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The Punjab Frontier Force

Lieutenant-General Sir Henry D.

Daly K.C.B., C.I.E. ^a

^a Bombay Staff Corps.

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Friday, June 27, 1884.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR SAMUEL J. BROWNE, *V.C.*, K.C.B.,
K.C.S.I., late Bengal Staff Corps, in the Chair.

THE PUNJAB FRONTIER FORCE.

By Lieutenant-General Sir HENRY D. DALY, K.C.B., C.I.E., Bombay
Staff Corps.

THE Council of the Royal United Service Institution has done me the honour to request that I would supply a paper on "The Punjab Frontier Force." The subject is vast; embracing a period of thirty years, during which the Indian Empire was convulsed, the grand native army, of which all were so proud, rich with the glories and conquests of a hundred years—triumphs in all climates, Egypt, Afghanistan, China and Burmah—under Clive, Wellesley, Foote, Pollock, Napier, Gough, and many a good Commander—between the dawn and dusk of a May-day in 1857, broke away from their allegiance, rose in arms against us, carrying with them many arsenals and war matériel of every description.

The mere recital of the records of the Punjab Force, from the Kohat expedition under Sir Charles Napier, in February, 1850, and to the glorious defence and glorious death of young Hamilton and Cavagnari's guard of Guides at Kabul, in 1879, would, however compressed, occupy more time than is allotted for such a paper as this—no amount of hard writing could make the catalogue easy reading.

We have the carefully compiled chronicles of Paget, of the exploits of the Force on the north-west frontier, filling upwards of 450 pages, records of daring service, done with devotion and discipline, under the prestige and leading of Englishmen; by Pathans, Mohammedans of the wildest class and clan—men steeped in blood feuds, traditionally careless of life, hating every dynasty but their own; by Sikhs, descendants of the soldiers of Runjit Singh, who had wrested Peshawur from the very Pathans by whose side they had been fighting shoulder to shoulder in our ranks.

These chronicles are to us what the chronicles of Froissart were to the soldiers of his time: they bring a glow of pride, testifying the wondrous power of order and discipline, effected by the nerve and brains of a handful of Englishmen. True it is that many a noble spirit passed away, hallowed in the doing; but many remain, pressing to do whatever devotion and duty may.

After I had accepted the invitation to prepare this paper, and began to read the records, reports, and lives of the men who made the

history of the time, I felt overwhelmed at the task, and shrank from attempting more than to dot down personal reminiscences, with here and there sketches and anecdotes illustrative of the men and the times—of the deeds done, and the doers. My own reminiscences have this merit—they carry us back to the earliest stages of the Punjab Force; for I believe Sir John Coke, that rare leader of Pathans, and myself, are the only survivors of the original Commandants.

Captain Coke and Lieutenant Daly raised the 1st Punjab Infantry and the 1st Punjab Cavalry; and within seven months of their embodiment both corps were reviewed by Sir Charles Napier and served in the field under his command. As to Coke's, wrote that heroic soldier to George Lawrence: "I have seen nothing superior to it in drill—it is admirable; and both you and I saw how this brave corps fought under its excellent leader in our five days' campaign." And in the General Order detailing the fighting he writes: "As Captain Coke and the 1st Punjab Regiment of Infantry sustained the brunt of this skirmishing, the Commander-in-Chief thinks it due to this admirable young corps, and its excellent leader, to say that their conduct called forth the applause of the whole column."

The stately proclamation of Lord Dalhousie, dated 29th March, 1849, recounts how the Punjab became part of the British Empire. The treacherous murder of two British officers at Mooltan, Vans-Agnew and Anderson, in April, 1848, was followed within twelve months by the destruction of the Sikh army, the capture of Mooltan, the battle of Goojerat, and the expulsion of the Afghans across the Indus to the mouth of the Khyber Pass.

Sir Henry Lawrence was placed at the head of the new Government, with unlimited power of selecting the civil and military Officers under him; Lord Dalhousie stipulating only for his Agent in the war, Colonel Mackeson.

