



very comfortable at our humble home. Now, when I see how many privations you had to put up with, I think you made wonderful sacrifices for your children, whose duty it is to make you as comfortable as they possibly can. I, for one, am certainly sorry that I have not been more prudent, for I certainly ought by this time to have been able to send you, at least, something; for I got the allowances of the acting adjutancy for eight months out of the ten in which I acted, after a reference to Government. . . . When I rejoin my corps I shall be in the receipt of 600 rs. per mensem, as the corps is at present in the field; out of which I shall at least be able to save 300 rs. a month, which is about 350*l.* a year. I am obliged to keep an additional horse and office establishment and field-carriage, but 300 rs. a month will certainly cover all expenses in the field, and 250 in garrison. The above 600 rs. per mensem is the field-pay and allowances, the garrison is about 400 rs. per month; so that in the field I shall save about 350*l.*, and in garrison about 150 rs. a month, which makes about 180*l.* a year; all of which is, of course, dedicated to you; and much greater pleasure will spending it in this manner afford me than if I was amassing riches upon riches on my own account.'

A little later in the year (though the letter bears the postmark of October), he continues in the same strain, entering freely into details of money liabilities, and adding:—

'I was at first undetermined whether to let you know how I am circumstanced, . . . but then I recollected that honesty is the best policy, and that being candid with you would please you more than if I were perhaps not exactly to fulfil what I promised. I therefore have told you everything, and always shall.'

It is but fair to remark that Francis Outram shared the same filial sentiments, and could equally appreciate the in-



estimable value of a mother's attachment. His letters are conclusive testimony on this point.

We have already said that when James Outram went up to rejoin his battalion in 1822, it was somewhere north-east of Ahmadabad. He fell in with it at the village of Morassa, where it formed part of a field force assembled with a view to the suppression of local disturbances which had become aggravated by long continuance. Lieutenant Richard Ord, of the same regiment, but of the 2nd battalion, then at Kishm, was acting adjutant, and from him he received charge of his substantive appointment. This officer had spent eighteen months in the Persian Gulf, but ill-health having prevented his return thither, he had been directed to attach himself to the 1st battalion of his regiment in the Máhi Kánta. The campaign being brought to a close by the capture of the rebel chief Konkaji, the battalion was ordered to Rajkot for the rains. A march in Káthiawár during the prevalence of the hot winds is not pleasant, but the weather does not appear to have abated the energy of the young men thus incidentally thrown together. They were much of the same standing, for Ord was only two senior to Outram in the regimental list of lieutenants. The latter had not enjoyed much sport on his upward journey. His journal shows he had had a little hunting at Surat, and had been unfortunate in breaking down a colt brought from Bombay; also that he found some hog at Ahmadabad, where he had experienced two severe falls. But of the 'little sport on the road' through Káthiawár to Rajkot, to which he refers, Lieutenant Ord gives the following account:—

'A few days after he (Outram) had joined, he and I were riding in rear of the column, and as day broke we espied hog at a little distance. Immediately we started in chase, not anticipating much result from our hunt, as we had no



spears, merely our swords. After a short run we detached a fine large fellow from the herd, who, after a sharp burst of about a mile, took refuge in a large patch of cactus bushes, out of which we found it impossible to dislodge him, though Outram in his eagerness dismounted, and did his best to make him bolt. From what I afterwards saw of hog-hunting I think it was as well . . . that he did not succeed. Foiled in our attempt, we galloped back to the regiment, and were just in time to rejoin it before it arrived at the encamping ground.

Again, a little later, a regular hog-hunt was organised. Owing to the hot weather, however, there was but one hunter to the fore, besides the same two named; Ord *loquitur*:—

‘Off we started, and after riding about three miles, admiring the mirage, the solemn stillness, and the various villages flashing on the horizon, we came to a large level plain covered with grass and stunted trees. Our guides stopped, and upon our asking them where the hogs were, waved their arms in a circle and said “There!” We all looked rather blank, for having no beaters with us, we might as well have searched for a needle in a haystack as a hog on that wide plain. Suddenly we caught sight of a little flag waving from a solitary tree in the distance, and, putting our horses’ heads in that direction, soon started a huge boar. Away we went as hard as we could lay legs to the ground, my horse leading—and Outram just behind, calling out to me to turn him. On, on we rode, but just when I came within nearly a spear’s length of him, instead of turning from me, he charged furiously at me, and had not my gallant steed bounded in the air and leaped over him, we should have been rolled upon the plain. Before I had recovered the suddenness of the attack, Outram rushed to the rescue; the



hog charged him furiously, but being a practised hand, he received the charge on his spear. In the concussion the spear was broken in half, one part remaining fast in the animal's head. Our enemy was now brought to bay but, sitting on his haunches with the spear in his head, he had such a strange appearance and charged so furiously when we approached, that our horses would not go near enough to him to allow of his getting his *coup-de-grâce*. We had, at this time, but one spear, I having dropped mine, and Outram's being broken—but after a while our horse-keepers came up with other spears, and the boar was soon despatched. My companions were much amused at my discomfiture, but gave me great credit for my first attempt.

Outram had purchased a house at Rajkot, and into this he moved shortly after reaching the station. The other officers who could not find *bangla* accommodation went into tents. Ord took up his quarters with a friend in the 1st Cavalry, joining the mess of that regiment; but Outram, not thinking this arrangement compatible with a proper *esprit de corps*, eventually persuaded him to share his own house and become a member of his own mess.

Colonel Ord, at a comparatively recent date, in reviewing the weekly hog-hunting picnics of Rajkot held at this particular period, gives a stirring account of an adventure at a place called 'Kerisera,' prefacing it with the remark that 'in India sporting is much encouraged by the higher authorities, it being the general opinion that these hardy exercises conduce much to the military training and formation of a soldier.' 'He had heard both Sir John Malcolm and Sir Lionel Smith'—and few men could be trusted for sounder opinions on military training—'observe that they never knew a good sportsman who was not a good soldier.' We quote the original narrative:—



‘ Outram, Liddle, and myself were together ; we started a sounder. Outram looking after one hog, and L. and myself after another, Outram soon lost sight of his in the thick jungle, but L. and I pursued our course. Soon we heard O. galloping up behind us ; we pushed on, hoping to get the spear before he came up. Most unfortunately there was a deep jungly ravine before us ; into that the hog dashed, and while we stopped on the brink, Outram rushed by us, and after floundering and rolling over several times reached the bottom—a dry *nullah*. We thought that he must have been severely hurt, but not a bit—soon he was on his horse’s back again, and after a long run he killed the boar, although he had only half a spear, the shaft having been broken in his descent down the ravine. When Outram had left us, L. and I went into the jungle, hoping to finish another hog. We had not ridden far when we heard a rustle, and saw the grass moving at a little distance in front of us ; we immediately set off in pursuit, but on coming to a more open space we found that it was not a hog that we were in chase of, but two lions. The lions, on getting a fair view of us, stopped and turned to look at us. We stopped also, feeling no inclination to encounter them. After gazing at each other for a while, the lions quietly walked away, and we followed their example. On regaining Outram, and telling him what we had seen, he was anxious that we should again go in pursuit, but we resolutely declined. These were the first lions, I believe, that were ever seen in Káthiawár ; since then I have heard that many have been met with, and some killed, but with the rifle, not the spear.’

Running a *nílgaï* down without dogs, and following him into the middle of a river, is another story of those days told of his hero by the same authority. One morning, too, that they were out with the dogs in quest of foxes, they



slipped the whole pack at some wolves which appeared upon the ground. These fought fiercely, and seriously damaged their assailants. The result was that most of the dogs went mad.

