



another province of Guzerat; and, overlooking the difference in the condition of the two countries, he assumed that the measures which, under the masterly management of Major Walker, Captain Barnewell, and Mr. Willoughby, had given peace to Kattywar and Rajpeemla, must necessarily suffice for the tranquillisation of the Máhi Kánta. . . . So confident was this estimable and benevolent governor of the omnipotence of gentle speech and singleness of purpose, that he actually diminished the strength of the force which had already found itself inadequate to control the insurgents, though Captain Outram had recommended that it should be temporarily increased, not necessarily for employment, but for purposes of demonstration.' To what extent such views were concurred in by the Court of Directors will shortly become apparent.

Though we read of breakfasts and interviews at Government House at this period, there is no record of any conversations which transpired. The Governor invited; Major Felix issued the invitations; Outram and others attended: further particulars are wanting. But there is also no lack of official correspondence to throw a light on the course of events. Before referring to this, we have to note that, in December 1835, Outram's marriage was solemnised in Bombay, where his affianced bride was temporarily residing in the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Morris, of the Civil Service. During the week or two of leave which preceded the wedding-day, his time was chiefly occupied at the Secretariat offices, reporting, or otherwise employed on public matters. A fortnight after his marriage, or in January 1836, he was forced to hurry off to his rough work in the Máhi Kánta, under injunctions to modify his original plans of settlement in accordance with the benevolent intentions of Government. He was now to all intents and purposes a political agent; but notice of confirmation in the appoint-



ment was not received by him until the end of March, when his friend Douglas Graham succeeded him in the command of the Bhil corps.

A very few days subsequent to his departure from Bombay, he was again at Ahmadabad, and there made acquainted by the assistant political commissioner, Mr. Arthur Malet, with the lines of policy laid down for his conduct of the agency, as defined in writing by Mr. Secretary Willoughby. The remarkable administrative faculty of the last-named gentleman, and his general aptitude of expression in communicating the instructions and meaning of his Government to the several officials it was his privilege to address, were almost universally admitted by those who were capable of forming an opinion on the subject, and Outram was not behind his fellows in respect for the Secretary's abilities. But in the matter of the Máhi Kánta troubles, the new political agent found it very difficult to believe that the Government programme was suited to the occasion. 'I will pay every attention to your remarks on the subjects you notice,' he writes on February 7, 'but while Government thus generously pardons the transgressions of these chiefs against us, no provision appears in my instructions for the satisfaction of the claims of others who have suffered at their hands. Such claims will, I fear, prove numerous and not easily answered, as, for instance, that of the Edar *soukar*,¹ Akka Chand, whose capture by Suráj Mall was reported by Mr. Erskine, and from whom a ransom of 10,000 rupees was extorted after a long exposure to dreadful tortures; also for the blood that has been spilt by them, and property destroyed in their attacks on the Edar village in Kuppura—in which, I hear, lives were lost, and a hundred buffaloes and other property taken; and the attack on Bottawur, another

¹ Now transliterated *sáhu-kár*, a merchant or banker.



Edar village, where one man was killed, and property destroyed, reported on the 5th instant. On these chiefs being taken under our protection, it will, I presume, be necessary to satisfy all well-founded claims against them, both in justice, and to prevent retaliation; and I beg to know how far I may hold out hopes of remuneration to the sufferers, either from the chiefs who plundered them—the pecuniary claims against the one being already so great, and the other having no means or estate whatsoever—or from the Edar Raja, or from the British Government, by whom their aggressors are protected?’

The language was strong; and it will surprise no one versed in the ways of official correspondence to learn that the writer was apprised how, in addressing his Government, he must find a second word for ‘spade,’ which was inadmissible at any cost. But the rebuke was administered in the mildest possible terms, and the Governor in Council highly approved of Captain Outram’s determination, distinctly expressed in his letter, impartially to follow the tenor of his instructions.

Conspicuous among the refractory chiefs with whom the political agent had to do were Fath Singh, Thákur of Rupál, Suráj Mall, the adventurer, Partáb Singh, of Aglor, and Karm Singh, Thákur of Gorwára. Of the two first we have already spoken; and we now refer to them, as to the whole four, in the light of illustrative cases. To understand the Government position with regard to these persons, it must be borne in mind that we were fighting the battle of a native power as much as on our own account. Indeed, one main cause of contention was the exaction of a tribute called the *Ghás dānā*, acknowledged by precedent and the custom of the country. This was the Gáikawár’s, and could not, therefore, be permanently reduced without that ruler’s consent; but



the Bombay Government reserved to itself the right to make temporary remissions when found expedient. Another payment exacted was the *Richri*, regarding which similar difficulties existed.

On first assuming charge of the political agency, Outram despatched letters, calling the outlawed chiefs to his camp. An amnesty was granted for all past offences under conditions which well-meaning men, however proud and independent, might easily have fulfilled; but which those who saw more personal gain in lawlessness and vagabondage would naturally disregard. Fath Singh, Thákur of Rupál, appeared with others, but soon absented himself, on the plea of seeking for securities. A long year was consumed in endeavouring to effect a settlement of his affairs. He shuffled and evaded, argued, objected, threatened, but did not proceed to violence. Eventually—in 1837—his case was settled in the spirit of leniency by which the Government was actuated, and which pervaded all its instructions, in respect of the disturbers of the peace in Máhi Kánta. The proceedings are not of sufficient public interest to be detailed; but there are passages in the recorded official correspondence regarding the Thákur of Rupál which we feel it a duty to reproduce, in proof of the loyalty and honourable action of the political agent.

There was a little cavilling at the departure of the Thákur in the present instance without furnishing securities, which, caused perhaps by suspicion of mismanagement, called for full explanation on Outram's part. Certainly there was something expressed or signified in the communications from Bombay which touched the sensitiveness of this honest servant of the State; for he had only been three months in the discharge of his new functions when he stated his apprehensions that he had lost the confidence of Government. A long despatch signed by the Chief Secretary thus

removes in a concluding paragraph all cause for such apprehension :—‘I am directed to request that you will assure Captain Outram that the confidence of Government, as it was not lightly given, will not be lightly withdrawn. The Right Honourable the Governor in Council trusts that he will go on cheerfully, under the conviction that though Government may dissent from his judgment on some points, it entertains the firmest general reliance on his zeal, enterprise, and sagacity, and confidently anticipates from his efforts—under Providence—the ultimate achievement of one of its most important and most favourite objects—the civilisation of the Máhi Kánta.’

At a later stage in the correspondence, ‘the Governor in Council very much commends the tone of Captain Outram’s communications to the Thákur, leaving, as it does, the door open for the extension of mercy, and the avoiding extremities.’ Later still, ‘the Governor in Council thinks that Captain Outram’s proceedings are entitled to the highest commendation of Government; for though his own opinions of the course of conduct to be pursued towards the Rupál Thákur varied in some respects from those entertained by Government, he has most faithfully adhered to the latter, without which they could not have been successful.’ But a higher compliment followed. Outram had recommended to the favourable consideration of Government the Thákur’s request to be permitted to pay the first instalment of the sum with which he was authoritatively debited one year later than the year fixed. To this Government objected on certain reasonable grounds; but the objection was followed by an unusual concession to the Government agent, thus expressed : ‘Should that officer, notwithstanding what has been stated above, still incline to think that the advantage of beginning a year earlier is not worth the difficulty or the risk which may be incurred by insisting on its being yielded, the

Governor in Council is willing to forego that advantage, and to abide by the terms Captain Outram proposed.¹

The despatches quoted were written in 1836. In the subsequent year, the political agent forwarded the bonds required from the Thákur, and received the further approval of Government to his proceedings. But he himself was never satisfied that the settlement was real: for he saw mischief in the character of the man with whom he was dealing; and we find it on record that Fath Singh subsequently broke out when he saw his opportunity, and when there was no Outram in the Máhi Kánta to keep him to his better behaviour.

