

The Indian Contingent.

SOME BRAVE DEFENDERS OF THE EMPIRE.



IF all the Imperial troops who have visited this distant portion of the Empire, there are probably none more interesting than the Indian Contingent. That "Tommy Atkins" should fight for his King and country is quite natural, because he is "of the blood," but to see these men of other climes, some of whom have grown old in the service, so loyal and devoted to the same king and country, brings very forcibly before one what Kipling meant when he spoke of the "White Man's Burden," and what a wonderful work the British are doing in India, that vast country with over 250,000,000 inhabitants, whose mode

of life and whose mode of thought is so different from ours. Pick out one of the contingent at random, and a few minutes conversation in broken English, or through an interpreter, will convince you that the men who can govern such must be men of sterling quality. Having seen these men, to think of those scattered Britishers who are bearing

the "White Man's Burden," is but to admire them. Like everything that comes out of the mysterious East, there is a charm, a fascination about our quaint visitors that is hard to define. It is not altogether the novelty of the sight, because they all seem so strangely familiar. We have probably read so much about their wonderful country, and Kipling has familiarised us so with Indian life that it is perhaps only natural that one should have a faint idea of having met these turbaned Mohammedans and Hindoos somewhere else. It is not the novelty, it is not the gorgeous Eastern dresses that attract one; it is the inscrutable



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personality of the men that fascinates, and makes one wish to know all that is passing in the mind which is mirrored in their dark, thoughtful eyes. They are so dignified, so polite, and so immobile that one longs to fathom their thoughts. Admire one's medals, or praise his prowess as a horseman and a swordsman,