For the year 1823 there is recorded in James Outram's *shikár* book, that he had 'good hog-hunting in the neighbourhood of Rajkot.' A list of eighty-three first spears is given, of which fifty belong to the recorder himself, the rest being divided among twelve other competitors, the highest of whose individual scores is eight. Of course many of the party were oftener out than others; Outram always. The rule of the hunt was that all should go after the same hog, selecting the largest. For the year 1824 the *shikár* register in Káthiawár is roughly continued until March 4 only, at which date thirty-nine hog and one *chítá* (leopard) had been killed. Of the first spears Outram carried off twenty-four, inclusive of the *chítá*; the remainder being divided among three comrades, one of whom scored eight. He also killed in Káthiawár four *nílgái*, two hyenas, and two wolves; the *nílgái* having been obtained in seven runs, at the cost of four horses!¹

¹ A detail of winners of these 'first spears' is given in the *shikár* book. Adding the two years together, we obtain a total of 123 (83 + 40), in the following order:—

Outram	74
Morris	10
Watkins	8
Wight	6
Scott	6
Rowland	6
Poole	5
Slight	3
Sparrow	1
Wilkes	1
Barlow	1
Stevenson	1
Jám Rája of Naunagar	1
	<hr/> 123



But the years 1823 and 1824 were not wholly taken up with the chase. The account just given of trophies in the hunting-field begins really in the last week of July and ends on March 4, thus exhibiting a detail of consecutive sport for little more than seven months. During this period Outram, a young man of but one-and-twenty, up to January 29 took three-fifths of the 'first spears,' it is true; but he was winning his professional spears also by energy on the regimental parade. Independently of the duties of his own corps, he had already been adjutant of a detachment on service in Kāthiawār under Captain Morris. In January 1823, he commanded the 1st battalion of the 12th N. I. on its annual review, and was highly complimented by Colonel Turner, the reviewing officer, in Station Orders of the day; and in March 1824 he commanded a wing of his corps on the occasion of its review by Sir Charles Colville at Junagarh. The state of the battalion generally may be inferred from the Commander-in-Chief's order, dated February 29, the day on which he had reviewed its headquarters for the first time since 'incorporation into the Line.' His Excellency expressed to the officers and men how much gratification he had experienced 'in witnessing that their good composition as a body' was 'equalled by their smart and soldier-like performance under arms, and the report of their orderly and correct conduct in cantonment.' No slight praise is hereby implied to an adjutant who, however able his commandant, must, if he be of the proper stamp, exercise a strong direct personal influence upon both officers and *sipahis* in a native regiment. And he had then only just entered his two-and-twentieth year. The good opinion of the higher authorities on his soldierly qualities was, however, not evinced by mere compliment. In April 1824, when his regiment moved in wings to relieve the 19th Native Infantry at Malegāon, in Khandesh, he was



placed in command of the wing reviewed by the chief at Junagarh, resuming, at the end of the march, his duties of adjutant. Selection of a junior lieutenant for such responsible work was no poor evidence of efficiency. Dr. Johnston, of the Bombay army, accompanied in medical charge. His recorded reminiscence of this chapter of Indian life is of sufficient interest to be utilised for the benefit of the reader. The march is described as 'a distance of 250 miles, through a fine country, not wanting in game.' The strict discipline maintained by the young commanding officer did not admit of '*shikaring*' while the men were in movement. 'But,' writes the doctor, 'after reaching our ground, encamping the men, and discussing a good breakfast in the mess tent, we generally sallied out in quest of game, and many a wild boar bit the dust on these occasions. Outram was always ready to join those under his command in the field sports, of which indeed he was the great promoter, and in which he took more first spears than any other man. But this, so far from leading them to be lax in their duties, made every man try to do his best. Duty was always a labour of love with those under him, for he inspired all who were capable of any elevation of feeling with some portion of his own ardour, and made all such willing assistants rather than mere perfunctory subordinates. Thus early did he show that wonderful tact of commanding which few have possessed in such a high degree.'

In October 1824 he proceeded on medical certificate to Bombay. Some four or five months before, his battalion had been converted into a regiment,¹ under the designation

¹ The order of the Governor-General in Council for the reorganisation of the armies of the three Presidencies is dated May 6. Twelve regiments of Native Infantry, consisting of 2 battalions each, were given to Bombay; 25 to Madras, and 34 to Bengal. The separation into regiments accordingly was notified in Bombay Government Orders of June 7, when James Outram appeared as fourth Lieutenant in the 24th N.I. Francis Outram was at the same time shown as sixth among the Lieutenants of Engineers. On July 29, James



CSL

of 23rd. He himself had been posted next to Lieutenant Ord in the 2nd battalion or 24th, and appointed adjutant; but he had been permitted at his own request to return to his original battalion and his original adjutancy.¹

His Khandesh experiences of *shikār* had not been as full as those of Káthiawár, nor were his results so successful. For a party of four there is only shown a list of ten first spears; but then seven of these belonged to James Outram. One of the seven was exceptional, in that it was not taken upon a hog. The young Nimrod had again run down a *nílgañ*, and the exploit had once more cost him 'a valuable horse.'

Many old officers of the Bombay army will doubtless remember a story which obtained credit in those days, to the effect that Lieutenant Outram volunteered for employment in the Burmese campaign, and that the Commander-in-Chief, who had a real appreciation of the volunteer's soldierly qualities, but may not have cared to move him from the scene of present usefulness, replied through his secretary that he would not accede to the application, as, after giving the matter every consideration, he had come to the conclusion that the war might be successfully accomplished without him! The sequel was said to have been a challenge, to which the good humour and good sense of the old General replied by a friendly admonition conveyed through a third party. We think it probable that the following is the more correct account. It claims to be that

Outram is gazetted Adjutant of the 24th Regiment N.I. from August 1, 'vice Allen, who resigns.'

¹ The following is the text of the Government Order, dated September 3, 1824:—

'23rd Regiment N.I.—Lieutenant J. Outram, having exchanged from the 24th to this Regiment N.I. (in order to remain in a corps in which he has long done duty), to be continued in the discharge of the duties of Adjutant without alteration of original date of appointment, and his appointment of Adjutant to the 24th Regiment of N.I., by the General Order of July 29 last, is cancelled.'



related by Sir James himself in after years :—He used to be nicknamed ‘the little general,’ and when he asked the chief to be allowed to go to Birmah, verbally, the reply of ‘Oh, no, little general, I think we can manage it without you,’ so enraged him that he rushed out bent upon the *duello*, and eager to find a sympathising second. Of course no one would act in that capacity; and the General, on hearing of the matter, said to him, ‘It’s lucky you did not find one, for I’d have shot you.’ In any case Sir Charles Colville must have been the chief referred to, and it is not unlikely that the occurrence took place about the period of his inspection of the 23rd Regiment in March 1824; for it was in that very month that Sir Archibald Campbell was appointed to command the expeditionary force in Birmah. It may be here mentioned that Lord Amherst had arrived as Governor-General in Bengal, in succession to the Marquis of Hastings, in the middle of the previous year.

While Outram was at Bombay, towards the end of the year 1824, one of those miniature wars occurred, which, trifling as they are in respect of numbers and area, afford lessons to young soldiers more practical in their way than the sand-modelling experience of our military colleges. The story is instructive because it illustrates an incident of British rule in India which may have been repeated more or less often, with variations in detail but like general results; because it shows the delicate ground on which we tread in enforcing our morals as well as laws upon a people unwilling to accept either where they clash with ancient custom or prejudice; and because it establishes the fact that a rebellion against authority may be carried on, even by the more uncivilised of our Indian subjects, in a strange spirit of chivalry, devoid of personal rancour or animosity.

The Deshai, or hereditary native governor of Kittúr, died in September 1824 without heirs; and his *jágír*, or alien-



ated lands, lapsed to the paramount power. Mr. Thackeray, British Resident in the native state, consequently assumed control of the property, pending receipt of the further orders of Government. But some members of the native household sought both to conceal the death of the chief, and to palm off a successor, falsely represented to have been adopted. It became, therefore, necessary to take measures for securing the treasure and jewels, valued at about 15 laes of rupees; and a guard, sufficient to supply the requisite sentries, was ordered to move into the fort on October 22. The day following the spirit of resistance was clearly manifested, and admittance refused to a relief of soldiers. Strong measures were necessary; so the Collector gave orders that Captain Black should proceed with two guns to the gateway and demand surrender of the place, with one hour to consider. This done, without answer returned, and a further half-hour having been accorded with similar result, the gates were blown open. A heavy fire was then opened upon our troops from within the fort; Mr. Thackeray, Captain Black, and Lieutenant Dighton were killed, and Lieutenant Sewell was badly wounded. Messrs. Stevenson and Elliott, of the Madras Civil Service, the Collector's Assistants, who had been taken prisoners, were brought in front of the *sipahis* to induce them to cease firing. The device was successful, and the rebels carried their point.