Suráj Mall had left the British agent's camp in search of securities, much in the same way as the Thákur, Fath Singh. During his absence, his case became further complicated by a charge brought against him, similar to that which first introduced him to the reader. Some three months before, he had seized and imprisoned a native merchant of Sidhpúr, a subject of the Gáikawár; and it was ascertained that he still retained the man in confinement, with the view of extorting a ransom of 2,000 rupees.¹ Outram, already believing that the treatment he had been instructed to pursue with the refractory chiefs was marked by unnecessary forbearance, could not but

¹ The details of Suráj Mall's offence, gathered from the *Rás Málá*, are illustrative of the state of affairs in the Máhi Kánta and neighbourhood at the time of commission, and also of the extraordinary audacity of the chief offender. It appears that on the death of the principal of a Hindu monastery at Sidhpúr, the succession to his authority was disputed by two disciples. One of these, named Raj Bharti, turned rebellious, donned Rajput attire, and enlisted Suráj Mall in his cause under promise of payment. The two together appeared one day with a party of horsemen at a town near Sidhpúr, and accounted for themselves to the satisfaction of inquirers by a made-up plausible story that they were peaceable travellers. In the evening they entered the market-place with the intention of seizing the person of the head merchant; but failing to find him, they went in search of a fitting substitute, one Lakhú Shet. This unfortunate individual they discovered at his dinner, forced him into the street, and carried him off on one of the horses of the party. The alarm was raised, and an attempt made to close the town gates against the marauders; but boldness and violence won the day, and they escaped.



feel highly indignant at this new proof of determined misdoing. And the circumstance that the evil-doer had quite recently been admitted to pardon, and publicly received by the political agent, greatly enhanced the seriousness of the offence. He therefore addressed a letter to Suráj Mall, informing him that he was again amenable to punishment for his conduct, and that if he did not accept certain conditions required of him to atone for his acts, he would be proclaimed and regarded as an enemy. As he was known to be close at hand, a period of three days was considered sufficient time to allow for acceptance or refusal of the terms offered. In reporting this matter to Government, Outram hoped for approval of his proceedings, but expressed his apprehension lest their tendency should be considered 'too lenient.' Government, however, did not approve, and there were no telegraphs in those days to supersede or supplement postal communication. The ball had been set rolling, and could not be stopped. Suráj Mall, declining to take advantage of the peaceable solution of the difficulty offered, was proclaimed an outlaw. Captain David Forbes, commandant of the Máhi Kánta field detachment, was called on to co-operate with the political agent, and a few troops were moved to take up here and there a position of precaution. The outlaw was followed up into his mountain fastnesses, and finally tendered his submission without striking a blow.

Mr. Willoughby's despatch, animadverting on the proceedings reported at the outset, was dated April 9. In the meanwhile, active measures had been taken with complete success, and the result submitted for the consideration of Government on the 29th of the same month. The despatch in acknowledgment of this subsequent report presents a curious contrast to the preceding one. We have no wish to criticise the writings of a secretariat so redolent of genuine philanthropy as that under the control of Sir Robert Grant;



we are, moreover, willing to believe that this ruling spirit of benevolence was not only appreciated by Outram at the very time he was supposed to swerve from its teaching, but that its lessons greatly influenced his own after-career; nevertheless, we are bound to continue our extracts from official papers, which, if a controversy be admitted as between master and servant, give at least an apparent victory to the latter.

The Bombay Government, on April 9, 1836, expressing concern at what had occurred, directed that Captain Outram be called upon, *without a moment's delay*, to explain a proceeding which could not, *primâ facie*, be reconciled with his instructions; and they stated their strong apprehensions that the measures he had taken might precipitate the crisis which it was their wish to avert. On April 26, when all had ended satisfactorily, the Secretary acknowledged receipt of the intelligence that Surâj Mall had surrendered on the sole condition that his life be spared, and, expressing the gratification of the Governor in Council, requested that Captain Outram be congratulated 'on so fortunate a result of his spirited, though, in their opinion, somewhat rash proceedings.'

Then followed these four paragraphs:—

'The outlawing of Surâj Mall is conceived by the Governor in Council to have been harsh, and the consequent march of our forces unnecessary, but the plan has been executed with a skill and decision worthy of Captains Outram and Forbes, and which, no doubt, have contributed to the event.

'I am desired to observe that good may arise out of evil, and the Right Honourable the Governor in Council is perfectly willing that Captain Outram's success should be ascribed, not to his instructions, but to his departure from



them, provided only that the spirit of the instructions be henceforth carried into effect.

‘With the exception of the measure of outlawing Suráj Mall, the whole of Captain Outram’s proceedings, I am directed to state, reflect on him the highest credit, and entitle him to the warmest commendation of Government.

‘I am at the same time instructed to observe . . . that in calling Captain Outram’s march unnecessary, the Governor in Council considers it so only in this view, viz., that it was the consequence of an unnecessary proclamation of outlawry. Under the circumstances . . . it was an expedient and excellent measure.’

Not a fortnight after the date of this letter, Suráj Mall presented himself before the political agent, accompanied by the merchant of Sidhpúr; when Outram, acting in the spirit of his instructions, and not perhaps against his own good judgment, released the turbulent chief from arrest without infliction of fine. For this act of unexpected clemency we read that the latter appeared to be deeply grateful.

In the following year the same Suráj Mall had proved so good and loyal a subject to the paramount power, by active assistance afforded to British officers, that Outram was authorised to present him with a *pagri* and *selá*¹ in the name of his Government for the purpose of indicating the sense entertained of the service he had rendered. ‘We rejoice,’ said the Governor in Council, writing from Bombay to the Court of Directors, ‘in being able to report the continued good conduct of Suráj Mall since his admission to pardon, and we feel pleasure in having it also in our power to state to your Honourable Court that his exertions have been joined

¹ The *selá* is, according to Dr. Forbes, ‘a kind of sheet constituting a part of dress especially worn and given in presents in the Dakhin.’



with those of Captain Outram in re-establishing peace and good order in the Máhi Kánta.'

Partáb Singh, the third on the list of chiefs whose cases we have selected for notice, was one of the most dangerous of the Kúli insurgents in opposition to his liege lord the Gáikawár. Though his nominal range was the *pargana* of Bijapur, yet he possessed influence, and was likely to do mischief beyond such narrow limits. In March 1837, owing to a threatened insurrection at this man's instigation, Outram made requisition on the officer commanding at Hargol for a troop of cavalry and company of infantry to proceed to Parantej for the protection of the Ahmadábád territory, and to co-operate with detachments prepared to act from Ahmadnagar and Sadra, amounting in all to one company of infantry and some Gáikawár horse. The requisition was duly attended to, and the presence of the troops at Parantej, together with the arrest of four principal chiefs, must have had a good effect in checking the general progress of the outbreak. But some of the rebels, to the number of 500, took up a determined position in the strongly situated village of Ransipur, on the banks of the Sabar-Matni, whence they ravaged the surrounding districts, and openly defied the native authorities.

The Gáikawár's commander-in-chief appealed to Outram for aid, implying that we were bound to place our available soldiers at his disposal. The political agent would not for a moment admit the notion that the men should be transferred from his orders to those of a native state, but lent a ready ear to the alternative proposal of acting in concert with an ally. Accordingly, with no other warrant than that given by the political commissioner at Baroda, he resolved to become a party to the attack on Ransipur. A proclamation was issued in the name of the Gáikawár, allowing eight days'

reflection. If, within that period, the rebels did not come in and state their grievances, they were to be treated as 'thieves' and destroyed, wherever found, in the dominions of 'either Sirkar' (that is, the British Government, or that of the Gáikawár) by 'the troops of both Sirkars.'

The eight days having passed without advantage taken of the offer of peaceable adjustment, Outram proceeded to act in accordance with the plan of operations agreed upon with the native commander-in-chief. Colonel Troward commanded the British troops, consisting of one troop of cavalry and two companies of infantry. The Gáikawár's force was composed of 400 horse, and about an equal number of foot *sibandis*. The local field artillery was to have been strengthened by a horse artillery gun supplied from Disa; but this did not arrive until too late for use. From Colonel Troward's report we learn that the infantry and guns were in position early in the morning of May 2; that 'Captain Outram's endeavours to induce the enemy to lay down their arms having failed,' the batteries opened; and that after a few rounds of shell, the town was fired in several places.

'The Gáikawár's troops then attacked,' continues the Colonel, 'and, after some brisk skirmishing, entered the place, when the Kholis crossed the river, and endeavoured to break through the ravines of the eastern side (where part of my detachment was formed), but suffered most severely in the attempt, about 50 being killed and 47 taken prisoners. A very few succeeded in escaping through some very thick jungle, where horse could not act or follow them.

'Our loss in the affair was one sepoy of the 17th Regiment severely wounded, and one of the 9th Regiment slightly so, but I cannot ascertain correctly the loss of the Gáikawár's troops.

