

The Gurkhas and the Sikhs

India's Great Warriors



A Sikh Mountain Battery Small Guns Packaged on Mules



Gurkhas Examining Sheep—This is Their Favorite Meat



Indian Lancers



Gurkha Swordsmen



The Indian Cavalry in Action as seen by an Artist

How These Fierce Fighters Are Battling for the Cause of Great Britain—Their Origin and Fighting Qualities.

PERHAPS never in the history of the British Empire has a situation so vital to its integrity and so affecting its prestige been thrust upon the people of that country as that involved by the present war. For two centuries her commerce has surpassed that of any other nation, her flag has been seen in every port, her ships have been the carriers of the products of every land and her sons have inhabited the farthestmost parts of the earth. Her colonies are located in every clime and every hemisphere, and her governmental policy has been felt everywhere. Her rule, on the whole, has been benevolent and beneficial so much so that a feeling of loyalty to the Home Country has steadily grown among the natives of India and other lands, and today in her hour of need, when England's standing among the nations is threatened with humiliation, these natives are responding in large numbers and with great enthusiasm and genuine patriotism to the cry for help.

India, a nation with entirely different racial instincts and traditions, with a different culture, religion, civilization and governmental policy—a nation one century ago the very antipodes of England in offering up her sons on the battlefields of Europe in England's defense as willingly and with equal self-sacrifice as the Mother Country herself.

Caste in the Army.
In Europe, as we know, every able

bodied man, given food and arms, is a fighting man of some sort—some better, some worse, but still as capable of bearing arms as any other of his nationality. But in India, where caste prevails, only a certain class of people may bear arms. The others, even if they have the requisite physical courage, may not become soldiers. The existence of this condition complicates the enlistment in India as it renders any form of a levy en masse impossible. The soldiers of India must come from the descendants of the ancient Aryan races who invaded India in prehistoric times, such as a Rajput and Brahman, who for practical purposes may be divided into two distinct classes—one comprising the people of Hindustan and of the Punjab, and the other the races of Jats (from whom the Sikhs are descended) and the Gujars, the Pathans and the Moguls of India, the Pathan and Afghan of the frontier hills and the Gurkhas.

Gurkhas Win Battle in 1878.
The Sikhs and the Gurkhas are the best known fighting men—that is, men who have over and over again stood the test of loyalty to Great Britain. During the war of that nation against the Afghans there was a night assault on the Peshawar Kotla on night in December, 1878. This attack has become famous in history on account of the precipitous mountain which was scaled during the night in order to command the road and make the

attack. Lord Roberts, who died during the early part of the war while "looking over the situation" in France, was in command at the time of this outbreak. His forces were made up of a regiment of Highlanders, a regiment of Gurkhas and two regiments of Punjab infantry. It was a moonlight night and the enemy soon discovered Lord Roberts' men. The action came before dawn when the Gurkhas suddenly sprang ahead of their Scotch comrades and swarmed over the Afghan entrenchment and bayoneted all who stood before them. Then they hurried to the second entrenchment with the same result, and the battle was won. They are much smaller in stature than the Sikhs yet the critics of European soldiers who have made a study of the Indian troops declare that the Gurkhas are equal to the best soldiers now with the Allies. They are absolutely fearless and are known as the world's finest infantry.

At present about twenty-five thousand of these men are with the allied armies and several of their encounters with the Germans have been chronicled as splendid examples of personal bravery. One of the English officers recently likened them to fighting bantam roosters, being far more agile than the large fighting cocks.

and as usual being frequently successful. The Gurkhas have a habit of creeping along quietly and then making a sudden bayonet charge, directly in front of the enemy. This surprise generally upsets the discipline of the enemy and before order is restored the Gurkhas get in their work with the bayonets. When in close quarters with the enemy they are fierce fighters and show little or no mercy.