No time was lost in repairing the mischief done to the prestige of our authority. There were no railways or telegraphs in those days, but fortunately Kittūr was not a very remote locality. On November 7 the 1st European regiment and a detachment of artillery embarked from Bombay for Vingorla, to proceed to Dharwar; and soon afterwards a combined force of Madras and Bombay troops, which had been directed to assemble in the Southern Marhatta country, entered the refractory State under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Deacon, C.B., of the Madras establish-



ment. December 10 the Governor of Bombay in Council published the despatches reporting the reduction of the fortress, and expressing his entire approbation of the measures adopted to achieve success, as well as of the conduct of officers and men engaged. Government viewed 'with particular satisfaction the exertions of the several corps to reach their destination from distant points, under circumstances of great difficulty attendant on the late unusual season and the great want of carriage in the country through which they had to pass.' The affair had been smart and well-managed, with a total loss on our side of three killed and twenty-five wounded. It is worthy of remark that Messrs. Stevenson and Elliott were well treated throughout this short period of captivity. According to the portion of the local press then considered the more authoritative, they were desired by the Marhattas to look upon the fort as their own, and their keepers, not themselves, as prisoners!

Now it so happened that both Francis and James Outram were present at the siege of Kittur: the former in the course of duty, the latter as a volunteer on leave at the Presidency. For the parts they respectively played we must refer to the despatches of the officer commanding the field detachment, although the Engineer only is mentioned in them by name. Colonel Deacon says: 'In reconnoitring . . . I was ably assisted by the abilities of Captain Pouget, of the Bombay Engineers; and his decided exertions and operations, as well as those of Lieutenants Lawe and Outram, of the same branch, were of the greatest use to me.' He added, however, that a demur on the side of the besieged to fulfil the terms of capitulation, which had been intimated by prearranged signal, had caused him to move forward 'H.M.'s 46th Regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Willshire,¹ and the 3rd Bombay Native Infantry under Lieutenant-

¹ Afterwards General Sir Thomas Willshire, Bart. K.C.B.



Colonel Seely.' Suspicion of treacherous dealing had been so far aroused, that 'the batteries were several times about to re-open:' but all ended well, for after a little delay in negotiation 'the prisoners were . . . brought out and the forts surrendered, about 8 o'clock on the morning of December 5.' By the light of these passages in the despatch, we understand the personal notes which inform us that James Outram, after successfully volunteering for the Kittúr expedition, was 'attached to the 3rd Regiment in command of the Light Company,' and that he had further 'volunteered to lead the storming-party,' a contingency contemplated, but rendered unnecessary owing to the submission of the insurgents.

As their arrival at Bombay is notified in the same day's Gazette, we may conclude that the two brothers returned thither from Kittúr together on January 19. The younger did not tarry many days at the Presidency, and in February had joined his regiment at Malegáon. One month later, an insurrection which, unchecked, might have proved of a serious character, broke out in the western districts of Khandesh, in the suppression of which he was called upon to take a prominent part. The leading rebel, with 800 men, attacked and plundered Antapúr, and carried his spoil to the hill-fortress of Malair, a village between Surat and Malegáon. There, having established his head-quarters, he raised the banner of the recently conquered Peshwa, and proclaimed his intention of reviving the glories of the Marhatia confederacy. Convenient military stations, such as Surat, Jálnah, and Ahmadnagar, were warned to hold soldiers in readiness for service; while the more immediately available force was concentrated for protective purposes upon Zai Kaira, the chief town of the Malair district, and seat of the treasury; that place being only twelve miles distant from the stronghold of the insurgents.



On the morning of April 5 a requisition for troops reached Malegão: and a detachment of 200 men of the 11th and 23rd Regiments was paraded and marched off at 5 o'clock in the evening. Lieutenant Outram, who was to command, and his friend, Mr. Graham the assistant-collector, followed at 11 p.m. on an elephant. They reached Zai Kaira at sunrise on April 6—37 miles in seven hours. On the way they had seen the fires in Malair; and the surrounding country had appeared to them in a blaze. For the last five miles into the town the road had been strewed with *sipahis*, completely knocked up. In the course of the day Outram received information which led him to believe that, despite of numbers, the fortress of Malair might be successfully escaladed on the further side. But this day's proceedings, and those of April 7, will be retold in the words of one who may be trusted for a knowledge of his subject: 'He therefore proposed to carry the place by a *coup-de-main*, to rout the insurgents under the panic of a sudden surprise and, by thus destroying the prestige they had already acquired, to dishearten the allies that were flocking to their standard. This proposition was enthusiastically received by his companions, Ensigns Whitmore and Paul, of the 11th Regiment; but it so far exceeded the discretionary powers which their written instructions vested either in Graham or Outram, that it was a matter of serious deliberation with the former whether he was justified in giving his consent. The result of his enquiries, however, satisfied him that a rapid and alarming extension of the insurrection could only be prevented by offering a prompt check to the rebels. He accordingly sanctioned the proposed measures; and soon after nightfall Outram marched forth to carry them into execution.

'As he neared the hill on which the fortress was situated, he sent Ensigns Whitmore and Paul, with 150 men, to make a false attack in front, while he himself, with the remaining



fifty sepoy of his detachment, turning off to the left, proceeded to assail the rear.

The operation was completely successful. Both parties effected the ascent before daybreak, and while the rebels had their attention drawn to their front by the assault of an enemy whose strength it was impossible to ascertain in the dark, Outram dashed in upon them from behind. The panic-stricken garrison fled with scarcely an attempt at resistance, and at the head of his reunited detachment, and some horsemen whom Mr. Graham had in the meantime collected, Outram followed them up so closely that they could neither rally nor discover the weakness of their assailants. Their leader was cut down; many of his adherents shared his fate, and the rest made for the neighbouring hills in a state of complete disorganisation.

As the infantry had now marched upwards of fifty miles in little more than thirty-six hours, Outram found it necessary to halt them soon after dawn. But the horsemen continued the pursuit so far as the nature of the ground permitted; scouts were despatched to ascertain the point of rendezvous selected by the scattered foe, and, at night, the chase was resumed. The insurgents were a second time surprised; many were slain, numbers were taken prisoners, and the rest, throwing down their arms, fled to their respective villages. A rebellion which had caused much anxiety to the authorities was thus crushed ere the troops intended for its suppression had been put in motion, and the plunder of Untapoor was restored to its lawful owners.¹

These services, for which the acknowledgments of Government, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Division General, were received by the smart young adjutant and his supporters, were the last rendered by Lieutenant Outram in his capacity

¹ *Memoir*, printed for private circulation in 1853.



of regimental officer. He had been marked by the authorities for special employ, and his energy and abilities were to be displayed in a new and higher sphere. By Bombay General Orders of April 22, he was placed at the disposal of the collector and political agent in Khandesh for the purpose of commanding a Bhil corps to be raised in that province for police duties. A fortnight afterwards appeared in the Government Gazette the appointment of an officer to be adjutant of the 23rd Regiment N.I. 'vice Outram, appointed to command a Bhil corps.' We are not surprised to learn that when he thus officially, as it were, parted from his old companions, his commanding officer, Major Deschamps, recorded a warm eulogium on his services, attributing in a great measure to his individual merits and exertions, the good reputation obtained by the newly-formed regiment.

Having now traced the strictly regimental career of the subject of our biography, it will not be out of place, before commencing a new chapter, to glance at the result of this incipient work upon physical powers which an Indian climate and much out-door work had put to a tolerably severe test.

He was not one to dwell upon bodily ailments, but he was not free from those to which flesh is heir; nor was India more kind to him during the first five years of his residence than to the generality of his companions. It has been shown that sickness had compelled him to leave Baroda in 1821 and Rajkot in 1824, proceeding on each occasion to Bombay. It has not, however, been stated that just before the march from Puna in the former year he had been attacked by a bilious fever which, to use his own words, though 'got over in three days,' was 'succeeded by a very curious disease, something between small-pox and chicken-pox.' He had managed to accompany his regiment out from Puna in that kind of second-class palanquin called a *doolee*;



and after four days' rest at his cousin's quarters in Bombay, whither he had gone by water from Panwell, he had felt well enough to decline his commanding officer's offer to precede the corps by sea-passage to Cambay. That this attack, however, had been of a decided character, may be inferred from his report of himself when it had fairly passed away: *i.e.* that he was 'a greater scare than ever,' and 'a little marked' by the disease. Moreover, Mr. Elphinstone had not at first recognised him at Baroda, because he 'had grown so much,' and his 'face was greatly altered;' which latter result he attributed to the same circumstance.