'When the enemy approached the ravines commanded by



our own troops, they were called on to surrender, and assured their lives would be spared, which they only answered by firing arrows, and rushing sword in hand upon us, when they were met by our fire, with the destructive effect above mentioned.

'The slaughter in the town must have been very great, as His Highness' troops were engaged for some time within it, and were opposed in a most determined manner.

'The principal rebel chief, the Thákur of Paria, was wounded and taken prisoner; and the other, the Thákur of Ransipur, was slain by the Gáikawár's troops, who displayed much gallantry in the attack.'

A subsequent report shows that on the British side there had been one man killed, and one wounded: 8 killed and 29 wounded of the Gáikawár's troops; and that, while no true figure could be given for their killed and wounded, 77 bodies of the rebels had been actually found.

It has been stated, with a certain amount of authority, that Outram, when proposing to act in concert with the Gujráti executive against Ransipur, solicited the early instructions of Government; that, owing to some official accident, never satisfactorily explained, a delay occurred in placing his letter before Council; and that no answer to the reference was received in time to allow operations to be suspended.¹ At first sight such a statement is hardly to be reconciled with the assertion before made in these pages that the attack on Ransipur had been determined on in communication with the political commissioner at Baroda. But the question is one of mere routine and form: the latter functionary was the natural referee in such matters, and it was his particular duty, not that of the political agent of the Máhi Kánta, to address the Bombay Government. Outram reported fully to Mr. Williams all his proceedings, regarding his sanction or

¹ *Memoir of the Public Services of Colonel Outram*, p. 44.

disapproval as coming with the authority of the Governor in Council; and no affair of magnitude could be undertaken at all without his express concurrence. In the matter of Partáb Singh, the requisition for troops to protect the Ahmadabád territory was communicated to the commissioner on the day that it was made to the local military authorities concerned, and the subsequent arrangements for co-operation with the Gaikawár's officers were carefully and systematically detailed for his approval. Active interference, it was explained, was not so much desired from a conviction of justice in the original action of the Baroda *darbár*, as of necessity for securing the tranquillity of the Máhi Kánta, in which district the insurrection had spread, and was threatening to spread yet further. On the other hand, a combination of forces might give opportunity for beneficent interposition between the Gaikawár and the insurgents, both in the event of submission, and even if submission were delayed. Outram's last recorded despatch to Mr. Williams, prior to the assault on the town, is a statement of his 'cheerful compliance' with a proposal of Ganpat Rao, the Gujrát commander, for the temporary release of an imprisoned Rajah, on the ground that the act might indirectly tend to a prevention of hostilities.

Unfortunately, there *was* an element of injustice in the Gaikawár's dealings with Partáb Singh; and the rebellion of that chief against his sovereign had been in some measure instigated by the sovereign's disregard of the subject's personal grievances. The Government of Sir Robert Grant was more likely to keep this ill-treatment in view than to sympathise with their agent's anxiety for the maintenance of British prestige and power. Outram saw the mischief of leaving unpunished the lawless acts of a bold rebel, whose example had its immediate effect on the surrounding people, British subjects as well as others; while in the eyes of authority in Bom-



bay, the first duty was to ascertain and remove the cause of offence, so as to be in a position to mediate between our native ally and his dependent before taking the part of either against the other. Undoubtedly the aims of both were the same: but the process to be pursued was differently devised. In one case repression would precede inquiry; in the other, inquiry would lead the way, and might possibly obviate the necessity of repression.

But there were other signs which made him act with determination. During the first year of his work in the Máhi Kánta Outram had received a confidential communication from the Governor's private secretary, at Dapuri, to the effect that there were reasons for apprehending a combination of native powers against the British Government, and an attempt on their part, through secret agents, to seduce the *sipahis* from their allegiance. A Brahmin had introduced two *subadars* of a native infantry regiment to the son of the minister of the Satára Rajah, in whose presence they were informed of the names of many well-known princes and chiefs who had, it was alleged, united to subvert the British supremacy. The native officers had reported the circumstance, and were instructed to watch further proceedings; but although their good faith was held unimpeachable, and a commission had assembled to investigate the charges, the affair fell through without practical result, the Rajah stoutly denying his own complicity. Now, notwithstanding the failure to prove an accusation which, if established, would have implicated some of the most distinguished of our native allies and feudatories in the most barefaced sedition, there was at this time cause for especial vigilance on the part of British officers who, like Outram, had so much to do with internal politics. It was essential to show that British justice was not weak, nor British mercy a mere expediency; and acts were so much more intelligible to the mass than

words. At the same time, the omission of the Gáikawár's name from the list of compromised Indians of distinction seemed to afford a strong reason for favourable consideration, should this ruler ask or need our assistance.

When it did come, the censure of the Bombay Government was couched in strong language. Mr. Secretary Willoughby's despatch, expressing the sentiments of the Governor in Council on becoming first acquainted with the measures *proposed* to be taken by Captain Outram in conjunction with the Gáikawár's troops, was only dated May 6, whereas, three days before, Outram had officially reported to his immediate chief the success of his operations against Ransipur. The secretary had been instructed to inform the political commissioner that the proceedings he had submitted were the most extraordinary that had 'ever come under the observation of Government;' for, with a full acknowledgment that the Kúli insurrection in the Gáikawár's district of Bijapur had originated in wrong and injustice, Captain Outram had, upon his own responsibility,¹ consented to combine his forces with those of an officer of the Gáikawár, for the purpose of reducing the rebels. He went on to remark that whatever the result of these injudicious proceedings, 'even should Captain Outram succeed, by the skill and judgment which have heretofore invariably marked all his military operations, either in inducing the insurgents to submit, or in capturing them without bloodshed,' the Government could not but disapprove of the interference exercised. And he conveyed to both the political commissioner and political agent unqualified disapprobation at their omission to seek in the first instance the instructions of higher

¹ Mr. Williams, in acknowledging Captain Outram's notes of conference with Ganpat Rao Damderah, and plan of combined operations to be undertaken against the refractory Kúlis, added that he perfectly coincided in the opinions expressed, and requested that action be taken accordingly.



authority before adopting measures 'embracing such delicate and important matters.'

But nearly six months after this date, a despatch, dated October 19, was more severe upon the political commissioner in Baroda, who had brought to notice and defended the exercise of his own responsibility, in suppressing the insurrection according to the programme recommended and adopted by the political agent. 'It matters not to Government,' are the words of this communication, 'whether your consent was influenced by any strong opinion and plausible arguments which might have been expressed to you by Captain Outram in favour of the measure, since such an excuse, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, could in no way shift the responsibility from the superior to the subordinate officer. Whoever suggested the measures in question, you took it on yourself to order them, and for having done so, you, I am desired to state, and you alone, must be held the accountable person.'

As for Outram, he was relieved from the censure with which he had been visited for assuming an unjustifiable responsibility, his possible offence of persuasiveness being left to a tribunal of conscience, with which Government had nothing to do. The remarks passed upon his conduct in other respects were such as to leave it questionable whether the occasional disapproval of superiors might not be made in form more acceptable than their stereotyped satisfaction. In one paragraph the Governor in Council, lamenting 'the impolitic and mistaken proceedings' taken by both officers concerned, could not doubt that both 'acted from a sincere and honest conviction' that they were doing for the best; and they could 'not help taking into consideration the eminently able and highly valuable services performed by Captain Outram in the Máhi Kánta since his appointment to the agency of that province.' In the next, while rudely



contrasting, to the disparagement of the civilian, the respective merits of the two public servants addressed, the writer states that 'the terms in which Government have felt themselves compelled, on the present occasion, to speak of Captain Outram have been productive to them of indescribable pain.' The paragraph immediately succeeding we reproduce more *in extenso* : 'Captain Outram is regarded by Government as one of the finest military officers under this presidency, being full of courage, resource, activity, and intelligence . . . at those periods when the British power was struggling for existence or for empire he would have acted a brilliant part; but . . . his fault is that, though perfectly fitted for the performance of civil duties, he is essentially warlike. The capture of Ransipur was of easy accomplishment, yet, so far as was compatible with operations on so minute a scale, those of Captain Outram were, in the opinion of Government, perfect both in conception and execution, and deeply do they regret that his great military talents should have been exercised on such a field.'