The defence of the frontier from Hazara to Mithunkote, at the junction of the five rivers, was a heavy task to face. It meant the control of lawless tribes, whose trade was warfare and plunder, numbering in all not less than 100,000 fighting men, levying blackmail on travellers and merchants, never combining save against Runjit Singh or Kabul.

For a thousand years and more the valley of the Indus under the Suleyman range had been studded with a line of forts and towers—ruins of which still remain—as positions and outposts against the ceaseless raids of mountain marauders.

In times not long past, in a country so difficult for military operations—with narrow defiles, mere fissures in the rocks—marauders assembled from long distances, well armed and well mounted, and carrying their food on their backs. They sacked towns, exacted ransoms, murdered Sikh, Governor, and people, getting back to their fastnesses with impunity.

The first duty which fell on Sir Henry Lawrence was the defence of this Trans-Indus frontier, and ten regiments, five of cavalry and five of infantry, were organized for employment.

Before proceeding further it will be well to turn to the small body

of *Guides*, which owed its origin to Sir Henry Lawrence in December, 1846; their organization must have been in his mind when he conceived the idea of a Frontier Force.

Sir Henry, during the first Afghan War, had seen the difficulties our army, British and native, encountered in the passes, amongst the hill tribes and northern nations, in the absence of guides and interpreters; and he resolved that in the future, within our own ranks, there should be hardy men accustomed to every region and accident of service, and familiar with every village dialect.

The Guides, originally one troop of cavalry and two companies of infantry, were raised by Major-General Sir Harry Burnett Lumsden, then a Lieutenant. Lumsden possessed characteristics for the task in a rare degree: a daring sportsman full of endurance, hardy and strong of frame, with an instinctive knowledge of men which gave him a power which none under him ever questioned. Life in the Punjab in those times was full of incidents, and few were the days which did not test self-dependence and soldierly intelligence. Henry Lawrence quickly gauged Lumsden's genius. In addition to the strength begotten by the stirring scenes in which he moved, Lumsden breathed among giants—the Lawrences, Edwardes, Nicholson, were his associates.

It is hardly enough to say that on the enrolment of the Guides each man's personal history was known to Lumsden; men from every wild and warlike tribe were represented in its ranks, men habituated to war and sport, the dangers and vicissitudes of border life, Affredies and Goorkhas, Sikhs and Huzaras, Wuziries, Pathans of every class, and even Kaffirs, speaking all the tongues of the border, Persian, Pooshtoo, &c., dialects unknown to the men of the plains; in many cases the Guides had a camp language or patois of their own. Lumsden sought out the men notorious for desperate deeds, leaders in forays, who kept the passes into the hills, and lived amid inaccessible rocks. He made Guides of them: tempted by regular pay and enterprise, many joined the corps and became conspicuous for daring and fidelity. On the border, and in the ranks of the Guides, tales, abundant in humour, were told of Lumsden's interviews with men who had defied all authority, and had never been seen in the plains but for murder and plunder.

A sketch of Dilawur Khan, who died on the path of duty, a Subahdar of the Guides, whose name is familiar in every village between the Khyber and Kashmere, will illustrate this.

When Lumsden first visited Eusofzai in search of recruits—in his own words—"of men accustomed to look after themselves, and not easily taken aback by any sudden emergency," Dilawur Khan was notorious. He had been brought up by Mohammedan priests, and was intended for the priesthood; but kidnapping bankers and rich traders, carrying them across the Indus into Eusofzai, was too attractive in adventure and remuneration, and he forsook the sacred calling.