For some years he continued the 'puny lad' of his self-retrospect, liable to every prevailing sickness, and easily knocked up by exposure. But we learn that even in his early days he formed the resolution to fight it out with the climate or die: to acclimatise himself by surmounting all the illnesses of Anglo-Indian existence, or succumb to one of them altogether. If he was not to conquer such contingencies, he did not care to live in the atmosphere to which they belonged. And he *did* fight it out and, strange to say, illness after illness left him none the worse permanently; while the result of an unusually varied series of approaches to death's door was the establishment of a constitution of iron, proof against all influences, and proverbial in its marvellous capacity for endurance of deadly trials; nerves of steel—shoulders and muscles worthy of a six-foot Highlander. He was given over in cholera more than once, and experienced fevers and other diseases or complaints which, humanly speaking, would have killed most men: but excitement and work soon became, and long remained, his best restoratives and tonics.

Of his 'moving accidents by flood and field' and 'hair-breadth scapes,' we shall have to tell hereafter. Our immediate business is with the Bhils of Khandesh.



CHAPTER III.

1825-1828.

Khandesh and the Bhils.—Outram's Bhil Corps.

THE province of Khandesh, situated to the north-north-east of the port of Bombay, from which its principal town, Dhulia, is distant 181 miles, became incorporated in British Indian territory in 1818, after the Peshwa's downfall. For a time it formed part of the district of Ahmadnagar; but was separated in 1849. It is now known as a collectorate, of which the greatest length is, from east to west, 175 miles, and breadth, from north to south, 128 miles.¹

Thirty-seven years ago, Captain Douglas Graham described the tract as contained between the Satpura hills on the north, and that branch of the *gháts* which passes under the names of Chandar, Satmála, and Ajanta, to the south. So far the description holds good at the present day. Let us add that, beyond the Satpuras, are the Akráni *parganna* and the native state of Barwáni. These comprise lands south of the Narbada, flanked by the territory of Holkar and the Gáikwár, the last extending also along the Sukhain hills, or western limits of Khandesh. East and south-east are Berar and the country of the Nizam. The tabular trap hills on the north are, according to Captain Graham, 'separated from each other by ravines of vast magnitude, and are covered with splendid forests which afford, amidst the most romantic scenery, unbounded shelter to the outlaw.' The Sukhain

¹ See also Appendix B, as regards Khandesh and the Bhils generally.



range is steep and stony, but the *gháts* on that side are broken: they sustain 'tangled masses of bamboo found nowhere else in greater luxury or more difficult of access.' A thick *babul jangal* clothes the hilly country on the south.

What with bad roads, sparse hamlets, rugged impracticable mountain passes, and the spread of *jangal* over the cultivable tracts, the aspect of the province, on being brought under British occupation, was far from inviting. Its decline is dated at a period within the present century, when Holkar's ravages were followed by famine, and famine was followed by misgovernment and official plunder. Irrespective of these visitations, though in some degree consequent upon them, lawless men moved, and savage beasts prowled over the face of the land in quest of mischief. Foremost among marauding tribes, one, the Bhíl, is especially connected with the work which we have in hand.

Colonel Briggs, political agent in 1818, estimated the Bhíls in Khandesh to form an eighth part of the whole population. Fifteen years later, Mr. W. S. Boyd, an experienced collector, adopting the same basis of calculation, fixed the number at 55,000. The former believed them to be a distinct people; and assigned them a habitat in the mountainous tract lying between Dharanpur in the Konkan (20'-23' north lat.) and Meywar, belonging to the Rána of Udaipur. Sir John Malcolm saw in them a distinctiveness of race and class-separation dating from the most remote ages. Captain Douglas Graham placed on record that, on being driven out of Meywar and Jodhpur by other tribes, they had located themselves among the rocky ranges of the Satpura, Vindhya and Satmála, and amidst the woody banks of the Máhi, Narbada, and Tapti, 'where, protected by the strong nature of the country, they have since dwelt, subsisting partly on their own industry, but more generally on the plunder of the rich landholders in their vicinity, considering



depredation on the inhabitants of the plain as a sort of privilege, and a tax upon all persons passing through the country of their occupation as a national right.' He believed the bulk of the Khandesh Bhils to have settled in Baglan (or Baglana), and to the north and north-west, as peaceable cultivators, proprietors, and village officials—respectable probably as their fellows, because having the same interest in the preservation of their rights and property. But there must have been many exceptions to this hopeful majority in the indolent, improvident lot whom he found scattered in numbers throughout the province, refusing intimacy with, or to acknowledge as kith or kin, those who had become 'degraded' by trade or labour, and had abandoned the normal ways and habits of the tribe. The most restless and troublesome he stated to be 'those dwelling immediately at the foot, and amidst the recesses of the surrounding ranges, who at different periods have either usurped, or have been entrusted with all the passes leading into the country, and till lately have held charge of many of the most important fortresses in the plains. Their hive-like habitations formerly crested the top of each isolated hill, where approach from every side was easily defended or immediately discovered; and these hovels, not reared for permanent occupation but hastily put together to be crept into for a few months or weeks, were without regret abandoned on any occasion that induced the occupants to shift their quarters. Roving and restless by disposition, and skilful hunters by necessity, the woods and jungles supplied them with roots, berries, and game; a successful foray filled their stores to overflowing, and as every man's hand was lifted against them, so the measure of wrath was fully returned by the tribe, whose powers of mischief far exceeded those of their numerous oppressors, and whose habits and locations enabled



them to bid such a lengthy defiance to so many Governments.¹

The term, like that of 'Kurd' in Asiatic Turkey, has been long traditionally associated with robbery and violence, but circumstances may have had something to do with turning the hand of the Bhil against his neighbour, equally with inborn combativeness and natural predilections. In village communities the Bhil of Khandesh was described to be usually the recognised watchman, who received a certain amount of rent-free land and grain for the ordinary fulfilment of duty, and special rewards for special services. We speak of the system in its condition under native states unaffected by the changes of European civilisation. It was observed however that, in the interior, that is, at some distance from the mountain ranges, the village Bhil seldom admitted the authority of an official or hereditary chief, or acknowledged any superior but one who had acquired the greatest reputation as a leader of banditti—failing whom, his choice fell on the oldest and wisest of his fellows. There is therefore good reason to infer that the settlement in the plains of certain of the tribe as peaceable members of an agricultural family, was brought about by compulsion or strong persuasion on the part of the Muhammadan rulers.² Moreover, on the occurrence of famine and invasion, it appears that the Bhil watchmen and cultivators generally broke away from their more domestic ties, and took refuge in the surrounding hills.

Apart from village organisation and the milder morality of the plain country, there were the fierce, intractable Bhil robbers of the mountain: men of strong animal passions and instincts, who had no sympathy or part with the tiller of the soil,

¹ *A Brief Historical Sketch of the Bhil Tribes inhabiting the Province of Khandesh.* Bombay, 1843.

² Report by Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson, of March 18, 1825.



and knew nothing of honest livelihoods or the uses of industry; who prided themselves in a profession of plunder invested with the character of sanctity, and whose religion was allegiance to the powers of evil, illustrated by propitiatory sacrifices of a sanguinary type. No wonder that these, and such as had not been grafted into a more civilised state than these, isolated themselves from, and were readily isolated by their neighbours, whose bitter and hereditary enemies they naturally became. Suspicious, cunning, and more ready to prey on the weak than test the prowess of the strong, their bravery was perhaps in most cases that of desperation and recklessness of life, but has also been held to partake of 'manly fortitude' and 'heroic devotion.'

One authority, admitting two sides to the picture, speaks of them in the following terms: 'Small in stature, lean and wiry, these Bhils are capable of great endurance, and from constant exercise their senses of sight and hearing are wonderfully acute. They seem, in their natural state, like the Bushmen of Africa, scarcely men, but rather a link between the human species and the wild creatures among whom they live. Robbers and marauders by natural descent, for long their hand was against every man and every man's hand against them. Hunting, varied by plundering and cattle-lifting, was their normal trade. There was something noble in them too; they were in fact the Rob Roys of India and, like our Rob Roy, they for a long time actually levied black mail from the inhabitants of the open country. Proscribed by Government and hunted down, they were killed by hundreds, but never subdued.'¹ Of those who were essentially hill-men, it may be said that, prior to the formation of the British collectorate of Khandesh, no coercion or persuasion had, from time immemorial or according to any

¹ Lecture delivered in Edinburgh to H.M.'s 78th Highlanders, by Colonel Davidson, late of the Bombay Army.



tradition extant, succeeded in drawing them from their mountain abodes and fastnesses.

