the Tower Bridge. Every wounded man in France when told he was being evacuated to England immediately asked if he would see London. To keep him happy and contented he was always told he would. One of our ladies was visiting the wounded Gurkhas at Brockenhurst. She found those of the 3rd very querulous. They said: "We are now convalescent and were promised we should see London, what then are we doing in this jungle?" I am not sure she did not take up the whole lot at her own expense, for she has a very large heart, and is most devoted to Gurkhas.

The same lady went to see other wounded Gurkhas at

Brighton, where she found one man, with his jaw badly shattered who appeared to be very friendly with his British hospital orderly. Talking to the latter, he told her he had been looking after this Gurkha for six weeks, and since the start had done all he could to buy his kukrie. Beginning with five shillings he had gradually gone up to twenty, but the patient only shook his head. The lady condoling with him, he added, "But I 'ave a 'soovneer' after all. I've got one of his teeth!"

Talking of souvenirs I happened to meet six hundred Gurkhas entering Abbottabad on a few weeks' leave, to see their families, after a long absence in Gallipoli, etc. They were halting just outside the cantonment, and on falling in I walked down the ranks. There wasn't a uniform button amongst them. Asking a man the reason he talked about "Asstrely" and "sufner" which I could not understand, until a very intelligent N.C.O. told me that the Australians had taken them all as *souvenirs*!

The Gurkhas admired the Australians immensely. Thought them splendid fellows. And the feeling was reciprocated. A soldier from the Australian hills was seen tapping a Gurkha on the chest, and shouting at him hard: "I'm an Australian Gurkha, come from mountains in Australia, see?"

It should be understood that our Gurkha soldiers hail from every kind of climate in Nepal. That is to say, from districts a few hundred feet above sea-level, as well as from mountainous areas over ten thousand feet high. Also, that large numbers live in regions which, for many months in the year, are extremely malarious. It is this great mixture of men, naturally affected by the conditions of temperature, moisture, etc., in which they have been brought up, that has given to the Gurkhas the reputation, largely deserved, of being a somewhat delicate race.

It is as well this should be known. As it is hardly recognised in India, it is not likely to be understood at home. Gurkhas at the present time have taken on the rôle of "additional British troops" in India. In troublous times they have exactly the same duties allotted to them. I note they have now been sent to the Moplah country to assist in quelling the rebellion there. As it contains highly malarious tracts we must expect a biggish sick-roll.

Every Gurkha is *supposed* to be a shikari. It would be

much more correct to say ALL are shikar lovers, but only a very small minority has any real knowledge of game. When you do get a shikari he is good, as good as they make them, and quite fearless. I cannot illustrate the reliability and trustworthiness of a Gurkha-soldier-shikari better than by repeating a story told, I rather think, in the official handbook on Gurkhas.

It happened a very long time ago, before the Mutiny, and was told by Sir C. Reid, once of the 2nd Gurkhas and known in London as "Gurkhy Reid." After relating how a man he lost at Delhi had shot twenty-two tigers with his old smooth-bore; how Gurkhas never wasted a shot and called their ammunition "kazana" (treasure); how eminently they possessed that grand fighting quality, "courage," he quotes an old Gurkha saying: "It is better to die than to be a coward." Then he tells his tale regarding coolness, bravery and amenity to discipline.

Two officers at Dehra Dun hearing of a tiger "kill" close to the cantonment, went after it at once. Having no success they started home on the elephant with a Gurkha orderly just in front, on foot, to show the way, and carrying his old smooth-bore. Suddenly, as they were leaving the jungle this man dropped on his knee and "presented," as if to fire.

The officers got their rifles ready and pushed up the elephant, but could see *nothing*. To get direction better one called out "As you were," and the Gurkha brought his rifle down as if on parade. Then "Present," and up it went again, but no pull on the trigger, although the tiger was only three paces away.