Before reverting to the views expressed by the Court of Directors in England on these acts of their Bombay Government and its officers, we will glance at one more case illustrative of Outram's first Máhi Kánta career, that of the Thákur of Gorwára, one of the more notorious *bharwattis*, or outlaws of the day. The word *bharwattia* was expressive of a kind of self-imposed outlawry or vagabondism, which in French colonies is known as *marronage*; and when openly resorted to by a discontented chief, it was commonly accompanied by abduction, plunder, or some act of violence, which rendered unmistakable the offender's hostility to the State, and contempt of law and order. Karm Singh was a chief whose quarrels with other chiefs, and consequent resort to *bharwattia*, placed him for the better part of two years in constant opposition to the authorities. In the spirit of his



general instructions, and also in obedience to special orders bearing on the case in point, Outram tried to arrive at the root of this man's grievances; and called in the aid of a native court, known as a *panchaiyat*, in the hope of a successful result. The investigation was held, but the Thákur of Gorwára declined to abide by its decision. He would neither heed the political agent, nor the *panchaiyat*. Eventually Sir Robert Grant and his council acceded, though with great reluctance and regret, to the adoption of strong measures recommended in this case by the political agent. It was well they did so; for Karm Singh repented of his malpractices, and surrendered himself unconditionally to the latter officer—a result which caused great satisfaction in Bombay. We add an extract from the despatch communicating the intelligence, because it explains how success was obtained:—

‘ This event will, I trust, justify in the eyes of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council the policy to which I expressed myself compelled to adhere, though at variance with the wishes expressed by Government, in Mr. Secretary Willoughby's letter.

‘ Had any negotiations with the *bharwatti* been attempted, as therein suggested, I am convinced that the Thakur would have continued “out,” in the hope of ultimately gaining his ends; and had any modification in the terms finally decided on, and publicly promulgated by Government, been allowed, it would have encouraged a continuance of the system of *bahrwattia*-ism, which I am convinced it is in our power, as it is our duty, I conceive, to put an end to.

‘ The Thakur sent to me last night to say he would abide by the decision of the *panchaiyat*, if he might now be admitted to pardon, and that he was ready to come in on that condition. I answered that, having committed a breach



CSL

of the peace in the face of the public proclamation of Government, by seizing a *banian*, I would give him no conditions; that if he came in, he would be placed in confinement to answer for his conduct, as might be directed by Government; at the same time, intimating to him that, as he had since released the *banian*, and committed no further excesses, his adopting the step of peaceably giving himself up would ensure my good offices with Government to obtain his pardon, on the full understanding, however, that he was to abide by the settlement of the *panchayat*.

‘On this understanding, the Thakur surrendered himself this morning, and is now a prisoner in my camp.’

In October 1837, the Honourable Court of Directors wrote an important letter expressive of their sentiments on the affairs of the Máhi Kánta, and the arrangements then recently made by the Bombay Government for the political superintendence of Gujrát. It need scarcely be said that this, in common with many like manifestoes issued in the halcyon days of Leadenhall Street, was a State paper worthy of at least as much attention as the despatches of more exalted but not more qualified critics in ministerial offices. But the body corporate was just as jealous of its principles as any individual statesman could be of his, and no cabinet minister could take more pains to show that he had rightly forecast coming events than did the Court to prove infallibility in political prescience. Throughout the Bombay letter there was an evident tendency to impress upon the Governor’s mind that any success which had attended his benign policy in the Máhi Kánta was to be attributed to the attention he had given to fulfilling home instructions, contrary to the habit of his predecessors. Captain Outram’s report, on first proceeding to reconnoitre his new field of labour, had disappointed them; they would not have expected that an officer who had assisted in reclaiming by mildness and con-



ciliation wild tribes which had been driven to desperation by a system of coercion, would have fallen into the common error of supposing that severity must precede indulgence :’ but that same officer must now, they felt assured, have become convinced that his recommendation at the outset had been rightly set aside. They would not refuse sanction to his nomination as political agent : and they saw no advantage in making the political commissioner at Baroda the organ for transmitting his correspondence.

A subsequent letter congratulated the Bombay Government on the complete success of their ‘just and generous policy’ in the Máhi Kánta, and on ‘the re-establishment of a tranquillity not previously enjoyed for many years,’ to be ascribed to the Governor’s ‘judicious instructions, and to the manner in which Captain Outram has carried those instructions into effect.’ And the Court immediately added :—

‘In bestowing this commendation upon Captain Outram we are not forgetful of the fact that on several occasions that officer has shown a disposition to act in a more peremptory manner towards refractory chiefs, and to resort sooner to measures of military coercion than your Government has approved. In all such cases which have been reported to us we agree in the main, or altogether, in the opinion of your Government.’

When the Court’s ruling was made known to Outram, he chafed under what he considered to be injustice or misconception. His impetuous and sensitive nature could not brook in silence remarks which he himself described as ‘very severe animadversions on the opinions’ expressed in his report of November 1835. The official communication to his address bears date June 7, 1838, but the letter to which it referred may have been six months or more on the road. On receipt he proceeded with characteristic fervour to reply



to the objectionable passages *seriatim*; but he prudently reserved completion and despatch for some weeks, and the consequence was that he sent in a fairly temperate and logical paper. We have no space to analyse, but may allude to the prominent points of his defence, as a demonstration that his policy with the Bhils, admitted to have been successful and therefore not quoted against him, had not always been conciliatory; a disavowal of entertaining warlike views in dealing with the rebellious Thákurs; a recapitulation of reasons for disposal of particular cases and assuming unsought responsibilities; and an appeal to practical and apparent results for a general confirmation of his zeal and devotion. The Bombay Government, in acknowledging the receipt of this reply for transmission, request the political commissioner in Gujrát to inform Captain Outram that ‘while the Government are fully satisfied with the soundness of the principles which have governed the Honourable Court and themselves in the affairs of the Máhi Kánta, the spirited and energetic manner in which he has frequently acted on his own responsibility has, whenever the Governor in Council conceived that officer exercised a sound discretion, received the commendation of Government, and that whenever, as at Ransipur, approbation could not be awarded, it has been withheld under much regret.’

The next paragraph has a force which seems to disallow compression :—

‘You are further requested to inform Captain Outram that on the occasions on which he acted on his own responsibility and received the commendation of Government, he has shown how judicious was the selection which placed him, from the experience of his most valuable services in Khandesh, in the office of political agent of the Máhi Kánta. But if his energy and prompt decision have been often



important in their consequences, not less have been his execution of instructions varying from his own impressions of what was best, and his scrupulous obedience when unexpected events did not call for his assuming the responsibility of action. The confidence of Government in the influence of this principle not unfrequently recorded will, I am directed to state, be particularly pointed out to the Honourable Court as showing the very high opinion entertained of Captain Outram's military and political character.'

After the extracts already given in this and the two preceding chapters, it would be superfluous to quote from public documents further testimony to the extraordinary estimation in which were held Outram's services in Khandesh and the Máhi Kánta. We should have been glad to have introduced here and there a sketch of the work performed by other of his fellow-labourers in the same field; but beyond casual mention of names it has been impossible to carry out any such intention. Colonel Ovens, for instance, will be long known in Indian local story as a great reclamer and benefactor of the Bhils; nor can his merit be classed as inferior to that of any officer associated with him in the same line of duty. He did not, however, transform the Bhil recruit into the Bhil soldier, nor make, out of the very materials of disorder and destruction, instruments of discipline and preservation. In saying this we are not seeking to draw invidious distinctions; only to explain that there are separate spheres of action and usefulness in India as elsewhere; and all workers do not attain the same degree of honour in one that they would in another.

To those unaccustomed to the ways of Indian public life, any description of the routine of a political agent in the Máhi Kánta would be barely intelligible. In his more strictly official capacity, Outram had to attend to the well-



being of his barons and minor feudatories: to make judicial investigations into their complaints, extricate them from financial embarrassment, and keep them, as much as practicable, in the paths of respectability. In other respects, he had to perform the general duties of a magistrate; to organise and keep in order a local police; to superintend the formation of a corps of *Kúlís*; to establish tribunals for the administration of justice; to render the roads secure to merchants and travellers, especially the main lines of traffic; and to give a stimulus to commerce by the institution of fairs and reduction of transit duties. In the last-named efforts he had the advantage of co-operating with Colonel Spiers, the political agent for Meywar and Malwa, an able and energetic officer.

He had also to contend with a system of bribery and corruption, on which we shall have so much to say by-and-by under its locally familiar name of *Khatpat*, that a detailed account of it may be deferred for the present.