But we must not now confine ourselves, either ethnologically or geographically, to any one particular division of the race, though the strict range of biographical narrative be limited to the inhabitants of one British Indian collectorate and its immediate neighbourhood. We have to do with all to whom a particular designation applies, whether dweller in the hills or plains, or ignorant of one or the other, or an occasional visitor or frequenter of both; only, be it premised, our subject is rather warrior than cultivator, and more commonly a disturber than a preserver of the peace.

The Bhils had taken advantage of the war between Muhammadans and Marhattas to give vent to their tastes and powers of misdoing: but on the cessation of that struggle, a new period of anarchy and confusion arose which must have been at its height when Khandesh came into our hands in 1818.

At that time we are told:—

‘Murder and rapine stalked openly and unrestrainedly through the land. Fifty notorious leaders infested this once flourishing “garden of the west,” and their every command was implicitly obeyed by upwards of five thousand ruthless followers, whose sole occupation was pillage and robbery, whose delight alone consisted in the murderous foray, and whose subsistence depended entirely on the fruits of their unlawful spoil. Smarting also under the repeatedly broken pledges of the former Native Government, and rendered savage from the wholesale slaughter of their families and relations, the Bhils were more than usually suspicious of a new government of foreigners, and less than ever inclined to submit to the bonds of order and restraint.’¹

The Satpura and Satmála, or northern and southern

¹ Captain Douglas Graham's Memoir.



hills, as well as western *gháts*, were alive with large bodies of warlike and disaffected men, ever ready, more or less, to ruffle the tranquillity of the plain country beneath. So insecure was the condition of the cultivator, that he was constrained to refuse the *takáwí*, or money advanced for seed, an act in many cases significant of a coming season of destitution. War between British and Bhils became therefore a stern necessity; and it was further necessary at once to stop the forcible seizing of grain in the lowlands.

For seven years every effort was made to bring about a better order of things. Colonel Briggs, the political agent, tried conciliatory, as well as repressive measures. Some of the delinquents were enlisted in the Government service, some were pensioned, and with others an attempt was made to organise a local police; but notwithstanding the loss by death or confinement of many of the more prominent insurgents, and that great and reasonable inducement to accept terms had been held out, little sensible progress was attained. It was not until the new policy inaugurated by Colonel Archibald Robertson had been rendered intelligible to the mass, and names such as Ovans and Outram had become familiar to the Bhil, that a marked change ensued for the better. This change is dated from the year 1825, when the Bhil agency was established and effect given to the orders specially communicated by the Court of Directors. The three agents were Captain Rigby in the north-west, having under his charge the *talukas* of Nandurbar, Sultanpur and Pimpalnair, with all the independent and tributary chieftains, those of the Dáng inclusive; Captain Ovans in the south, in charge of Jamnair, Burgáon, and Cháligáon, inclusive of the districts below and adjoining the Ajanta and Satmala range; and Lieutenant James Outram in the north-east, superintending the line of the Satpuras, with the districts of Chopra, Yáwal, and Sauda, to which were after-



wards added Erindol, Amalnair, and Nasarábád. To the latter officer was moreover entrusted the duty of raising a Bhil Light Infantry corps under native commissioned and non-commissioned officers of Line regiments.

The agents were certainly instructed how to carry on generally the important work committed to them, and made acquainted with the results which it was desirable they should achieve. But it is manifest that much must have been left to their discrimination and judgment, and that individual character would go far to solve the problem of success or failure in an undertaking of the kind. They had to combine administrative with executive functions: to be magistrates, judges, arbitrators, advisers, police superintendents, and military commanders: to conciliate as well as repress, to attract as well as awe, and to inculcate honesty and fair dealing by example as well as by precept. Outram had, in addition, to instil discipline and obedience into the minds of those whom he was to rear as a local force.

To render acceptable the humane and enlightened policy about to be initiated, military operations were reduced to a minimum. To stop them entirely would have been unwise, impolitic, and unfair to the peaceable inhabitants of Khandedh: but a general amnesty was offered to all Bhils but the more heinous offenders, for whose apprehension large rewards had been proclaimed; and indeed, a free pardon for past crimes was granted to those who surrendered at discretion.

Although the order to organise a Bhil corps under a European officer was long delayed, and the incident of the Malair rebellion, in which Outram bore so conspicuous a part, doubtless hastened its issue and execution, credit may not be withheld from the local Government for the measures eventually taken. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827, had had a long experience of Western India. Great natural ability, combined with a keen



insight into the native mind, and that cool courage which had caused Colonel Arthur Wellesley to hold him 'certainly born a soldier,' soon gave him a high local reputation, which was afterwards not diminished by his tenure of the Presidential dignity. In the matter of the Bhîls he leaned to the milder policy of conciliation, and looked hopefully to the possibility of ameliorating the condition of these proscribed brigands and outcasts. He would reclaim rather than exterminate; and happily the Home Government, despite of objections put forward, eventually supported his proposals. The selection of so junior an officer as James Outram for the double work of morally civilising and physically disciplining the rough and ignorant Bhîl of Khandesh, was not more creditable to the nominee's character than to the judgment of the Governor. In at once throwing up his regimental position and accepting the appointment offered, the young adjutant acted against the advice of friends, who expatiated on the poor prospect of a successful result to his labours. But he was wise in his generation.

A severe illness detained Lieutenant Outram until the beginning of May in Malegâon, where his regiment was stationed. Here also were the head-quarters of a field force designed to keep in check the Bhîls of the Ajanta or Satmala range, who, under the guidance of one Pandu and other leaders of local celebrity, had long ravaged the plains below the mountains with impunity, setting at nought all attempts to dislodge them from their fastnesses. As it was not practicable to open communications from this place, Outram proceeded up to Kanûr, a small station in the Nizam's country above the *ghâts*, but with no practical result. Hence he returned to Malegâon in the hope of persuading the local authorities to consent to active operations; for he was convinced that his mission would be vain so long as the spirit of rebellion was fostered by the belief that our troops



could not attack the evil at its source, by penetrating the mountain retreats. Again disappointed, he made his way to a native officer's post at Jatigáon, some thirty miles distant, also above the *gháts*, whither the men were detached from his own regiment. The commandant, recognising one whom he had long been accustomed to obey, and ignorant that a General Order, placing the English adjutant of the 23rd N.I. on separate staff employ, had virtually cancelled his immediate authority over the *sipahis*, even though drilled and disciplined by himself, at once complied with Outram's requisition to hold in readiness all his disposable men for a march after nightfall. Thus provided, he set off under guidance of a native spy, marched upon a strong position where he had heard the Bhils were then concentrated, and came upon his quasi-enemy by daybreak. His detachment consisted of only thirty bayonets, but the surprise had its anticipated effect. On the first alarm that the red-coats were upon them, given by the scouts when the distance was too great for actual assault, the whole body of rebels fled in every direction panic-stricken, leaving their women, children, and scant property at the mercy of the soldiers. Separating then his small party into threes and fours, Outram directed the *sipahis* to pursue the Bhils so long as any came in sight, and to rendezvous at a particular spot, searching the ravines closely on their way thither. The sight of the scarlet uniform and the sound of musketry in many different quarters confirmed the fugitives in the idea that the whole British force was upon them, and prevented all attempts at rallying; in fine, the dispersion for the time was complete. On this occasion two Bhils were killed and many supposed to be wounded, while most of the families remained in the power of the assailants. But the matter did not end here. It was determined to prevent, as much as possible, renewal of mischief. Information of the proposed *coup de main* had



been sent to Major Deschamps, commanding at Malegão, and his co-operation invited and accorded. Reinforcements consequently appeared, and a pursuit of the Bhils, carried out on a more extensive scale than before, ended in the occupation of their haunts by regular troops, and the destruction of their power to such an extent that a way was opened for the introduction of restorative and remedial measures.

Outram then commenced his work of organisation and, as he himself expresses it, laid the foundation of the corps through the medium of his captives, 'some of whom were released to bring in the relatives of the rest, on the pledge that they all should be set at liberty.' He has further non-officially recorded the particulars of this interesting and remarkable inauguration of a great philanthropic as well as political movement:—

'I thus effected an intercourse with some of the leading Naicks, went alone with them into their jungles, gained their hearts by copious libations of brandy, and their confidence by living unguarded among them, until at last I persuaded five of the most adventurous to risk their fortunes with me, which small beginning I considered ensured ultimate success.'

