

# OUR RESERVE OF GENERALS.

BY ROBERT MACHRAY.

WHILE all are agreed that war is a great evil to any people, yet it must be admitted, Tolstoi and the Peace Society notwithstanding, that in the present condition of the world for a nation to be caught unprepared for war may be a greater evil still. From the latter point of view we can readily see that the numerous conflicts—practically one every year—in which the British Empire has for the past half-century been engaged up and down the globe have, at least, had the advantage to us of making our Army, in greater or less degree, familiar with the conduct of campaigns and the art of war.



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GENERAL SIR RICHARD HARRISON, K.C.B.  
*Inspector-General of Fortifications.*

Nor is this less true even if, as is generally the case, each separate war has its own special difficulties in new problems to be grappled with and solved; for the experience gained in one war in the handling of large bodies of troops, in the management of transport, and in the commissariat—features which are common to all campaigns—is of the highest value in any other war.

The British Army has at this moment a larger proportion of generals who have seen active service in the field than can be found in that of any other country. Nearly forty generals of various grades have taken part in the war in South Africa; but in what I have ventured to call our "reserve" of generals, officers who have not been in the present war, and who number considerably more than a hundred, there are very few whose records do not include two or three campaigns. India has frequently been spoken of as the training-ground of our Army, and it certainly has given us some splendid soldiers. Most of our generals have served there in one capacity or another, and not a few of them have had charge of important operations either on its frontiers, or in Afghanistan, or Burma. There are constantly upwards of fifty of our generals in India, and, as any Army man will tell you, "Indian men are always good men," meaning thereby that they are experienced and efficient commanders, it



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GENERAL SIR EVELYN WOOD, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., V.C.  
*Adjutant-General to the Forces.*



follows that in them we have a large and reliable portion of our reserve of generals. During the last twenty years there have been several campaigns in Egypt and the Soudan, each of which has helped to transform men who otherwise must have been



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GENERAL SIR BAKER RUSSELL, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.  
Commanding Southern District since 1898.

mere closet-students of warfare into trained and tried leaders of armies in the field.

It will be evident, therefore, that our forces have at their head generals who have had excellent opportunities either in India, or in Egypt, or in both, of perfecting themselves at first-hand in their business. And while it

is no doubt the case that the great soldier, like the great poet or the great anybody else, is born and not made, still it cannot be disputed that knowledge derived from personal observation of actual warfare must be of enormous service; and in this very valuable knowledge our generals are rich. Nor, numerically considered, are they an insignificant body. There are on the Active List nearly one hundred and sixty generals, of whom fifteen are of the full rank, thirty or more are lieutenant-generals, and a hundred and ten are major-generals. Brigadier-generals are not usually included in the list of "generals," but if they are added, then our Army has close upon two hundred generals. (I have said nothing about our field-m Marshals, of whom there are eight, although our two most distinguished generals, Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts, are amongst them, because they form a class by themselves.) Thus, if we deduct the forty—the actual number is less—who are in South Africa, our reserve of generals is something like a hundred and fifty strong. Twelve of these, however, are generals of Marines, who never have "commands."

Among so large a number of generals, it may surely be said without offence that all have not the same ability or the same particular gifts, but there can be no question that most of them are capital soldiers; some of them, indeed, have proved themselves remarkably able and brilliant men. Except in altogether unusual circumstances, a general in the British Army—or, for that matter, in any army—can hardly be a young man; and while some of our generals have reached their rank earlier than others in the service, their average age is rather above than under fifty. All of them have had to "work their way up"—a process which has taken them from thirty to forty years. Some of them, perhaps, are physically not quite so "fit" as when they were younger; but the conditions which surround an officer's life are such as to make him as good a man practically at fifty, or even sixty, as a civilian who is many years his junior. A general must be able to be in the saddle for many hours at a time if necessary, and the "mobility" (shall we call it?) of our generals in South Africa shows how well they can stand this test.

Old military men tell me that the relations between generals and their commands have altered very much for the better in the Army during the last twenty or thirty years. Formerly a general had very little real



connection with, or influence upon, his troops, and took but a comparatively insignificant part in their instruction. He used to be dreaded as a great magnate whose principal function was the carrying out of the annual inspection, and of course he was a familiar feature on a field day; but the man himself was an unknown quantity. It is quite otherwise to-day. The general now knows his officers and men, and they know their general. In no other country is there so much sympathy between commander and command as there is in ours, and this applies to the whole body of our generals. The outbreak of war—often sudden, sometimes unexpected—is not the best time for the exercise of calm judgment, though it is just at such a crisis that it is needed most; and it is unquestionably an excellent feature in our Army that our generals are none of them “ornamental” soldiers, holding themselves apart in a sort of splendid isolation, as it were, from their men. On the contrary, knowing what their men can do, they are not likely to be either hurried or flurried.