The younger officer shouting out that he could not leave the gallant fellow alone like that jumped off the elephant, but although he looked along the levelled barrel of the orderly he could still see nothing. Putting up his own rifle he told the Gurkha to fire. A terrific roar, a bit of a rush and all was still. When the smoke cleared there was the dead tiger with a ball in his brain which had entered through the centre of the forehead.

The Gurkha takes readily to games. Football, undoubtedly, appeals to him most. When starting the "soccer" game at Almora, in 1888, I had occasion to write to the late Sir E. Marindin (then a major) on a nicety concerning the "off-side" rule. In his reply he added a postscript: "I

am glad the Gurkhas are taking to football; I hope they don't draw their kukries when playing!" He evidently thought they would be hot-tempered over it! But not at all, they are very good-humoured, though a foul charge *does* put their backs up. After football, quoits, putting the shot, tug-of-war, and then hockey come next in their estimation.

It is rather a curious fact that with such an active-minded people the ruling clans have so little care for field sports, or athletic games. Very different from Indians of the same class. Beyond the great official tiger hunts, riding and drill and manœuvre, the ruling classes do not take a great deal of outdoor exercise. The real keenness, for both sport and games, seems to be characteristic of the peasant.

Gurkhas get much attached to their British officers, and feel their retirement or transfer very keenly. They will do wonders for officers they admire, and the amount of work they can get through, when properly managed, is truly marvellous. My old colonel (now General H. D. Hutchinson, C.S.I.), than whom there is no better judge, always used to say that provided you gave the Gurkha plenty of time for his two meals, and provided he saw some definite end in view for his labours, you could work him or parade him, with advantage, all day and every day.

The Gurkha has an excellent opinion of himself, is most patriotic, and very fond of his country. Indeed, his devotion to the latter is most touching, and his contempt for some of the "plainsmen" of India is somewhat amusing. A favourite orderly of mine once asked me during a halt in the jungle if my father had served in the Indian Army. On my telling him I had never had a relation out there, he remarked quite solemnly: "That's like me; I never had a relative in this country either!"

When there is no fighting to be done, the Gurkha is decidedly domestic. He makes a capital husband and a kind father. He frequently brings his wife with him from Nepal, and in every battalion a married establishment of from 200 to 250 is provided for. The youngsters born in barracks are called "line-boys," and many of them make good soldiers, signallers, bandsmen, etc., if well looked after when young. In the field, too, these line-boys are most conspicuous for their daring and courage, being frequent leaders in an attack or assault.

I was staying in the same house with Lord Kitchener on his return from a visit to Nepal about 1906. Asking him how he liked it and what he thought of Nepal, he said he had enjoyed every minute of it and was never so surprised in his life. He described how he was carried the last stage in a dhoolie,¹ while "Birdie" (Sir William Birdwood) and his adjutant-general (Sir A. Martin) walked, but couldn't raise their legs without pain for three days, as it was mainly steps.

Describing his visit, Lord Kitchener said he was intensely surprised at the look of the country on getting out of the dhoolie, for he had expected to see something like the hills round Simla. Instead, what he saw was a beautiful valley in front of him dotted with little houses painted green. Country, he said, exactly like Switzerland and the resemblance intensified by these houses, which looked so thoroughly Swiss in shape and design.

"Then I was put into a roomy landau, horsed by very fine walers, and driven along a splendid road to the capital (Katmandu). There I found marble palaces, lighted by electricity and full of Nepalese officers who were all generals and always in uniform, like a continental nation. The Maharajah was kindness itself, and meted out to us the most splendid hospitality, while the big review was excellently carried out by very soldierly looking troops."

Lord Kitchener took advantage of his visit to press for permission to raise two more battalions of Gurkhas to the then existing eighteen; a question which had been hanging fire for some time. The Maharajah wasn't very keen, and the Chief did not advance matters much just then. A friend of mine was in the carriage when Lord Kitchener made his request, pointing out that it was Eastern Nepal men he wanted, which would not be so great a drain. Adding also that he was anxious to have a round number of twenty battalions. In 1907, one more was agreed to (my battalion, the 2/7th), and in 1908, another, the new 2/10th.