Sikhs.
The Sikhs are of an entirely different type—tall, athletic and highly spirited. They are model fighting men. It is hardly correct to speak of them as a distinct race, for they are really a religious sect which started as a persecuted set of reformers who finally became a powerful body embracing many of the Hindu tribes and the races of the Punjab. A Sikh is baptized into his sect, not born into it, for no man is a Sikh until he has been baptized. Their faith is austere—demanding a most vigorous self-sacrifice. But many of the young men prefer to grow up as ordinary Hindus, and lead a comparatively easy life, free from the arduous restrictions of any special religious creed or sect which fastens its exacting regimen upon so many of this caste-ridden country.

After Great Britain's declaration of war, many men applied for baptism as Sikhs, but only those whose lives had been lived according to the simple tenets were accepted. No non-baptized man is admitted to the Sikh regiments of the Indian Army. Heretofore the military reputation of this sect, so far as the English are concerned, dates from the Indian Mutiny when the Sikhs flocked to the Union Jack. Since that time they have served England in Abyssinia, Afghanistan, Chitral and Africa. They bore the brunt of the British campaign in Somaliland, in one instance a detachment of two hundred falling to the last man sooner than surrender to overwhelming numbers. They are absolutely fearless and stand ready to die at any time to save their commander.

Saved Lord Roberts.
Lord Roberts used to tell a story which illustrated this particular trait. During one of his campaigns he found himself in a very dangerous position and before he could move he was struck in the hand by a bullet. He heard a cry of alarm behind him and turning saw that one of his Sikh full height with extended arms in order that he might stop with his own body any bullet that might do harm

to his commander. There were six of these ordeals attached to Lord Roberts and he makes special comment on the faithful attention of these men.

This is all the more remarkable from the fact that England had two wars with the Sikhs during the conquest of India. The first occurred in 1845 when an army of them composed of sixty thousand well drilled troops and more than one hundred guns invested the British garrison in Ferozepore. There was a two days' battle about this place in which although the Sikhs were worsted they gave the English a hand to hand fight long to be remembered. In 1846 the English had another battle with the Sikhs. This was fought at Aliwal, and the men of India again showed remarkable fighting qualities.

The final battle in Great Britain's first war with the Sikhs occurred on February 10th, 1846, at Sohraon, when the British Lancers charged the crack Sikh brigade. The latter threw down their rifles as not sitting their mettle and advanced sword and shield in hand after the manner of the ancient warriors. Many of the Sikhs rushed forth and singled out an English man for special combat. They were gradually forced back by the British and lost more than ten thousand killed, wounded and drowned in the Sutlej River. Even then they were not conquered, and they launched a second war, murdering two English envoys and raising an army of forty thousand men. The British, twenty-five thousand strong, met them on the famous field of Gujrat and won a complete victory. One by one the chiefs surrendered their swords, and the whole of the Punjab came under the British flag. Then came the miracle of loyalty for ever since that time not only has there not been the slightest sign of a rebellion but they have fought for England whenever she has called upon them to do so.

The Indian Army.
The Indian Army at present is composed of about two hundred thousand men. It is made up of infantry, cavalry and a very small amount of artillery. There is no Indian artillery. Each regiment has two classes of officers—British and native, and the line drawn between them is severely kept. Each class has its own mess, and the

British officers however junior in rank are in control. Of the native soldiers about thirty-five per cent are Mohammedans, sixty-three per cent Hindus, two per cent Christians or Jews. Mohammedans and Hindus are rarely found in the same regiment and never in the same company. The service is voluntary and there is never a shortage of recruits, the bulk of them being sons of men who served the British Raj in their day. About one-third of the army is composed of "class" regiments. These are regiments in which all the men are of one race and religion. The best soldiers of India are supposed to be the Mohammedans.