Outram's first report bears date July 1, and is addressed from Dharangão to Colonel Robertson, collector of Khandedh. It relates that on May 8 the writer, agreeably to his instructions, proceeded to Cháligão in search of recruits. At this place he received all necessary aid from Mr. Graham, the assistant collector, who explained personally to the superior native officials, and caused them to explain to those under their orders (as well as to the Bhils themselves, when forthcoming), the nature and advantages of enlistment in the service of the British Government. Pending



the result of such appeal, he went to a station above the *gháts* privately, to secure the support of Captain Kelly, of the Nizam's army, an officer generally credited with influence among the people with whom negotiations were to be opened. The gentleman thus addressed was not slow to act upon his young friend's requisition; but his efforts were unavailing and, as he declared it to be his decided opinion that the prejudices and fears of the Bhils in the matter were not to be overcome, the applicant returned to Cháligáon on May 20. Here, too, during the few days of his absence, no candidates for service had been induced to offer themselves; but Outram thought too well of this particular part of Khandesh, in its relation to his main object, to abandon it in a hurry, so he continued in the district, visiting and residing at neighbouring Bhil villages until June 15.

In the official report of these proceedings there is no mention of the affair in which the *sipahis* of the Jatigáon detachment were engaged; but it must have occurred at the period we have reached, and it was not improbably the result of the visit to Captain Kelly and failure to obtain recruits at Cháligáon. The unsuccessful application to Malegáon for armed men was doubtless as private in its way as the promptly met requisition on the native officer; and consequently neither circumstance appears on the record in official foolscap. It is not hard to understand the shyness of the Bhils to enter upon a new line of life on the representation of comparative strangers. They had had ample cause to mistrust authority under Native Governments, and insufficient experience of the British rule to accept it in a thoroughly trusting spirit. The fears of the men at some supposed lurking mischief were among the main obstacles to enlistment; and three or four of the first comers were frightened away by a report that they had been enticed with a view to eventual transportation beyond the seas. At length,



as already shown, five of the bolder, it may be the more intelligent of the number, were persuaded to take the shilling in earnest, and, though not a man seems to have been actually enrolled until late in June, Outram had, on July 1, as many as 25 recruits. On September 1 he again wrote to Colonel Robertson from Dharangáon which, on hygienic reasons, he had constituted for the time his head-quarters, and where he had commenced butting his recruits for the monsoon. From 25, the number of enlistments had increased on August 1 to 62, and on the date of writing to 92, but it will be seen that the progress was held insufficient. The report is explicit:—

‘You will be sorry to observe that they have not, during the last month, increased in number in the ratio that might have been expected from the former. Several are the causes of this; partly from the Mohurum festival having intervened, during which I kept all my men together to make them pass a happy holiday; partly because I find it prudent at present not to appear to press the rapid assembly of a large number whilst yet unarmed; but chiefly, I am sorry to say, because the suspicions of our motives gain ground daily. Alarming reports are doubtless kept alive by those who are interested in frustrating this measure, in the success of which they foresee the deathblow to plundering with impunity.’

The necessity for keeping the recruits unarmed gave a colour of truth to the mischievous stories circulated, and an unfortunate coincidence, arising from the locality selected, rendered the recruiting officer’s position more delicate still:—

‘The town of Dharangáon, and the very cutcherry in which I am residing, having been the scene of the massacre



of a number of Bhils (enticed on a very similar plan about eleven years ago, during the Peshwa's government), the butcheries of that period are fresh in their memory, and a repetition is dreaded by all but those who are now with me. I have spared no endeavour to remove their fears by constant intercourse with them; by talking of the cruelty above alluded to with marks of detestation and without reserve; by explaining the advantages we expect from their services (for they could not understand, and would suspect any *other* motive for the liberality of the Government); by listening to their complaints, enquiring into, and obtaining redress for oppression, to which the families of many were subjected when unable to complain; by interceding for those who, though proscribed, have sought my intercession, and by taking every opportunity of displaying a perfect confidence in them, and exacting little services from them.

‘By these means I have succeeded in inspiring almost all who are in the corps with a feeling of security, and a confidence in me, of which I have had ample proof. Had this not fortunately been the case, the undertaking must have been ruined on the 26th instant, when, by some means or other, a report was spread among them that, in the great concourse of people assembled in the town on that day (being the last of the festival), were concealed the agents by whom they were to be slaughtered in the evening. Well calculated to strike terror in the minds of people most of whom had had relations or friends cut off by similar treachery during the Peshwa's reign, the story was only credited by about fifteen of the newest and most timorous of the recruits, who fled on the first alarm.

‘The moment I heard of the rumour I ordered the Bhils to assemble, and was promptly obeyed. I explained to them how much disappointed I had reason to be in men who,



notwithstanding the confidence I placed in them, sleeping under their swords every night (having none but a Bhil guard at my residence), still continued to harbour suspicions of me. The feeling with which they answered me was so gratifying that I do not regret the cause which brought it forth. They immediately went after the fugitives, and returned with eight in the evening. The others, whose fears had carried them out of reach, are still absent, but I have not struck them off the strength of the corps, their friends having gone to recall them, and I have no doubt they will be happy to return when they find their fears were groundless.

‘Others have given early proof of their fidelity. In the beginning of August I despatched two parties to recruit, the one of a *havildar* and 20 Bhils to the Chálisgáon, the other of a *naick* and 10 Bhils to the Londir *talukas*. Most of them were inhabitants of the countries to which they were sent, and on their arrival at their homes, they found that report had been busy with their fate during their absence. So terrified were their relations from what they had heard of our intentions, that they endeavoured by every means to persuade my men to desert, but notwithstanding such solicitations they all returned, though they could only prevail on nine men to accompany them. . . .

‘Agreeably to your permission I purchased twenty swords, which I have distributed among the Bhils, but they are not calculated to give the appearance of security I am anxious to display.

‘I have shown that those now with me are free from fear, but if kept without arms, I could not answer for their long remaining so. . . .

‘Having previously received your assent, on July 1, I promoted three Bhils to *naicks*,¹ and on August 1, one the *naicks* to *havildar*.² My motives for making such e-

¹ *Náyak*, a corporal.

² *Havildár*, a sergeant.



promotions were to excite a spirit of emulation by showing what they had to look up to as a reward of good behaviour, and to teach obedience to non-commissioned officers of my creation, in opposition to what they had only been accustomed to pay to their hereditary *naicks*. My wishes have been completely answered; the non-commissioned officers are aware of their responsibility, and the privates look up to them as they ought.

‘The great bar to order at first was their frequent indulgence in intoxication: this I have put out of their power by the mode of payment, which provides them daily with merely the necessaries of life; except on the last day of the month, when the surplus of their pay is given, which I am happy to find they are beginning to expend in articles of finery in preference to spirituous liquors, and I have not observed a single instance of excess in this respect during the past month. . . .

‘To terrify the Bhils into taking timely refuge in the corps, I also employed my men on one or two occasions to apprehend offenders. You have already been informed that a detachment from the Bhil corps was anticipated in the seizure of the notorious Heeria Naick, by one day. They also apprehended a gang of thirteen which had just committed a highway robbery; but the stolen articles not being found upon them, the prisoners were released—though there was no doubt they were the perpetrators, the information against them having been given by an accomplice whose evidence I did not think it prudent to bring forward.

‘The alacrity they evince in the performance of these services convinces me they will soon have no scruple to bring about their nearest relations to justice when required to do so. That these exertions have terrified the Bhils who continue to oppose the laws, is fully proved by the circumstance of two of the most notorious *naicks*, Lallia and

Saibia, who have for years eluded all attempts to apprehend them, having voluntarily tendered their submission to me. Although they are proscribed, taking advantage of their being thus in my hands would have been very detrimental to establishing the character of the friend of the Bhils, on which the success of my undertaking so much depends. I therefore promised my intercession with you in their behalf, on which subject I had the honour to address you on the 22nd ultimo.

‘I may also mention in proof of this position, the circumstance of the country for fifteen miles round my headquarters, which had hitherto been most particularly a prey to the rapacity of the Bhils, having been perfectly free from their depredations since the establishment of the Bhil corps at this place: not a single robbery having taken place, though formerly of daily occurrence, while travellers, who once never ventured out without the protection of horsemen and *sebundies*,¹ now proceed alone and unarmed. Should the Bhils in the corps prove faithful and efficient servants—which the little experience I have now had in them leads me confidently to hope I shall render them—the rest of that class will be compelled to have recourse to peaceable occupations for a livelihood, when it is not unreasonable to hope that this hitherto degraded race, finding protection under our mild rule, may become gradually habituated and attached to the change. Such is what I foresee will be the reward of this humane measure; and though I am aware it will at present be treated as a vague speculation, I do not hesitate thus early to express my confidence of the result.