Upon the whole, these two years and three-quarters in the Máhi Kánta were for him a great contrast to Khandesh existence. Though he and Douglas Graham had been accustomed to spend the rainy months almost alone in their 'palace' at Dharangáon, they were both good readers, and seemed never to have lacked occupation; while the open seasons brought them Nimrod guests in plenty, and Bhils, buffaloes, or tigers afforded ample scope for superfluous energies. But here, the free wild life in the *jāngal*, the congenial duties and associations of the Bhil corps, had given place to the dull jog-trot of an isolated political agency. No sport attracted kindred spirits to the locality. The days of a 'hundred mad pranks,'¹ and of practical jokes, all well spiced with danger, were gone. Old Haidar's *hauda* and the Maratha spear had degenerated into an office chair and an office quill. But James Outram threw himself into his new duties

¹ Douglas Graham's expression.



with the zest and absorption characteristic of Anglo-Indian soldier-statesmen. He had already learned to wield the pen of a ready writer; for without pretension to culture of style, he expressed himself on paper with a fluency and a force which often proved embarrassing to gentlemen of the Secretariat. Official platitudes were wasted upon him; 'how not to do it' he would not see; to the bottom of the matter both he and his Government must go; and he could never manage to sit still under what his too ready sensitiveness construed into a misrepresentation or an unjust rebuke, no matter by whom administered. It was well, both for the public service and for himself, that he served his 'political' apprenticeship under men who, like Sir Robert Grant and Mr. Willoughby, not only cherished warm feelings of personal regard for the young soldier, but could fully appreciate his real qualifications. Otherwise his outspoken energy would probably have soon dismissed him to his regiment a disappointed man—marked as one whose tendencies, both of sword and pen, were too essentially warlike for any but regimental duties. Mr. (afterwards Sir John Pollard) Willoughby used to speak of this as the most critical period of his friend's public life. Hard and uphill official battles we shall find him fighting in its after stages, but he had then established for himself a political reputation and a general sympathy which he lacked as a captain on special employ in the Máhi Kánta. Here and throughout his Presidency he was known as one of the most dashing soldiers and sportsmen in Western India; but his political spurs he had yet to win.

A despatch from the Court of Directors to the Governor in Council, Bombay, bearing date March 12, 1840, reviews the good work done by their officers in the district of which we have now been treating. Among its later paragraphs is an expression of regret at reading the earnest defence of his views, submitted to their consideration by Captain Outram;



an admission that no error had been observed in that officer's conduct since he had been made acquainted with the policy propounded by the Honourable Court; an assurance that the pacification of the Máhi Kánta had never been supposed capable of accomplishment without some exhibition and occasional employment of force; a high compliment paid to Captain Outram and his assistant, Lieutenant Wallace, for the removal from the popular mind of mistaken impressions of Government objects; and, finally, acceptance of Captain Outram's own proposal to issue a proclamation declaring *Bharwattya* an offence not to be passed over with impunity.¹

At the date of this despatch, however, Outram was far away from the Máhi Kánta; and by the time that it had reached its destination, his mind was full of cares and anxieties on behalf of a people situated beyond the limits of India Proper.

¹ Appendix C.



CHAPTER VI.

1838-1839.

Family affairs—Appointment to Sir John Keane's Staff—Arrival in Sind with the Bombay Division of the Army of the Indus—Missions to Cutch, Haidarabad, and Shikárpur—Accident—Accompanies General Willsbire from Gandáva, but rejoins Commander-in-Chief on arrival at Kandahar—Opinions on Afghan War.

ALTHOUGH James Outram's career was essentially that of a public servant, we may not altogether lose sight of his domestic life, nor of those home associations which naturally influenced his character. In writing to his mother from Sadra in August 1838, he expresses a determination to remain in the Máhi Kánta no later than the following December, and, unless war should break out, to visit England in February 1840. He deplores the uncertainty and irregularity of homeward and outward bound mails, and encloses the triplicate of a bill, lest the original and duplicate, both before despatched, should never reach their destination. 'Some of our packets,' he says, 'have been plundered by the Arabs, and some have returned from being unable to face the monsoon.' Altogether, the picture is such as to reconcile Anglo-Indians to any defects in home communications apparent in 1880.

But the writer had unusual reasons for depression. His wife had left India in the previous year from ill-health. She had joined him at Ahmadabad in May 1836, shortly after their early separation consequent on his sudden and forced departure from Bombay. A son had been born at Harsol in September of that year. Danger to life had ensued on the



event, and Mrs. Outram had been conveyed to the residency at Sadra, so soon as pronounced able to bear the fatigue of moving. Hence she was ordered to the hills for the hot weather of 1837. Not being free to accompany her, Outram followed at a convenient opportunity, and they passed the rains at Púna. But he had to wend his way back to Sadra alone: the doctors would not hear of the lady's return thither: change to England was imperative.

Sadra had now few attractions for the political agent. The residency *bangla*, or 'mansion,' as he designated it, on which he had spent time and money, had suffered during the latest rains; and its leaking rooms had brought on serious damage. Renovation of carpets and matting would entail a tiled roof for protective purposes. All this expense was annoying at any time; for a *quasi* bachelor in straitened circumstances it was most unsatisfactory. He had, moreover, changed in ways and habits since his marriage. Physical exertion was in a great measure abandoned. He detested 'constitutionals' in any shape, and soon fell into the mistake of avoiding exercise if he could possibly manage it. The early morning, like every period of the day, was devoted to desk work. At Harsol he would walk beside his wife's *tonjon* in the evening; but at Sadra he often passed the walking hour in inspecting the workmen carrying out proposed improvements in the house, an expensive amusement to which he was everywhere prone. He had begun to grow quite stout before leaving the Máhi Kánta. Shikar expeditions did not engage his attention as before, with their dash and excitement. At Harsol he sometimes went after hog. At Sadra there was no sport to tempt him. It is supposed that he killed his last tiger in the *jungal* near Kaira, when in company with a friend during the hot weather of 1837—the beast had been reported a man-eater, and was giving trouble. The pursuit of small game he never cared for: indeed he



made a vow as a youngster never to fire anything but ball, and kept it. Outram's intention to return to England in February 1840 had, we have stated, been saddled with a condition. The outbreak of war was the contingency which might materially affect his plans. Now it so happened that, throughout the early part of the year 1838, movements had been going on in India which looked decidedly warlike: and on October 1 was issued the manifesto directing the 'assembly of a British force for service across the Indus.' There was to be no advance on Herat as once contemplated, but there was to be an occupation of Kandahar and other parts of Afghanistan, in favour of Shah Shuja, the sovereign of our choice. This, then, was a realisation of a state of things which had been dimly portended. Outram's regiment was ordered on service, and Outram naturally volunteered to join. Lord Auckland had, it seems, heard of him, and had suggested to the Bombay Government, through the channel of private secretaries, that it might be desirable to attach him in some capacity to the army; so that his offer was at once accepted. One recommendation on his behalf was, that he should command the Shah's contingent; but he disclaimed all hopes of so great honour or distinction. Eventually Sir John Keane, commanding the Bombay column, appointed him an Extra Aide-de-Camp on his staff. To judge from his own account, he did not at this time aspire to any high military post: his object was rather recreation than hard work; but he was evidently amused at the unexpected manner in which they had provided for his employment. 'Neither you nor I,' he writes to his wife, 'ever could have thought I should be an A.D.C.: but recollect, this is not to flutter about in a ball-room, but to attend the General on service.' Then, as if apprehensive that he had foreshadowed a position of too much danger, he immediately changes his note, and explains how pleasant will be the discharge of duties



enabling him to see everything as an amateur; adding that, since the enemy never came near enough to the chief of the forces to endanger his life, the aide-de-camp ran no risk whatever!

His correspondence with friends in India, during the months of August, September, and October 1838, show how keen was the interest with which he regarded the approach of the then impending Afghan campaign. To Colonel Sutherland he proposed to raise, on the Shah's account, a small body of select horse in Gujrat, to be placed under the command of Mir Sarfaráz Ali, a nobleman whose good service to the British Government during the Pindári war had elicited the warm commendation of Sir John Malcolm. He also suggested the enrolment of a larger number of men from the same quarter, under English officers. The same subject was resumed in September in a letter to Major Felix. 'One month's notice,' he said, 'would suffice to complete a thousand *sowárs*, and they would march at the rate of ten *coss* a day without halts—which would take them to the Indus in a month, *viâ* Jaisalmir.' In October, he again wrote to the same correspondent on the weakness of the cavalry in the army destined for Afghanistan, and proposed an increase to that branch of the Bombay expeditionary force, indicating the regiments he would employ, and forecasting a brigade of dashing troopers, to be attached to which, 'simply as volunteer, or in any capacity,' would afford him immense gratification. That he was right in pronouncing the proportion of cavalry to be far too small, the experience of the campaign fully showed. The notification of his own eventual appointment was expressed in flattering terms by Mr. Secretary Willoughby. Government, in complying with his request to share in an expedition for which his regiment had been detailed, could not 'help feeling the great loss' which temporary absence from his important duties in the Máhi Kánta would occasion;



but 'being impressed with the high qualifications' which he possessed 'for rendering the most valuable services' to the cause on behalf of which his zeal had prompted him to come forward, the Honourable the Governor in Council had 'not thought it right to withhold acquiescence' in his wishes.