The men are allowed to live in the field the same as they do at home. They have their own peculiar ways of killing a sheep, which is their favorite meat. They do this by cutting the animal's throat with a knife so sharp that there is never any danger of failure on the first blow. They build mud ovens and cook their food in these queer perforated mud mounds. England has never meddled with the mode of living of her Indian soldiers except as to sanitation. There is, however, little difficulty about this and the class of people from which the army comes are cleanly.

They have the greatest admiration for their British officers, for they are fully aware that these officers are their superiors as leaders in military affairs. When it comes to obeying orders they are machines of terrific force as has been shown in many of the bayonet charges made by them. Not a single act of cowardice has been shown by the Indian troops except that of the officers in many instances have been compelled to discipline them for foolhardy and senseless bravery such as would mean certain death without any special results for the Allies.

Anxious to Capture the Kaiser.
When the Sikhs arrived in the Allies' camp they asked to be shown pictures of the Kaiser declaring that they were determined to capture him, but the officers who had made the effort to take him prisoner or even to get a glimpse of the War Lord has proved futile.

Apart from sending her men to fight for the honor of Great Britain India has given liberally to the war fund and to the Red Cross.

Saving WASHINGTON'S CHURCH



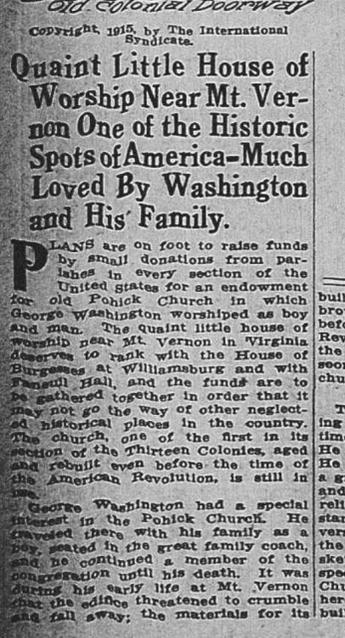
Old Colonial Doorway



Another View of the Church



The Old Burying Ground



Pohick Church from the Road



Waiting at the Church - Photo shows neglected condition



The New Building

Quaint Little House of Worship Near Mt. Vernon One of the Historic Spots of America—Much Loved By Washington and His Family.

PLANS are on foot to raise funds by small donations from parishes in every section of the United States for an endowment for the old Pohick Church in which George Washington worshipped as boy and man. The quaint little house of worship near Mt. Vernon in Virginia deserves to rank with the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg and with Faneuil Hall, and the funds are to be gathered together in order that it may not go the way of other neglected historical places in the country. The church, one of the first in its section of the Thirteen Colonies, aged and rebuilt even before the time of the American Revolution, is still in use.

George Washington had a special interest in the Pohick Church. He traveled there with his family as a boy, seated in the great family coach, and he continued a member of the congregation until his death. It was during his early life at Mt. Vernon that the edifice threatened to crumble and fall away; the materials for its building and furnishings had been brought from England many years before, and during the time of the revolution it had been neglected to the extent that a new church would soon become a necessity for the churchgoers of the neighborhood.

Planning A New Church.
Then it was that Washington, during busy days at Mt. Vernon, found time to plan a new Pohick Church. He loved his church and its people. He did not confine himself to being a great American patriot, a statesman and a soldier; he found time for his religion. One of the numerous outstanding facts to show that he was a versatile man is clearly brought out in the historical data that he alone sketched and filed in the plans and specifications for the new Pohick Church. These plans were closely adhered to, and the old building was built over—practically made into a new edifice according to the plans drawn by the Father of His Country.