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MAJOR-GENERAL H. LE GUAY GEARY, C.B.  
Commanding Belfast District.



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LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS GRENFELL,  
G.C.M.G., G.C.B.  
Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces.

The personal element has always entered very largely into warfare; so much so, in fact, that nearly all campaigns are identified with the names of individual generals. In our reserve of generals there must needs be many differences of disposition, of temperament, and of character in the men who are comprised within it, and it is well that it should be so. The point to notice is that the field of choice is wide enough to cover all the operations of war, no matter what their scope. During the first part of the war in South Africa, the foreign Press, in its own kindly and friendly way, flouted and sneered at our generals. They even went so far as to say that President Kruger had issued orders to the effect that his soldiers were on no account to shoot at our generals—because they were of “more use to him living than dead.” But when our reserve of generals was drawn upon, and Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener appeared upon the scene of action, with what result is now known to all the earth, these flouts and sneers were replaced by the grudging acknowledgment of the fact that, indisputably, we had generals who were generals indeed.

The space which can be given to an article in a magazine is naturally so circumscribed that it is impossible to do more



here than to group together a few of the most prominent members of our reserve of generals, with a brief glance at the more striking or more interesting periods of their respective careers.

Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, is *ipso facto* our principal general, and would, no doubt, take the field were it necessary or expedient. Born in 1833, he entered the Army in 1852. His record of service therefore extends over nearly half a century. Lord Wolseley has been so constantly in the public eye for many years past that even the most casual man in the street knows something about him. The present generation may have forgotten his earliest exploits in the Burmese war of 1852-3, in which, a mere lad of twenty, he distinguished himself greatly, or in the Crimea, where his services were mentioned in despatches. In both of these wars he was severely wounded. The Mutiny seems to most of us nowadays far away; he was present at the relief of Lucknow. Five years later he was in China, and took part in the assault of the Taku forts. His first great chance came in the Red River Expedition in 1870, of which he was in command; for his successful conduct of that affair he was made K.C.M.G., and since then it is not too much to say that he has been the fore-



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MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN ARDAGH, K.C.I.E.

Director of Military Intelligence, War Office.

most soldier of the Empire, as witness Ashantee (1873-4), South Africa (1879), Egypt (1882), and the Soudan (1884-5). It is perhaps mainly in connection with the victory of Tel-el-Kebir that his name will go down to posterity. In 1895 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief; and his has been the vast and tremendous responsibility of organising and sending out the large army we have accumulated in South Africa—a feat which, in its own way, is without a parallel in the history of the world. In a former number of the WINDSOR there was given an account of Lord Wolseley at the War Office.

The first name on the active list of generals is that of H.R.H. Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. Next comes that of Sir Robert Biddulph, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Colonel-Commandant of the Royal Artillery, who is at the present time Governor of Gibraltar, a post for which he is pre-eminently well fitted, as he is one of the best artillerymen of our day. He is a thoroughly good man, and in the event of a European war, improbable, but always possible, no better general could be in command of the "Rock." The Duke of Connaught, who ranks immediately after Sir Robert, won many golden opinions when he was in command at Aldershot; and it is very well known that H.R.H. would very much have preferred



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MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM BUTLER, K.C.B.

Commanding at Devonport.



South Africa to Ireland, where he is now Commander-in-Chief. The Duke is an ardent soldier, and inherits those military qualities which have ever distinguished our Royal line.

Sir Henry Evelyn Wood, the Adjutant-General of the Army, who has the Victoria Cross among his numerous orders and decorations, is one of the most prominent figures in our reserve of generals. Sir Evelyn entered the Army by way of the Navy, so to speak, serving in the Naval Brigade in the Crimea, where he was severely wounded. It was in India, in 1858, that he won his V.C., "for having, during the action at Sindwaho, when in command of a troop of the 3rd Light Infantry, attacked with much gallantry, *almost single-handed*, a body of rebels who had made a stand, and whom he routed," and for other gallant and courageous acts. He was subsequently with Wolseley both in Ashantee and in South Africa. On the death of Sir George Colley he became Governor of Natal and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa in 1881. Still later he saw much soldiering in Egypt. Sir Evelyn has been well described as a "tremendous cavalry soldier." He is the author of two books on this arm of the service—"Cavalry at Waterloo," and "Achievements of Cavalry."