‘In consideration of the irregular class of people I have to deal with, I entreat that the few propositions I may submit in the first stages of this undertaking may be treated with more indulgence than, as coming from so young and

¹ *Sibandi*, a kind of militia for revenue and police duties.



inexperienced a man, they might otherwise be entitled to. I may possibly in some instances be unable to abide by former custom or rule in my attempts to reform the Bhils, wherein I must be guided chiefly by circumstances as they occur. Placing early trust in them, for instance, will naturally be regarded as imprudent, and as placing temptation in their way—yet I am persuaded that this is the only way to make them trustworthy. Delay in the sanction of any measures is what I dread, and to show the necessity of avoiding this is my reason for making these remarks, and humbly requesting that you will consider the expediency of sanctioning or rejecting my propositions—while this undertaking is still in its infancy—without the delay of reference.

Long extracts have been purposely made from this early report of progress, because it affords a very practical illustration of the difficulties arising at the outset of a great work—difficulties apt to be overlooked or underrated by those who have had no experience of similar ventures. Among other annoyances with which the writer had to contend, was the want of a long-expected detachment of regular *sipahis* which Government had placed at his disposal. These men were to constitute the nucleus of the new levy, and Outram had, with instinctive sagacity, given out from the first that they were coming. Only it was feared that their appearance at a late hour might rather impede than assist the growth of the corps, by encouraging the notion that they were intended as a check upon the Bhils already recruited. As it happened, when the *sipahis* did arrive in November, it was necessary to disarm them temporarily, so as to put them on a like footing with the recruits who had not yet been provided with weapons. In October, however, the newly enlisted men had commenced to show signs of usefulness, and to convince their young commander that



they were unwilling to eat the Government salt, without making return of some kind for benefits received. One Jambū Náyak, leader of a large body of marauders, who had slain a horseman in the Potran district, was brought in a prisoner to camp, and handed over to the civil authorities. His capture had been effected by a Bhil like himself, one of Outram's recruits, who, by direction of his British leader, had joined the lawless gang a few days before, without exciting suspicion that he was a mere detective. The man having accompanied Jambū—at a time that he was separated from the main body, and attended only by a few of his followers—to the locality of a tribe whose leader was in British pay, had there found means to secure and carry him off. This act was soon succeeded by other proofs of individual or collective zeal and devotion; and on November 1, when the total number of Bhil recruits had exceeded a hundred, and the whole scheme looked more than ever promising, and likely to bear fruit in accordance with the more sanguine expectations of its promoters, the periodical report to Colonel Robertson showed that the exertions of the men on police duty had on several occasions merited the collector's approbation, and that three privates had been made corporals for specially good service.

On the other hand the following passage in the report would infer that all was not *couleur de rose* at this period:—‘As was to be expected from suddenly raising the hitherto lawless Bhil to be the instrument of power, my parties were in one or two instances at first guilty of making petty exactions, which, though given as presents, were of course only granted from the idea of the donors that more would otherwise be extorted.’ But Outram checked the system by timely punishment; and the reduction to the ranks of a *náyak* thus offending, brought the more intelligent of his men to a correct appreciation of their duties and responsibilities.



After little more than four months' experience of the work, he trusted to render his Bhils fully efficient for the outpost duties of Khandesh, and contemplated relieving all or most of the Line detachments then employed upon them.

The corps marched in December, and, passing through the *parganas* of Burgáon, Cháligáon, and Nandigáon, encamped within a short distance of Malegáon. Nothing could well be more satisfactory than the behaviour of the young Bhil soldiers, to whom the change of scene and camp-shifting on this occasion afforded a pleasurable novelty. Some hundred miles were thus traversed with excellent effect. On January 1, 1826, according to the provincial report, the levy had increased to 134 men. There had been 36 enlistments since November 1, but 7 desertions and 4 rejections had reduced the number to 25, to be added to 109 previously borne on the rolls. The new year's report is the more interesting because it refers to the introduction of drill and discipline in a less indirect way than before attempted; and chronicles the admirable behaviour of the older *sipahis* towards their low-caste brethren. We gather that the 'regulars obtained the entire confidence of the Bhils by their conciliatory conduct;' that the ready association of the regular troops with the irregular recruits had the happiest effect, for these last 'began to rise in self-esteem, and feel proud of the service,' which placed them 'on an equality with the highest classes.' The behaviour of Outram's own regiment (the 23rd N.I.) in this respect, when the men of the Bhil corps were sent bodily into the Malegáon cantonment, is told in a manner so characteristic of the honest heart of the narrator, that we make no apology for a full quotation:—'Not only were the Bhils received by the men without insulting scoffs, but they were even received as friends, and with the greatest kindness invited to sit down among them, fed by them, and talked to by high and low—



as on an equality from being brother soldiers. This accidental circumstance will produce more beneficial effects than the most studied measures of conciliation; and Bhil reformation will owe much to it. The Bhils returned quite delighted and flattered by their reception, and entreated me to allow them no rest from drill until they became equal to their brother-soldiers! Thus happily has another obstacle been removed.' This obstacle—a purely moral one—he explains to have been caused by the impression that his men would be unfavourably disposed towards the regular army; whereas, instead of any such result accruing from the contact, a feeling of regard for the red-coats arose in the minds of the Bhils, which would assuredly, in his opinion, be communicated to future recruits. A postscript dated January 4 reports the arrival and distribution of arms and accoutrements. The men seemed highly pleased with, and proud of the former, notwithstanding that a very few months before they had expressed themselves strongly against receiving them.

Early in 1826, Outram had returned to Dharangāon, which place he then determined to make his permanent head-quarters. On May 1 of that year, he states that it is his intention to discontinue for a time recruiting; and on July 1 he reports that he has 'now in the service 308 Bhils, of whom 258 attend drill.' During the two previous months the men had been much engaged in the construction of barracks. Their conduct continued to be satisfactory; there had not been a single complaint against them from villagers throughout June, and none that could be remembered in May. They abstained from spirituous liquors, except on certain special occasions, when the use was authorised; they exerted themselves with zeal and success to suppress robbery and violence; and they loyally responded to the call of their commandant to set an example of



soldierly obedience and good behaviour, whether on duty or parade, or in quarters with their families.

In December the Bhils were inspected by Mr. Bax, of the Bombay Civil Service, who had succeeded Colonel Robertson as collector of Khandesh. The corps was reported competent to take part in the charge and escort of treasure; to keep the peace in case of plundering or disturbance; to act in a body, or detachments, against outlaws or rebels; to assist regular troops in the event of serious field operations; and to supply ordinary guards and escorts to the local authorities. Outram concludes an official report, dated December 13, with the expression of his intention to recommence recruiting so soon as the arrival of his expected adjutant would enable him to move about the country. 'I shall endeavour,' he says, 'to draw off recruits from all parts of the Satpura range, and make myself perfectly acquainted with every stronghold and place of refuge in these mountains; so that, on the occurrence of any disturbances similar to those of last rains, and every former year, I may be able to circumvent all such gangs by my Bhils, and at once.'

In April 1827 an affair took place which enabled the authorities to judge more fairly of the temper and quality of the Bhil corps. A gang of marauding Bhils had been assembled for mischief in the hills beyond Sirpur. It had been just strengthened by the accession of two notorious characters, Mahdeo Singh and Govinda Náyaks, bringing more than twenty followers, and one Lahnu who had been expelled from Outram's levies; and rumours were current to the effect that emissaries from these men were busily engaged in endeavouring to draw together the disaffected, and seduce the loyal inhabitants and Government servants throughout the province. Their numbers were said to be increasing daily, and it was generally believed that they would attack the village of Bonwári, which from its strong



position had already resisted one attempt made by them upon it.

Outram was moving with a detachment of his men in search of recruits when he learnt the state of affairs, and his first impulse was to solicit the orders of the collector. But the news reaching him that six carts and twenty-four bullocks had been just seized by the gang, he took the responsibility of action on his own shoulders. Marching his recruiting party to a village at ten miles' distance, he selected a detachment of one *jama'dār*, one *havildar*, and twenty-five rank and file disciplined Bhils. And this is his account of the sequel:—

‘The whole body eagerly pressed to go, but being desirous to prove the power of discipline, I informed them that a larger force would detract from their merit, as I believed the enemy were not above double the number of those I had selected.