Captain Lang was appointed to succeed Captain Outram in the political agency of the Māhi Kānta; and on November 21, 1838, the latter officer embarked at Bombay on board the 'Semiramis' steamer, with Sir John Keane and suite. On the 27th the Hujamri mouth of the Indus was reached; but the want of camels and boats prevented further progress for a considerable period. The difficulty was a real one: its importance made it one of those opportunities which men like Outram can instantly turn to account. Two days after arrival in Sind, the Extra Aide-de-Camp was despatched on a special mission to Cutch, to procure that assistance in land and water carriage which the Amirs had failed, or been unable, to supply. On rejoining head-quarters at Gorabāri, after an absence of eleven days, he was able to make a satisfactory report of his work. He had proceeded by sea to Mandavi, from which port, after arranging for the despatch of boats, forage, and sheep, he had made a camel and horse journey to Bhūj, to confer with the assistant Resident, and visit the Rao, or reigning prince; he had then returned to Mandavi and sailed, past the mouth of the Hujamri, to Karāchi. This place was, at the time, no more than an obscure fishing-village; but it possessed one or two wealthy native merchants, and Outram was enabled to do much business there, and again on his way thence to camp, in furtherance of the transports so urgently required. His return involved an unsafe journey of about ninety-five miles. 'I went,' he explains, 'without servants or baggage of any kind, determining myself to go overland to camp, and hoping to excite confidence by displaying it in thus going totally



unattended—my object being ostensibly merely to look after camels, but in reality also to feel the temper of the natives, and to endeavour to ascertain the actual intentions of their rulers.¹ Leaving Karáchi soon after midnight on December 9, he reached camp at 9 p.m. on the 10th, having spent twenty-seven hours on camel-back. On the way he explored a ruined city, besides scrutinising the country generally, and effecting a good stroke of transport work. The people were excited and suspicious—no wonder—but ‘on the whole’ he ‘had no great incivility to complain of, and experienced no difficulties of any consequence.’ It was not, however, until December 19 that the camels from Cutch arrived; they had been delayed *en route* by the hostile action of Shir Muhammad, of Mirpur, one of the lower Sind *amirs* or chiefs. On the 24th the force moved forward, and reached Thatta on December 28.

To make our narrative intelligible at this stage—and with future episodes of Outram’s career in view—it will be well to attempt a brief sketch of our relations with the rulers of that province in which were now encamped the troops forming the Bombay column of the army of the Indus.

The Amirs of Sind were members of a Baluch family called Talpur. According to the territorial divisions of their governments, those belonging to Khairpur, or Upper Sind, were Rustam Khan and his brother, Mubarak; those in Haidarabad, or Central and Lower Sind, were Nur Muhammad and Muhammad Nasir Khan, with their cousins-german, Sobdar and Muhammad; while Shir Muhammad of Mirpur owned the tracts west of the Indus. Of the three ruling branches,

¹ Extracts from Captain Outram’s Journal—letters to his wife were printed for private circulation, and subsequently published under the title *Rough Notes of the Campaign in Scinde and Afghanistan in 1838-9*. We shall have further occasion to quote sparingly from these unpretending but graphic and interesting diaries.



the Amirs of Haidarabad possessed the better known and more important State, but the Amir of Mirpur was the member, personally, most hostile to British influence. Our knowledge of these chiefs originated in our knowledge of their predecessors; but time had worked a change, and passive relations of reciprocal benefit had been converted into a one-sided activity on our part, which caused the new generation of Talpurs to regard the Anglo-Sindi alliance as a sort of inconvenient incubus. There is a formidable blue-book, containing the 'Correspondence relative to Sind,' from 1838 to 1843, which commences with a treaty of four articles dated August 22, 1809. By this treaty the contracting parties were jointly pledged to 'eternal friendship' and the interchange of agents; and the less powerful of the two signatories was pledged to the more powerful not to allow 'the tribe of the French' to be established in Sind. Eleven years later a second treaty was concluded, much to the same effect, but with no specification of European 'tribes.' In 1832 we renewed and somewhat amplified our written engagements with Mir Murad Ali, the then sole responsible chief of Haidarabad; and made a separate treaty with the State of Khairpur—vowing 'eternal friendship' with it, closing for ever 'the eye of covetousness' to its good things, and yet receiving from it, for our merchants, the use of the river Indus and roads of Sind. Then followed a 'commercial treaty' with Haidarabad in 1834; and a treaty of two articles with Mirs Nur Muhammad and Muhammad Nasir Khan, sons of Murad Ali, in 1838. This last instrument was short but significant. It provided for the mediation of the British Government in adjusting differences between the Amirs of Sind, and the Maharaja Ranjit Singh; and the residence of an accredited British Minister at the court of Haidarabad, with liberty to the Amir to send an agent to our court in return. The nature of the mediation to be effected



is apparent in a later treaty of more note and many more articles, concluded between the British Government, Ranjit Singh, and Shah Shuja ul Mulk, of which the sixteenth article is thus expressed:—

‘Shah Shuja ul Mulk agrees to relinquish, for himself, his heirs and successors, all claims of supremacy, and arrears of tribute, over the country now held by the Amirs of Sind (which will continue to belong to the Amirs and their successors in perpetuity), on condition of the payment to him by the Amirs of such a sum as may be determined, under the mediation of the British Government; 1,500,000 rupees of such payment being made over by him to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. On these payments being completed . . . the customary interchange of letters and suitable presents between the Maharaja and the Amirs of Sind shall be maintained as heretofore.’

In July 1838—or exactly one month after this treaty was ‘done’ at Lahor—Colonel Pottinger, the resident in Sind, was instructed that the minimum of the sum which the Amirs would have to pay in conformity with the article quoted, might certainly be estimated at twenty lacs of rupees (200,000*l.*); that they must be made sensible of the advantage of at once coming to terms; and that in the event of their declining to meet the wishes of the British Government and accept British mediation, they must be prepared for an occupation of their frontier town of Shikārpur and adjacent country, and other such measures as the Shah might eventually determine to adopt.

We need not here enter into the story of this tribute. How it originated, and what were the circumstances of its abandonment and revival, are matters which belong rather to the history of the period than to a separate biography: so also the right we had to mediate between Sikhs and Sindis and Afghans, to the gain of one and prejudice of the other,



when our own interests were at the root of the whole procedure. It is enough for our present purpose to know that the Resident exercised the discretion vested in him, to defer making the ungracious communication to the Amirs; and that the chapter of accidents in which their enlightenment on our 'friendly' intentions is recorded, contains many evidences of intrigue and ill-will in active operation against us.

Such being the state of affairs on the arrival of the Bombay division at the mouths of the Indus, it is not surprising that obstacles were thrown in the way of its progress to join the Bengal forces moving towards Afghanistan: and that the services of Sir John Keane's extra Aide-de-Camp were put in requisition for special duty at Thatta, as they had been seven weeks before, when the Lieutenant-General's head-quarters were lower down the river.