The long and honorable life of Pohick Church is interwoven with the history of Virginia, the American Colonies and the United States. Another of the master spirits of the American revolution who worshipped there was George Mason, one of the founders of the Republic. In the venerable church sat representatives of the Fairfax family, and it would seem no exaggeration to say that the Pohick congregation did more than many great churches and as much as any other church in the New World to promote the thought of liberty, force a severance with Great Britain and carry the American Revolution to success. And this is said not to underrate the influence of some of the churches in New England at that time. The Pohick Church, hidden away as

gregation of the church was agitated to a great extent concerning the rebuilding of the house of worship. The church had been several times repaired, and the congregation became split over the question of rebuilding on the first site or the setting up of a new building on another site. The population of the parish had increased and with the northerly movement of the population up the Virginia bank of the Potomac River the old church was off the parish center. It was convenient to Gunston Hall and the country living in what was called "Gunston Neck" and Lorton Valley; it was within a reasonable ride of Belvoir and the settlers of the valley of Accotink Creek, but it was a drive of about seven miles to Washington and the city. So Washington was one of those who favored the removal to another site. He pointed out a more central site, and then he prepared a map of the parish showing the location of the homes of members of the congregation to enforce his argument. Good Mason was one of those who opposed removal, but the members of the congregation were won to the side of Washington, and he selected a site on the top of a ridge commanding extensive views north, south and west, and about two miles nearer Mt. Vernon than the site of the first church.

The New Building.
Construction of the new church building, which was of brick with light sandstone trimmings and of the same design as another famous church often attended by Washington—Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia—was begun in 1768, and in 1773 the congregation moved into the new building.

In the changes which fortune and misfortune have brought to Pohick Church its records and its relics were far scattered. About fifteen years ago there was a reawakening of interest in the story and the troubles of this old church, and records and fragments of records were discovered in curious ways and places. The vestry book, containing the names of the vestry in office at the time the congregation took possession of the new building, and containing terms relating to the construction of the building was found in the archives of the New York Historical Society and returned by that society to the congregation of Pohick Church.

There is one bit of paper, connected with the church, for which close inquiry has been made by a number of the descendants of the early parishioners. That is the map which George Washington made, showing the dwelling places of the members. Nearly all of the homes of the parishioners of 1768 have been obliterated and the sites of the houses forgotten.

Pohick Church fell into hard times. There came a time when the con-

between 1785 and 1835, because so many of the families that had attended it took pines in Christ Church, Alexandria. A rector by the name of Johnson, who had married the daughter of Edmund Washington, who succeeded to the proprietorship of Mt. Vernon after the death of Mrs. Washington, put a good deal of love and labor into Pohick Church and congregation, beginning about 1835. The roof of the building had fallen in, but it is said that he also found an altar in the building and that cattle grazed in the churchyard. Much of the furniture of the church, pews and the like, disappeared, tombstones fell and were swallowed up in the graveyard mold or carted off for use as doorsteps or standing blocks before walls. Repairs were made, but the building had not seen the last of its troubles.

A War-Ridden Territory.
Again, during the Civil War, the church was abandoned. Men of the congregation were off to war; the women were busy with their children and all of the farm work; it was impossible to pay a minister, and there was no congregation. A strong plan, planned by Washington, fell again into ruin. During most of the war troops were stationed in the neighborhood, and the sandstone, facings of the doors and windows still show the carved names of the soldiers who found shelter in the building.

The territory was war-ridden, such as certain country is in Belgium and Poland today. At times the church was within the Union lines, and again it was within the Confederate lines. It was usually used as an outpost or a picket post, and even the soldiers' horses were stabled there, the pews and floorings and every other bit of woodwork in the building having been carried away by the troops as fuel.

Some time after the war the church was again patched up for worship. It was in the late '80's or about 1900 that Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, one of the wealthy women of the country, became interested in old Pohick Church. It was discovered that the brick building was unfit for occupancy by the congregation and Mrs. Hearst gave them a temporary place of worship close by. That frame building is called Hearst Hall.

Public attention being called to the ruinous condition of the church, patriotic people subscribed enough to put on a new roof and provide new pews. Since then the Daughters of the Revolution and the Colonial Dames have restored the interior of the church, put in high-backed pews, after the original pattern, marking the places of the Washington, Fairfax and Mason pews, and installing the high pulpit which was a feature of the Episcopal churches of Colonial days.