‘With the detachment above mentioned, I marched at nightfall on Boorwarry (twenty miles) at which place we arrived at about three A.M. The jungle around the village was all on fire, and fearing that it had fallen into the hands of the rebels I proceeded to reconnoitre. Being perceived by the villagers, who in the obscurity took me for an enemy, I was fired upon, but upon giving them to understand who I was, the gates were opened, and the detachment received as deliverers, the villagers having been in momentary expectation of attack.

‘I caused Callian Chowdry, and Dhen Sing, and Anchit Naicks immediately to assemble their followers, and under their guidance proceeded to attack the rebels, whose haunt was represented to be about six miles further in the hills. We reached a rugged ravine in which it was situated at sunrise, but I was surprised and disappointed to find they had been warned of our movements, and were nowhere to be seen. On dispersing some of my men to look for their traces, they

attacked me very spiritedly from ambush, and before a shot was fired by our party, had wounded my *jemadar*. This, together with their terrific shouts, and showers of arrows and stones from a height commanding us, at first startled my Bhils, but they were speedily rallied, and maintained the skirmish very steadily. The enemy having the advantage of the height and the cover of trees and rocks, it was necessary to draw them from their position. To this end I feigned a retreat which brought them down from the heights; my detachment then turned, charged very gallantly, and put them to flight. There being no prospect of ever taking a nimble and hardy Bhil on such precipitous ground, with men burdened with arms and accoutrements, and who had marched upwards of thirty-six miles, I again drew my detachment off, and induced the enemy to follow, when another charge totally dispersed them, leaving two killed behind them, besides several wounded, whom they carried off. Our loss was great in proportion to my small party; the Bhil *jemadar* severely wounded by two arrows, three sepoy with arrows, and about a fifth of the whole bruised by stones. . . .

‘Having returned to Boorwarry, where we were joined by the remainder of my detachment (which I had directed to follow in the morning from Tekwarry), at midnight I again marched into the hills with a detachment of twenty men and an officer, in the hope of securing the families of the enemy; but they were secreted, or sent off to other haunts. After searching till midday yesterday to no purpose (only five Bhil scouts having been seen, who fled at our approach), I returned to Boorwarry, and having left a detachment at that place sufficient to overawe the dispersed Bhils from re-assembling, and to assist the *mamlutdar*¹ (whom I have sent

¹ *Mamlat-dār*: doubtless from the Perso-Arabic *Mu‘amala-dār*; a native revenue official.



with his police to that place to endeavour to apprehend some of the fugitives), I marched this day with the remainder of my detachment to Talnair.

‘The conduct of the Bhil detachment on this occasion is highly satisfactory, being the first opportunity I have had of proving my men when opposed to their own tribe. They have freely risked their blood in our cause, and fought boldly.

‘The quickness with which they rallied, and the boldness with which they charged, together with the fatigue which they had undergone and the eagerness they showed to accompany me on the second night, entitle them to the approbation of Government; especially considering that they were unsupported by regulars (whom I purposely left with the remainder of the detachment), and that, of the whole party engaged, only four were above eighteen years of age, and that the enemy they had to encounter had obtained considerable celebrity by the success with which nearly the same number of Bhils, with the same leaders, and nearly on the same ground, had repulsed a detachment last year, consisting of an officer and seventy-five regular troops.’

The above is extracted from a report dated Camp, Talnair, April 22, 1827. Fifteen days later a further report, dated from ‘Ajunda,’ shows that Outram had since pushed on to this latter village, with as many ‘horse and foot’ as he could collect together, and dispersed a gang under one Seepria Náyak, which had been hovering around the scene of a recent disturbance with the manifest object of joining the rebels under Mahdeo. ‘All the Bheels in this neighbourhood,’ he writes, ‘had been more or less concerned, though few had joined in arms. All had connived at the assembly of the gang, and maintained correspondence with it. I deemed it prudent therefore to secure in the first place as many of their persons as possible, both to obtain information, and to



prevent their absconding from fear of their connection with the rebels becoming known—in which case it would have been difficult to settle the country, whilst they would be driven to plunder for a livelihood. Accordingly, at midnight, my parties apprehended simultaneously eighteen Bheels, of several villages, and having these in my hands, I secured the attendance of all with whom they are connected. From them I learnt that the gang had been formed here, but was chiefly composed of Bheels from a distance; that having assembled they proceeded to join the rebels in the hills, but returned and dispersed; and that only two or three were now in this *pergunnah*, the rest having separated and found safety individually. . . .

‘ Having now satisfactorily ascertained that no more of the gang are left in this country, and having no fear that any of the rebels will dare to return and unite to disturb it, I took upon me such measures as I deemed immediately necessary to restore confidence and preserve tranquillity. . . .

‘ I released all prisoners excepting the two who had belonged to the gang, after giving them and the Bheels of the surrounding villages written protections from any further molestation on account of the late rising, giving them to understand that this clemency is owing to the speedy dispersion of the rebels before the commission of any violence, and that all who are still absent (except the five leaders) who return to their villages within ten days shall not be molested. . . .

‘ I am happy to state that these measures have had the desired effect; the peace of the country is entirely restored.

. . . . Of the leaders not one is left in the country. . . .

‘ I have explained to the Bheels of the country that they will not be treated so leniently: that the mere circumstance of their concealing their knowledge of a rebellion being meditated or proposed, will subject them to severe punish-



ment; and that in future Government will not merely make examples of the principal leaders as heretofore, but that all concerned in such risings shall equally suffer. They are now so fully convinced of the utter uselessness of such attempts, and of my ability and determination to carry my threats into execution, that I can confidently answer for their remaining quiet.'

In a history of local progress, there is little more to be added for the year 1827, beyond the fact of reduction of establishment in the northern agency and successful colonisation in the south of Khandesh. A new agency on the principle of the other three was at the same time created in the Nizam's territory. As for the Bhil corps, it grew gradually stronger and more efficient, and, on the occasion of a review by the brigadier commanding the province, numbered as many as 600 men. It was now enabled to relieve the regulars wholly from outpost duty. In 1828, the collector reported that, for the first time in twenty years, the country had enjoyed six months of uninterrupted repose.

Fairly to judge of the services thus rendered, the reader must not lose sight of the material of which the new levies were composed. An amusing illustration of the Bhil recruit in 1827 occurs in a note of introduction from Captain Ovans, thus describing its bearer:—'He is a restless and dangerous character, who will not settle at the plough, and who must not be left without a subsistence. But he will make a famous grenadier when you form your flank companies.' On December 18 in the same year, Mr. Giberne, the collector of Khandesh, referring to Captain Ovans's views, in which he agrees, writes:—'You should never consider looks or *character* in taking recruits: yours is a peculiar duty.'

From Outram's private correspondence during the last-named year, we gather that his mother had been under



grave apprehension on the score of his personal exposure to danger in the hunting-field. He had sought to reassure her in the following terms:—‘It is not dangerous hunting tigers on an elephant as I do; it is as safe as firing at the monsters from the top of a tower. If I have been carried away by enthusiasm occasionally to expose myself unnecessarily, believe me, I shall bear your advice and admonitions in mind, and abstain for the future. In my situation a little daring was necessary to obtain the requisite influence over the minds of the raw, irregular people I command; and if ever you hear of any act of temerity I may have hitherto been guilty of, do not condemn me as unmindful of what I owe to you and our family, but attribute it to having been a part of my peculiar duty. . . . The necessity for a recurrence of such duties is now at an end.’ Boar-hunting was not to be had in Khandesh, and he had not experienced its pleasures and excitement for three years. The rapid diminution in the number of tigers was, moreover, even rendering that sport a comparatively rare one. As regards his bodily health, never had he felt better or stronger. He spoke of going home, but thought it well to await the termination of his brother Frank’s proposed furlough, so that the younger son’s visit might succeed the elder’s, and the absence of one would in some way be compensated by the presence of the other. We shall see with how little of the foresight displayed in his professional career he was reckoning up the concerns of his family and home.

To Mr. Giberne, the collector, he expressed himself contented to remain as long as possible in Khandesh. Puna and Nagar—the two favourite stations, cited as typical of convivial gatherings—had no special attraction for him. ‘I care not for their society,’ he wrote, ‘not being calculated to shine out of the range of my own forests.’