On this occasion, however, the question was not one of boats, camels, or commissariat, but of a new and detailed treaty. Outram was associated with Lieutenant Eastwick, the assistant resident, in a mission to the court of Haidarabad, the particulars of which may be gathered from a perusal of the published instructions addressed by the resident to the former officer. In Colonel Pottinger's letter to Mir Nur Muhammad the names of both emissaries are mentioned; but it is not clear that any distinct duties were assigned to each, nor indeed that the association of a second delegate meant more than that a great military authority having appeared on the scene, his dignity required a representative at any formal visit to be paid to the local *darbâr*. The draft treaty was of twenty-three articles, and besides the usual declarations of peace, and amity, and 'perpetual enjoyment' of present possessions, it provided for a British military cantonment at Thatta; the part payment by the Amirs of our troops permanently quartered in Sind (as these



princes would 'derive such vast advantages' from their presence); the protection of Sind from all foreign aggression, and the unconditional aid of the Sind army if found necessary by the British Government. Lest the Amir should fail to see all the benefits contemplated in this purposed understanding, Nur Muhammad's particular attention was called to the obvious intention that the two Governments should 'really become one'; and it was pointed out to him that the wealth about to 'flow into Sindh from the British force stationed in it,' and which would 'give employment to thousands of the people of the country,' must 'cause a vast increase to the revenues from the demand for grain, and every other article of consumption,' and would 'bring merchants from every quarter to settle in the country.'¹ The later opinions of both Lieutenant Eastwick² and Captain Outram on the Sind question, are suggestive that either the sympathy of these officers with the views of their Government must at this early period have been half-hearted, or that their acquaintance with the merits of the case before them was as yet imperfect.

The steamer conveying to the seat of native government the representatives of British power, civil and military, was twice aground on the first, and twice again on the second day after leaving Thatta. Such occurrences represented too closely the normal condition of the classical Indus to have the character of ill omen. On the third day the opportunity was afforded to the passengers to visit the village of Jerak, since the head-quarters of a deputy collector; and, on the

¹ See *Sindh Correspondence, 1833-1843*; presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1843.

² For many years, as Captain W. J. Eastwick, a prominent member of the Directorate of the East India Company, and of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. This able and upright public servant became one of the most active champions of the despoiled Amirs of Sind—a hearty ally, in the cause of justice, of his life-long friend James Outram.



morning of the fourth, the anchor was cast on the river bank at a point some three miles distant from Haidarabad. During the voyage, Outram's keen eye, as we gather from his diary, was searching out the military features of the country. A deputation from the Amirs attended to welcome the new arrivals; but it was not until the afternoon of the following day that the mission was received by the three joint rulers, Nur Muhammad, Muhammad Nasir, and Muhammad Khan. The fourth, Mir Sobdar Khan, owing to indisposition of some sort, was absent. Outram had not been idle in the interim, for he had ridden to the town, and nearly round the walls of the fort, and, in spite of insulting abuse received on passing the Baluch camps, had effected a double reconnoissance of the several approaches to these points. At the reception the chiefs were outwardly polite, and displayed much cordiality, *moribus suis*, towards the British officers; and they readily discussed with them the subject of the treaty. But the behaviour of the Baluch soldiery and many general indications of hostility observed outside the *darbâr*-room, were such as to necessitate a demand for explanation; and so unsatisfactory was the reply, that Eastwick and Outram had no alternative but to re-embark without waiting for a second interview. An attack upon their small detachment of sixty-nine men was averted only by its remaining on the alert throughout the night. The promised answer as to acceptance or rejection of terms offered had been deferred; but a verbal message, to the effect that the treaty would be sent back, was brought on the fourth day by the native agent in our employ. The envoys rejoined Sir John Keane's head-quarters at Jerak, to which place the troops had advanced from Thatta. Their report, and the intelligence received in other quarters, indicating possible aggression on the part of the Sind Baluchis, led to the request for a military demonstration of



our strength from the north, where the commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Fane, had pitched his camp, and where Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton was preparing to cross the Indus at the head of a Bengal division. The construction of a bridge of boats on either side of the island of Bakhar, to facilitate the passage of an army from the left bank of the river at Rohri, was not a matter of instant accomplishment. And as it happened that the requisition for aid in Central Sind came at a season when progress was suspended on this account, compliance was willingly given. Accordingly, the major-general had himself marched a portion of the Bengal force as far as Kandiára, about a third of the way to Haidarabad, when a dispatch from Sir John Keane caused him to counter-march his men, and return to their starting-place. The prospect had brightened. A change had come over the minds of the Amirs; they had accepted the treaty; friendship had been renewed; and the Bombay division was in full movement up the river. Whether this result was owing to the military demonstrations, and occupation of Karáchi by the naval and reserve forces, or to Colonel Pottinger's diplomacy, or to all combined, we need not stop to examine.

Although Outram does not appear to have taken any prominent part in the brief diplomatic discussion at Haidarabad, Lieutenant Eastwick doubtless felt the advantage of having at his elbow so worthy a coadjutor. On return to Jerak, work was found for him of another kind. He was sent out by the general with fifty Púna horsemen, to scour the *jungal* and make a reconnaissance along the road about to be traversed by the troops. When this task was achieved, he took some six or seven hundred camp-followers to assist in tracking the boats laden with stores, still working up the stream from Thatta, and closed his day's labours by bringing in all to within one mile of the camp landing-place, with



the single exception of one long flat-bottomed craft, which, notwithstanding the employment of 200 men on the work, could not do more than half her prescribed journey. The last duty gave him the opportunity of exploring a burning 'shikargáh,' or forest, in which the bodies of three officers of the Queen's Royals had been discovered the previous day, and of satisfying himself that the deceased must have lost their way and perished in the flames, without being able to get clear of the *jungal*. On the second day all the boats were brought abreast of the encampment; and the upward march commenced on the day following.

The Bombay division of the army of the Indus broke ground from Jerak on February 3, reaching Kotri in two marches. The position of this station on the right bank of the river, almost immediately opposite to Haidarabad, rendered it a desirable halt. Advantage was taken of the comparatively peaceful aspect of affairs to permit officers, under certain restrictions, to visit the capital. Outram attached himself to a party consisting of the chief engineer, the commandant, and brigade-major of artillery, and other scientific officers appointed to make close examination of the city, its fort, and environs. It was with no small satisfaction that he found the plan, sketched during his diplomatic mission, certified as correct in every respect, while the mode of attack which he had proposed to the commander-in-chief was pronounced to be the most judicious that could be adopted.

Three days were spent at Sehwan, to give time for the whole force to clear the Lakhi Pass;¹ and during these the commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Fane, arrived in the

¹ From Kotri the force moved to Sehwan, by the Lakhi Pass, traversing the rocky spur of that name overhanging the Indus. With the natural obstacles presented at this stage of the march, the passage of artillery was no simple matter. Owing to the encroachments of the river and consequent disuse of the track round the base of the hill, it had become necessary to make



immediate neighbourhood, on his downward route to Bombay, for embarkation to England. Outram was in personal attendance on Sir John Keane when proceeding to meet his senior general, and has recorded the cordial embrace of the two veteran warriors; adding that he breakfasted in Sir Henry's boat, and passed the day with him and his staff, each member of which had a separate boat comfortably fitted up. Sir Henry's health did not admit of his staying in camp, but he was enabled to ride thither, and derive satisfaction from inspection of the cavalry and artillery horses, before re-embarking in his tiny flotilla. The departure of this distinguished and much respected officer left Sir John Keane commander-in-chief of the army about to enter Afghanistan.

Inclusive of its progress from the Hujamri mouth of the Indus to Thatta, the Bombay division had marched some 224 miles in Sind, up to Sehwan. Shikápur, where Mr. Mac-Naghten, the envoy with Shah Shuja ul Mulk, had taken up his temporary quarters, was yet at a distance of 132 miles. With little exception, such as presented by the river-reaching spur of the Lakhi hills, the country was sandy, low, and flat, and the monotonous character of the scenery, though pleasantly varied by extensive wheat-fields and other cultivated land, was insufficiently relieved by village and forest. Hot weather, acting upon this monotony, would naturally have a depressing effect upon new-comers; but when Sehwan was left on February 23, there were yet two or three weeks to intervene before the actual setting-in of Sind heat. On February 28, at a point where the upward direction of troops and travellers would turn inland from the

a practical way over the higher ascent. By the skill and labour of the engineers and their assistants, the difficulty was overcome in an incredibly short time by means of a zigzag path cut out of and built upon the almost perpendicular face of the hill.

bank of the river, Outram was ordered by Sir John Keane to start immediately for Shikárpur, and hold personal communication with the envoy. These orders were received at midday, and the recipient was at Larkhána, more than thirty miles off, in the evening. Resting there for the night, he left at nine the next morning, with the two camels on which he had accomplished the greater part of the previous day's journey, and reached his destination at 10 P.M.—a long and weary forty miles, though the distance would have been nothing to a well-mounted rider. He was heartily welcomed by Mr. MacNaghten, whom he found at table with his assistants, Major Todd and Captain Macgregor.