Gurkhas are very fond of the Scotch bagpipes. In their own country they have something similar. I don't quite know when they were started, but I believe the old 4th, in 1884, was the first unit to have a regular set. Almost

¹ Species of covered roomy "stretcher" carried on the shoulders of coolies.

every battalion has a complement of pipers now. It is usual to send selected men to a Highland regiment for a proper course of six months or more, with refresher classes every two or three years afterwards.

There was much opposition at first by the regimental bandmasters. When started in the 3rd Gurkhas, our bandmaster was an Italian, a Signor Rossetti. He *hated* them. When playing out at the club, etc., the pipers marched up and down, playing, after each piece by the band. One evening, to pull his leg, I went up to Rossetti and said :

“ Well, Signor, how do you think the pipers are getting on ? ” Up went both hands and, pulling a dreadful grimace, he said, with much gesture :

“ Don't mention them, I have played one wonderful piece of music, and the beautiful melody is running in my head, when [squeezing, in jerks, an imaginary bag under his arm] whare, whare, whare, those blasted pipes begin ! ”

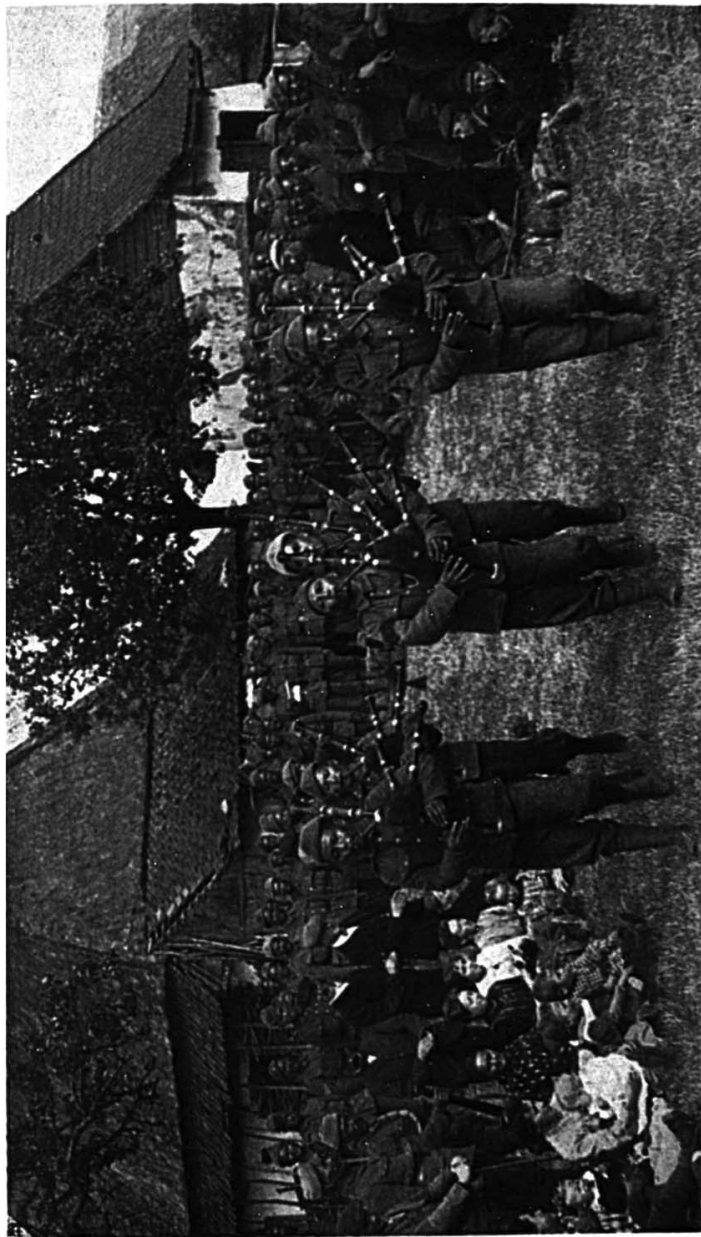
The great annual festival of the Gurkhas is called the “ Dasehra ”¹ in honour of the goddess Kali² (the destroyer). It takes place in September or October, lasts a week and is much thought of by the men. Ten days holiday with us is usually given to allow for the preliminaries, and also for recovery afterwards from the orgies of food, drink and revelry, which are a natural corollary to the celebrations.