Dilawur's capital consisted of his sword, a piece of rope, and a huge bullock's skin, which he could inflate at pleasure, and so carry himself and his guests across the sacred river; once there, a message was sent

to settle the sum the firm or family would give as ransom for his guest. This was Dilawur's occupation. Lumsden, thinking that Dilawur must have rare local knowledge and pluck to carry on such a trade successfully, sent him an invitation to his camp, promising him a safe return to the hills. The very novelty of the invitation took Dilawur's fancy, and to the astonishment of the chiefs of the district he appeared in camp. Lumsden received him with all courtesy, pointed out that in a short time posts would be so established throughout the country that his calling would be impossible, and the risk of hanging great, and ended his moral by proposing to make him a Guide. Dilawur fairly burst into a fit of laughter at the proposal, and took his departure across the border. Six weeks afterwards he voluntarily turned up at Lumsden's tent, saying he had come to join the Guides, but pleaded hard to be excused the degradation of the "goose step"; but Lumsden held out stoutly for the absolute necessity of his being taught the complete art of war, and finally had the satisfaction of seeing the most dreaded man on the frontier patiently balancing on one leg at his bidding.

Such is Lumsden's own account, and he adds: "About half my first recruits were of this stamp, while the other half were sons or nephews of the chiefs of the district," who sought the Englishmen as representatives of their family, and eventually rose to the higher ranks. So popular became enlistment under Lumsden that thirty or forty young Affredies, or Pathans, fed and clothed by their relatives in the ranks, passing through their drill, awaited vacancies. Great was the excitement at the rifle butts when a vacancy, as a prize, was shot for by these aspirants.

The headquarters of the corps were fixed at Murdan, in the midst of Eusofzai; a rude fort was constructed, and there in a rich valley, bounded on the north and east by the Swat Mountains, with the Indus and the Kabul river south and west, Lumsden held civil and military sway over a people the Sikhs had failed to subdue, and who had withstood an army with guns led by Runjit Singh in person.

I have described Lumsden's mode of selecting Affredies and Pathans, to be associated and brought under discipline with Sikhs and other Hindoos, and must now give an anecdote of the feeling of this body to Lumsden himself. Sir John Lawrence, as ruler of the Punjab, was wont from time to time to make tours through all parts of the country. On one of his early visits to Murdan, the chiefs from the hills with their followers, and every village baron, gathered at Murdan to pay the great man obeisance. Revenue assessments and cases were discussed, and appeals received. Lumsden, from early ties, was probably easy in criminal and civil matters with a people whom he found cultivating their fields with sword and matchlock by their side, and who had never paid revenue except by force of arms, and who had no law but tradition and the will of the Kazecs. Sir John, though cordially relying on Lumsden's judgment, spent two or three days in cultivating a personal knowledge, as was his habit, with all that came before him, and thus it seemed to the men of the Guides

that their leader was harassed by discussions and explanations instead of being with them as usual in the field or at sports.

The night before Sir John was to march with his retinue from Murdan, Lumsden, after Sir John had gone to bed, went outside, and sat on the parapet of the fort. After awhile, an Affredi orderly, who always attended Lumsden in sport or fight, crept up to him and said, in a low tone: "Since the great Lawrence came you have been worried and depressed; many have observed this, and that he is always looking at papers, asking questions, and overhauling your accounts. Has he said anything to pain you? is he interfering with you? He starts for Peshawur to-morrow morning; there is no reason why he should reach it." The incident tells its own tale.

To return to our story. All these men were so welded together by Lumsden that they quailed before no danger, shrank from no raid, however desperate, and bore themselves to their leader against any odds with a fidelity unsurpassed by the Crusaders. In the valley of Peshawur, in 1847, Lumsden's prestige became a proverb, and with his native Officers, men of mark and name, the Guides became famous. In the following year Lieutenant Hodson joined the Guides as Adjutant. This was the famous partizan soldier who, after being conspicuous in many a stirring scene, fell at Lucknow in 1858.

During 1848, the year of rebellion in the Punjab, the Guides under Lumsden and Hodson were repeatedly engaged; their ranks repeatedly thinned, and again and again filled; their pay was above the ordinary scale for native Officers and men, and to meet the exposure, and the leading which constant service entailed, the proportion of native and non-commissioned officers was double that of the Line. The corps was self-dependent; they had no carriage save that which was carried by their own mules and ponies; their pay supplied everything; extras for foreign service, or any cause, there were none.