The precise object of his mission is not stated by Outram in the pages of his printed journal. That it related, however, in some way to commissariat arrangements, may be inferred from the fact that the available Bengal officers vested with the responsibilities of that department were summoned to the envoy's tent on March 2, to furnish certain information required by Sir John Keane; and he was able to report that the result of the meeting was 'much more favourable in some respects than he had expected.' On the same afternoon it had been arranged that the Bombay delegate was to be presented to Shah Shuja. His Majesty was so overcome by the heat that he sent to request a transfer of the scene of reception from the formal audience chamber to the place of evening promenade. Thither accordingly went the British officials. Remaining on horseback while the king, sitting in a native *takht-rurwán*, or litter, conversed with them, they were not detained for a long interview. Outram noticed the custom, approved by our authorities, to approach and leave the Shah with much ceremony, as well as the scrupulous observance of prescribed etiquette inculcated by the envoy in our outward relations

with the Afghan court. He adds that his Majesty received him with much affability, and that he appeared to be between fifty and sixty years of age, and of mild manners.

But apart from the journal or his own writings, we gather in another quarter that Outram was really commissioned to obtain, if possible, through Mr. MacNaghten's agency, a large number of camels to supply the wants of the commander-in-chief, in whose camp the mortality among baggage animals had been seriously felt. So grave, indeed, had been the loss, that it was reported impracticable to move the whole Bombay division to the Bolan without a further reinforcement. The arrangement proposed for attaining this end was complicated, and its success depended on the diplomatic adroitness of the procedure adopted. Let us see what light has been already thrown on the situation.

'The self-complacency of his Majesty, and the official dignity of the Envoy,' writes the author of the 'Memoirs of Colonel Outram's Services (1853),' quoting in part from Kaye, 'had been so seriously offended by the contempt for their unsoldierly levy which Sir Willoughby Cotton undisguisedly evinced, and Sir John Keane barely affected to conceal, that Sir William MacNaghten, assuming a high tone, had insisted on a prominent place being given to the Shah in the approaching operations. And the commander-in-chief had cogent reasons for avoiding a rupture with the British Plenipotentiary. He therefore resolved to go through the form of offering a thousand of his own insufficient herd of camels for the use of the contingent; but he determined, at the same time, *that the reverse arrangement should be carried out, if by skilful management it could be effected.*' Outram, we are further told, performed the duty confided to him with a success beyond even the anticipations of his chief, who received from the envoy 'a supply of camels.'



more than double in number those he had offered for the use of the Shah's contingent.'

It should be mentioned that on February 23, or the day on which the Bombay division left Sehwan, the cavalry, artillery, the 13th light infantry, and three native infantry regiments of the Bengal column had marched from Shikárpur towards the Bolán and Kandahar. The 4th infantry brigade had been detained to escort the Afghan king, who proposed moving at an early opportunity. Outram, having sent on his riding camels half the distance to be got over, took leave of Mr. MacNaghten after dinner on March 3, and started at midnight, by palankeen, to return to Sir John Keane's camp, then pitched at Larkhána. If evidence were needed of the favourable impression made upon the envoy's mind by his energetic visitor, none better could be adduced than the written application for transfer of the latter's services to his own special mission, which had reached the chief before the A.D.C. himself. But the offer was thankfully and respectfully declined on the honourable plea of unwillingness to leave the army while there was prospect of active employment in its ranks. That he was useful to the lieutenant-general, even in his every-day capacity, has already been demonstrated. Now again, on return to head-quarters, his tact and firmness were remarkably evinced in bringing to order some refractory camel-men from Cutch. These camp-followers struck work, positively refusing to advance a step further; and Outram was despatched to quell the mutiny. Assembling all, to the number of two or three thousand, he selected twenty of the most influential of their *jamadárs*, and marked them off in confinement. 'I then,' he writes in his journal, 'ordered the remainder to take on their camels under the surveillance of a body of horse; but they refused. Having warned them, without effect, that we could be trifled with no longer, and



of my determination to flog them all round unless they complied, I was under the necessity of tying up one and giving him a dozen lashes; a second succeeded, and a third—who got four dozen, he having been observed checking the rest when they began to show symptoms of giving in. This had the desired effect; they promised obedience in future, and took out the camels to graze. On their return in the evening, they were again mustered, and told that they should remain under surveillance, unless such of the Cutch *jamadārs* as had been faithful throughout should pledge themselves for their good conduct. The required pledge having been given, they were sent to their duty.* Those *jamadārs* who had been placed in confinement were not released at once, as further security seemed requisite for their future behaviour; but on the day after the example had been made, the mutineers were ‘quite obedient.’

A detachment of the Bombay troops, consisting of H. M.’s 17th and 2nd regiments of foot, proceeded from Larkhān towards Gandāva in the Kalāt State, on March 11. The commander-in-chief and staff, with horse artillery, the 1st Bombay cavalry, and a wing of the 19th native infantry followed on the 12th idem. After three short stages, each averaging thirteen miles, and a long march across the desert of thirty miles, Outram was despatched on a new mission to the envoy, then in camp with Shah Shuja. Riding all night on a tired camel and, for half the distance, quite alone, through a country of abandoned grain-fields and protective watch-towers—frequented by Baluch plunderers, who evinced their hostility by murdering every stranger—he reached Gandāva (forty-one miles) late in the morning. Thence, on the following day, March 15, he continued his route to Bagh (forty-five miles) upon a pony lent him by the commissariat officer, escorted by two armed Baluchis entertained for the journey. Here he fell in with Mr. MacNaghten, and com-



municated to him the objects of his coming, returning on the 19th to Gandáva, and rejoining Sir John Keane at Panjok, a few miles beyond. Owing to the information which he brought from the royal camp, the chief directed him to hasten back to Gandáva, for the purpose of despatching thence an express messenger to the envoy, conveying the intelligence that his Excellency had resolved upon pushing on with a small escort to Dádar, there to meet the Shah, and accompany his Majesty and the British officers with him up the Bolan, then occupied by our soldiers. The latest accounts from Sir Willoughby Cotton were to the effect that the head of his column was within one march of the top of the Pass, and that it was expected no opposition would be offered to its progress before arrival at Kandahar.

General Willshire was nominated to command the 'Bombay division of the army of the Indus;' but it was not to lose the presence of Outram, though attached to the personal staff of its late commander, and doubtless preparing to accompany him. On March 21, while riding out from Gandáva to meet Sir John Keane, an accident occurred which disabled him for a time from all active work. His horse, making a sudden turn when at speed, fell flat on his side with his rider below him: and the bone of the pelvis, above the hip-joint, was fractured from violent contact with the hilt of his sword. It can well be understood how vexatious to him was the *contretemps*; but there was consolation in the reflection that things might have been worse. The medical officers were of opinion that the utmost detention he could suffer would be for three weeks; and though he might not accompany his chief in advance, he could be safely carried in a palankeen with the troops which would shortly leave Gandáva.

It was on March 31 that the main body of infantry in the Bombay division, with Outram and the dragoons, managed

to get clear of Gandāva. Of the first day's short march to Gagar, the invalid writes, 'I did not feel the slightest inconvenience from the shaking in the palankeen; and, in fact, were it not necessary to remain quiet in order to allow the fractured bone to unite, I believe I might now walk about.' But although on April 29 he was able to ride twenty-two miles to join his chief at breakfast 'in a delightful garden a few hundred yards from the walls of Kandahar,' he had only abandoned the palankeen and resumed his seat on horseback on the 25th.

We need not linger over that month of April, with its sad experiences of starvation for animals, and of death, by the ruthless hands of robber-tribesmen, for unwary men armed or unarmed.¹ Outram, whether on horseback, or borne along from day to day in an ungenial palankeen, noted carefully all the features of the line of country now so familiar to us, and recorded the events of the march. Passing near, or among the bodies of murdered *sipahis* and others belonging to the force, in one narrow defile, at the outlet of the Bolan, he found 'the stench arising from the countless putrefying camels dreadful.' Nor did the horses escape the general suffering. On the arrival of the Bombay division at Kandahar, it was ascertained that about one hundred and fifty of those of the artillery and auxiliary cavalry had dropped on the road from exhaustion. The surviving animals had suffered much, but were pronounced to be in a better state than the horses of the Bengal army, three hundred and fifty of which had been lost. From this and former experiences, the author of 'Rough Notes' takes occasion to remark on the superiority, for work and endurance, of Arab and Persian horses over stud and country breeds; and gives the palm, in both respects also, over stud-bred horses to some recent imports from the Cape. The reason of his hurried ride into Kandahar, broken bone

¹ Appendix D.