On the big day the arms of the unit are “ piled,” with bayonets fixed, in an improvised tabernacle, the floor of which is carefully levelled and then “ leaped,”³ while the ground all round is lavered with water. The rifles are adorned with flowers and blessed by a Brahman, for Gurkhas worship the implements of war believing that it is to the favour of the sword they owe their prosperity. Just northward of this tabernacle is a stout post 4 to 5 ft. high, with 2 or 3 ft. of it firmly embedded in the ground.

¹ From earliest days a great Hindu military festival at the close, of the wet season, which was the period when military expeditions were usually undertaken. The Mahrattas used to celebrate the occasion in a way characteristic of them by destroying a village !

² Wife of Shiva, one of the Hindu Trinity, i.e. (1) Brama, the creator ; (2) Vishnu, the preserver ; (3) Shiva, the destroyer.

³ I.e. plastered carefully with a mixture of cow-dung and wet clay.



To face page 16.
PIPERS OF 2ND BRD, QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S OWN, GURKHAS PLAYING IN A VILLAGE IN FRANCE, WINTER OF 1914-1915.

Round holes, capable of taking a stout rope, are bored in the post at convenient heights from the ground.

When all is ready, the sacrifices commence by one goat after another being anointed, brought up to the post, his head secured against it, and then struck off by a stroke of the kukrie. No bungling ever takes place. All sacrificial animals are males, and death is absolutely instantaneous. Some blood of each victim is sprinkled on the floor of the tabernacle.

Last of all comes the *pièce de résistance*, or the decapitation of a young male buffalo with one stroke of the kukrie. This is a most difficult feat and the executioner is specially selected for his strength, activity, quickness of eye and nerve. The buffalo, duly anointed, is led to the post with much ceremony, and his head firmly secured to it. The selected man, clad in new linen "shorts" and vest, approaches the beast, carrying a very large kukrie. Using both hands, he carefully measures distance, straddles his legs, raises his arms very high and, with incredible swiftness, brings down his weapon, with a cut and a draw, right through the nape of the neck to the dewlap.

I have seldom seen this bungled and it is a remarkable feat. To be absolutely propitious, the buffalo should sink on his knees and belly and not fall to one side.

With reference to these sacrifices it is most interesting to read about peace, sin and trespass offerings in the third book of Moses (Leviticus). Here we have a direct analogy. Note the tabernacle, the priest, the sprinkling of blood, the laving of the ground, the clean linen breeches, the anointment of the victim, his position and his male sex.

In conclusion, what more can I say about these splendid little fellows who are such fighters, and yet so jolly with it all? *Before* the Great War, *during* the Great War, and *since* the Great War they have indeed given of their best for England. At their recruiting depot at Gorakhpur we hope soon to see rest-houses erected surrounding a replica of the Whitehall cenotaph. On this will be recorded the heavy losses the men of Nepal sustained during the Great War in our service; while in a niche will be a semi-sacred book containing the names and units of the glorious dead.

I write on Gurkhas. My enthusiasm is but natural when I served with them for over a quarter of a century, and my only son was killed fighting with them. But let it

not be thought there are no other races in our Indian Army who have an equally good fighting spirit, and can show a grand and honourable record. There are many, and, as I learnt after completing my regimental service, the number of brave and gallant soldiers of all classes and creeds included in that wonderful force passes comprehension. He should be a proud man who has the good fortune to be associated with them.