It may be thought that I have been too careful in sketching the life and deeds of the Guides through the throes of the Sikhs, on their transition from an independent nation in 1846, to their incorporation with the British Empire in 1849; but this handful of soldiers became the nucleus of the Punjab Force, which, modelled on the Guides, and associated with them in scores of struggles on the hills and in the passes, along a frontier of some 600 miles, became, in May 1857, not only the foundation of the present Bengal army, but, with the exception of the sturdy heroic Goorkhas, was the only available native force wherewith to stem the tide of sedition which, at a swoop, carried the Sepoy army of Bengal, from Peshawur to Calcutta, into rebellion.

I will now touch upon the constitution of the first regiments of the Punjab Force, five of cavalry and five of infantry, and the organization is on the same principle to this day. A cavalry corps was composed of a Commandant and 3 British Officers, 18 native Officers, and 588 sabres; an infantry regiment with the same proportion of Officers and 896 bayonets.

The native Officers were the sons or brothers of chiefs and nobles, on or outside the frontier, or Sikhs who had held rank and power in

the old army ; men of the family of the ex-Amir of Kabul, the son of the Governor of Jellalabad, who stood by our cause in Sale's defence, were of these. The non-commissioned were mostly of the same stamp, serving on to await their promotion to the commissioned rank.

Each corps maintained its own carriage of mules and ponies, and was thus ready at all times to take the field at the shortest notice.

Within a year each regiment had settled down to guard their portion of the frontier of 500 miles, from Kohat to Mithunkote.

Three horse field batteries, each with five 9-pounders and a 24-pounder howitzer, were attached to the Force. The batteries were commanded by Bengal Artillery Officers, who had made their mark during the war. The gunners were Sikhs, who had remained faithful. There were also two companies for garrison duty, veterans of the Sikh army. With these batteries were some remarkable Sikh Officers, who had served under Avitabile and Van Courtland, in Runjit Singh's army, bearing French orders of rank ; noble old soldiers they were, with a holy faith in their guns—to them objects of devotion.

The cavalry and infantry force, of necessity hastily organized, was composed in several regiments, mostly of men of Hindostan. Life beyond the Indus, away from their families, with harassing duties, and exposure in a climate very different from their own, had no abiding temptation for them: health and spirits gave way; they longed to return to the plains of India, and be with their own people. Their vacancies were filled on the type of the Guides,—the 1st Punjab Cavalry and 1st Punjab Infantry were so from the beginning,—and thus it came about that the security of that troubled border was maintained by the descendants of the restless marauders who had roamed and plundered for generations; and by their side fought Sikhs, their hereditary enemies, still conspicuous for the discipline and daring with which Runjit Singh had imbued their fathers.

The Punjab Frontier Force, in 1852, numbered 11,000 men of all ranks, and 64 guns—including old metal in position on the walls of the forts at Bunnoo and Kohat.

The Bengal army of 1857 was almost entirely drawn from Oudh ; light cavalry, in discipline and horsemanship, all that could be desired; infantry, splendid in physique and perfect in movements, described by no mean judge, the gallant old Nott, "noble soldiers whose backs no Afghan had ever seen." Each regiment had some 24 British and from 16 to 20 native Officers; but the native Officers, under the system which prevailed, owed their position to length of service only. In the infantry the result was specially conspicuous. Subahdars of companies, aged and often toothless, mounted on scraggy ponies, jogged along the line of march. Gallantry in action could hardly win for the Sepoy the badge of a non-commissioned rank. It was with this mass, fresh in discipline, armed to the teeth, steeped in fanaticism, that the Punjab Frontier Force had suddenly to deal.

