

can speak from personal observation in the Crimea.

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Enclosure No. 2.

Report upon the "Highland Transport Service."

*Abyssinian Field Force,
Camp, Antalo, 13th May, 1868.*

The Highland Transport was separated from the General Transport raised in Bombay for service in Abyssinia, on the 14th February, 1868; but it may be said to have derived its origin from the two Punjab Trains specially organized in October, 1867, for this campaign, to which it owes both its foundation and organization.

Organization.

It consists of four divisions of 2,000 mules each, which are subdivided into troops of 150, and the following is the scale of the establishment of each division:—

- 1 Captain.
- 3 Subalterns.
- 4 European Inspectors (selected from British regiments).
- 20 Jemadars, or Troop Serjeant-Majors.
- 80 Duffadars, or Serjeants.
- 667 Muleteers.
- 2 First Class Nalbunds, or Farriers.
- 10 Second Class Assistant Nalbunds, or Farriers.
- 1 Head Native Blacksmith.
- 10 Second Assistant Blacksmiths.
- 10 Bheesties, or "Water Carriers."
- 2 Ropemakers.
- 1 Salootrie, "Native Veterinary Surgeon."
- 1 Moonshie, or Native Writer.

At the commencement of the campaign, one man had charge of two mules only; and it is as much as he can look after properly.

Stable, watering and all other line duties at fixed hours are conducted with the same discipline, and in precisely the same routine as in the Bengal Irregular Cavalry regiments.

The muleteers are trained and drilled to their work, and kept in as strict a state of discipline as the circumstances of its being a newly raised corps will admit of.

The Jemadars keep in Persian the "nominal roll" of each man in their troop; also the pay account.

The "long roll" of every man is kept in Persian by the Moonshie; also the pay account, which is also kept in English by the Captain.

The officers commanding the Punjab Trains have summary powers, and can sentence to two years' imprisonment, in addition to corporal punishment.

The whole is under the direction of a Sub-Director, who is one of the Head Quarter Staff, and reports direct to the Assistant Quartermaster-General, Army Head Quarters, assisted by a Staff Officer and Officer Inspector, the latter of whom constantly travels from one station to another, and reports direct upon all matters that may come under his observation.

The Train has worked regularly between Addigerat and Magdala,* principally in carrying baggage, ammunition, hospital stores, and commissariat supplies for the Force for one month.

At intermediate large stations a Staff Officer has been permanently appointed to receive all reports from officers in charge of convoys, and he

forwards the same to head-quarters. At these posts small reserves are kept, from which sick and weakly mules are replaced.

We have had in work mules purchased in Spain, Egypt, India, Persia, and Abyssinia.

Mules.

The Spanish mules are principally large and ill-bred, and, from my own observation, are naturally of a weak constitution, and unable to bear great changes in climate. They have suffered much from a want of sufficiency of food, especially of grass, of which they do not eat enough even when it is procurable, for that which is obtained is dry and coarse, and they don't relish it.

When once in low condition, it is almost impossible to bring them round even with rest and grazing. abundance of which they get at the sick depôts, the few well-bred Spanish mules we have had have answered well.

The Persian, Indian, and Egyptian mules on the contrary are very much more enduring, require less grain, will eat any description of grass, and thrive upon it.

During the operations before Magdala, when the animals had for some days to endure hard work upon little food and water, which latter was very bad, the large mules fell off in condition very rapidly, whereas the others showed comparatively little change. The difficulties of the road, crossing and recrossing the rivers Bashilo and Jidda, enervated as they were, was most trying, and many succumbed.

Return of Mules from 1st March.

The Abyssinian mules are not enduring; all those we purchased were then in good condition and fresh, still they have broken down in larger numbers than any others.

On the 1st of March there were 5,412 animals in the Highland Train, and of these 1,002 were sick. On the 1st April there were 6,661, and of these 1,002 sick.

On the 1st May, 7,690; and of these, 1,944 sick. Since the 1st March we have purchased in the country on the Highlands 2,720, and 1,740 have been transferred from the Lowlands.

Since the same date we have lost on the road 449, and 1,257 have been sent to the Lowland sick depôt at Koomaylee, and struck off our returns, and 309 were destroyed or died at Highland sick depôts.

2,418 were discharged from Hospital and sent to work.

The mules had scarcely a fair start, for they were generally put to work the day after disembarkation, after some weeks between decks in a tropical climate.

Causes of Sick.

I have at all times consulted with Staff Veterinary Surgeon Hallen as to the causes and remedies for the large number of sick, and I consider the chief causes to be:—"Hard work at great altitudes."

"Constant exposure, with want of rest."

"Insufficiency of food and bad quality of grass."

"Irregularity in feeding."

"Galls, owing to bad saddles; want of time and means for repairing the same."

"Carelessness in saddling and loading."

Men.

The drivers of the train were entertained as syces or muledrivers, in the position of public followers from the Punjab for the divisions

* About 300 miles.