Sir Richard Harrison, K.C.B., the Inspector-General of Fortifications, the general next in seniority to Sir Evelyn, is, as one would expect from his position, a "sapper." His record begins with the Indian Mutiny, and as a young Engineer he was present at the siege and capture of Lucknow; he has taken part in four or five other campaigns, including the Zulu war and the Egyptian war of 1882. He carries his sixty-three years very well, is a keen soldier, and extremely "fit." Immediately after him on the roll come General Chapman, commanding in Scotland, Sir Arthur Lyon-Fremantle, and General Montgomery-Moore, Colonel of the 18th Hussars.

Among the other generals of full rank several are connected with the Army in India—Horace Anderson, I.S.C., Channer, V.C., I.S.C., and Sir Arthur Palmer, I.S.C., in command of the Punjab.

The last two names on the list of generals are both those of men of great distinction—Sir Henry Brackenbury, the Director-General of Ordnance, and Sir Francis Grenfell, the Governor of Malta. The former, a Staff College man, is a student and a diplo-

matist as well as a soldier. He has been in four or five campaigns, beginning with the Mutiny. As an author, his principal work is a "Narrative of the Ashantee War." Sir Francis Grenfell is a splendid all-round man of conspicuous ability, and the excellent work he did in Egypt, when he was Sirdar, will not soon be forgotten. A strategist and a tactician, he is as fine a soldier as is to be found in the Army.

Among the lieutenant-generals not in South Africa at the time of writing, Sir



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BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR BINDON BLOOD, K.C.B.

Commanding Bundelcund District since 1895.

Charles Mansfield Clarke, Sir Cecil East, Sir Robert Low, Sir Baker Russell, General Geary, Sir G. B. Wolseley, Sir William Butler, and Sir George Luck, are all well known men. The first-named is on the military administration as Quarter-Master General, and he has seen service in India, New Zealand, and in Zululand. He is the man who completed the subjugation of the Zulus. Sir Cecil East is a good student, as well as a good soldier. He showed marked capacity when he was at the Intelligence



Department. Sir Robert Low, who has the Bombay command, is a first-class soldier. Sir Baker Russell, of the 13th Hussars, at present commanding at Portsmouth, is not only a splendid cavalryman, but also a capable all-round general; he is a tactician and a strategist of eminence. General Geary is President of the Ordnance Committee; he is a man of keen intellect and an extremely hard worker. Sir G. B. Wolseley, brother of the Commander-in-Chief, is in command at Madras. Sir William Butler, now at Devonport, is another of our conspicuously able men. Sir George Luck, a magnificent cavalry soldier, has the Bengal command.

Such are a few of our lieutenant-generals—the exigencies of our space preclude making the list as full as I should like. And the same remark applies to the major-generals, of whom there are something like eighty in our reserve of generals.

Lord Congleton, in command of the infantry at Malta, and General Thynne (York) are both admirable soldiers. General Trotter, who has the London command, is a fine officer who does not spare himself. General Burnett, now at Poona, is the man who revolutionised the feeding of the Army. General Maurice is our foremost student-soldier. As far back as 1872 he won the Wellington Prize Essay, and he has made

several important contributions to the literature of war. He has the district command at Woolwich at present. General Gosset (Dublin) is a man of great ability and experience. Sir Coleridge Grove, the Military Secretary at Headquarters, is giving invaluable service where he is—a position for which he is singularly well fitted. General Stewart MacGregor, in command of the Artillery at Portsmouth, is a capital “gunner.” General Leech—with the exception of General Sartorius, the only major-general with the V.C. in front of his name—is not only a first-class “sapper,” but a good all-round man. General Lloyd, who is at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, is a very strong man. General Borrett, the Inspector-General of the Auxiliary Forces, fills his post to perfection, but he has small chance of war service. Sir John Ardagh has a very responsible position as Director of the Military Intelligence Department. General Brownlow is a fearless soldier who made a record for himself at Laing’s Nek. Sir Bindon Blood, now at Meerut, is a “sapper,” but he is a good deal more. He proved himself to be an excellent general in the Chitral campaign. John Ramsay Slade is the “gunner” who brought his guns out of the battle of Maiwand. General Hallam Parr (Shorncliffe) is an authority on Mounted Infantry.



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MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE B. WOLSELEY, K.C.B.  
*Commanding Madras Forces since 1898.*