Mark the contrast in the constitution of the present native army, modelled on the Guides and Punjab Force. Regiments of cavalry and infantry have each a selected Commandant and seven British Officers. Native Officers, numerically as before, often men of birth and position,

always men of education; every soldier feels that he bears with him his own fate on the field—that promotion is the sure heritage of skill and valour.

In the majority of regiments, instead of one race, there is an admixture of races—sometimes by troops and companies, sometimes by men antagonistic in religion and caste.

In this commingling of tribes the army has a bond of strength which no temptation has yet shaken.

Sir Hugh Rose bore striking testimony to this as Commander-in-Chief, after the trials and struggles of Umbeyla in 1863 :—"It was due to the native troops employed, particularly to the regiments organized since 1857, that the Commander-in-Chief should submit to the Government of India a practical proof of their discipline and fidelity. Every effort was made by the Akhund of Swat and the hostile tribes to seduce to their cause their co-religionists in the native regiments opposed to them; but, with the exception of one young Bonair recruit, their sense of duty and discipline kept them true."

The mixture of races in the ranks has proved a political and social safeguard.

Of the fifty fights and expeditions in which the Punjab Force was engaged on the north-west frontier during the ten years Sir Neville Chamberlain exercised command, I will touch on one only—the expedition against the Mahsud Wuziris in 1860. This is an illustrative one. The Mahsud Wuziris were pre-eminent for plunder and violence, their raids increased year by year in daring, till, at last, in 1859, after years of immunity, their chiefs brought a body of five or six thousand men into the plains for plunder.

General Chamberlain, who passed down the frontier at this time, wrote to the Government:—"In the course of my annual tour, I see much of all classes, and nowhere do I hear the cry for justice till I come within reach of the Wuziris. Then commences a train of injuries received and unredressed. There is no more pitiable sight than the tears and entreaties of a family stripped of all their means. Supposing our backwardness to arise from fear, men and women counselled courage, saying, 'We will assist you; they can't stand before guns and percussion arms.'"

This final raid brought their deeds of rapine to a crisis. It was determined to march a column into their strongholds, which no stranger had ever approached—an entangled mass of mountains of five ranges, with their crests rising from 5,500 feet to 11,500 feet—accessible only by the defiles of the Suleyman range, channels, by which the drainage from the mountains finds its way to the Indus, varying in breadth from 1,000 to 80 yards.

The expedition, composed entirely of soldiers organized and disciplined in the way I have described, without an English bayonet or sabre in the ranks, consisted of—

Detachments of the Punjab Light Field Batteries: 3 Royal Artillery British Officers, 101 fighting men.

The Peshawur and Hazara Mountain Transport: 6 Royal Artillery Officers, 125 fighting men.

Detachments of Guide—Punjab—Mooltan Cavalry : 4 British Officers, 331 sabres.

Detachments of Sikh, Guide, Punjab, and Goorkha Infantry : 41 British Officers, 4,536 men.

In all about 5,200 fighting men—Sikhs, Affredies, Goorkhas, and Pathans of every clan—with 64 British Officers, of whom seven were Staff, led by Brigadier-General Sir Neville Chamberlain, whose presence to every man of the Force was a guarantee of success.

On the 17th April, 1860, the column entered the Tank Zam defile, a huge ravine, rugged with rocks and boulders, the passage difficult in fine weather—impassable even for elephants after a storm of rain, for the watercourses at the base of the towering mountains, wind for miles before reaching the plains; but selected as the route which afforded the best means of getting up supplies from the rear.

On the 19th, at midnight, the General marched off with the whole of the cavalry, to seize a height, followed by Lumsden with the mountain guns and 2,000 infantry.

Now began a series of marches in which miles occupied hours, the safety of followers, supplies, &c., requiring heights on both sides to be crowned until the rear guard came up. In the new ground, day by day, breastworks had to be constructed for night picquets, of stones from the hill-sides, palisaded to prevent a sudden rush from overpowering numbers; all tents were struck at dusk; half the men slept accoutred, all in uniform, and the inlying picquets were of necessity strong.

The Wuziris, with unity which is proverbial amongst men who subsist almost entirely on plunder from the plains, were gathered, perched on crags and heights, ready for every chance, occasionally fighting with desperation. One chief, seeing an English Officer with a few men reconnoitring the ground, shouted to his followers, "Now is the time to die for our faith, and to show the kind of men whose country is invaded." There was no lack of enthusiasm; a desperate rush was made, the gallant fellow died, but not until others had fallen.

The first serious opposition burst out on the 25th: the reveillé was just sounding, and all was quiet, when a volley from the picquets and the "fall in" call startled Lumsden's column of 4 field guns, 100 sabres, and 1,200 infantry, which had moved by another gorge. 3,000 Wuziris, sword in hand, burst through the picquets, 500 penetrated the camp, where a desperate hand-to-hand struggle ensued; they were driven back, leaving 132 bodies behind them; no wounded were found, though the number must have been great. Lumsden's loss was heavy also: 21 killed and 109 wounded.

The sick and wounded were now sent back; sixteen days' supplies, 4,000 shoes for the men, and shoes for the horses—for struggling over rocks and boulders had destroyed these—were taken, and arrangements made for an advance on Kani Goram, the capital, hitherto considered inaccessible.

At this time a message came from the Wuziris, that they desired a conference; the chief men appeared in camp. The General told them "there was still time to make terms; we had no wish to meddle with

their affairs, but we must have security against their plundering and murdering on the British territory, and that unless this was assured their capital would be captured." After much discussion the Mallicks said: "Why go further? Our people are rough mountaineers, difficult to restrain; blood was fresh, and bodies of relations still unburied in the sun; our country is unfit for an army!" The General replied that it was contrary to our custom to show hostility to the dead, and pointed out to them that many of their dead had been honourably buried by our troops, and that the relations might come and bury the remainder. The Mahsuds, who hold it a sacred duty to bury their dead, seemed touched for the moment; but, depending on their numbers, their crags and mountains, they roughly put aside overtures for peace, and left, warning us of their preparations.

On the 4th May the Force moved forward through a narrow cleft in the rock; 6,000 or 7,000 of the enemy were in position, the mouth of the pass was closed by an abattis so strong that guns had no effect on it; along the crags and ridges were breastworks of stone, terraced one above the other, thick with Wuziris. I will not delay by attempting further description of ground, &c., which well might lead the mountaineers to rely on their courage to maintain it.

The Force was formed into three columns of attack. The right and main attack had to carry breastworks on a crest, the last 12 or 15 feet of which were almost inaccessible, the ground below was broken, and cut up with ravines; the attacking party in groups fired from behind rocks, to shelter themselves from the fire and stones hurled from above. Casualties were thick amongst them. The Wuziris, seeing this check, leaped from their breastworks, and with shouts, sword in hand, burst through the leading men and reached the mountain guns and reserve. The ground on which this occurred was visible to both sides; the hills and crags rang with cheers from the clansmen as they watched the glistening swords. Captain Keyes, now Sir Charles Keyes, was with the 1st Punjab Infantry in reserve; putting himself at the head of a handful of men, he cut down the leader of the Wuziris, already on the flank of the guns. Thus the tide of triumph was turned. The men of the battery, under Captain Butt, never swerved; they stood to their guns and fought; the brilliant stroke was over; the Wuziris, leaving the ground thick with dead, retreated up the hill, so hotly pursued that the breastwork was carried and the position won.

Our loss was Lieutenant Ayrton, 94th, attached to the 2nd Punjab Infantry, and 30 killed; 84 wounded.

The centre and left attacks were carried with trifling loss, and the stronghold of the Wuziris fell into our hands.

During the halt at Kani Goram the soldiers who had won, encamped in order outside the walls, were permitted to visit the town under Officers, morning and evening. A Syud, watching the orderly marching of the conquerors about the city, called out to the bystanders, "Well done, British justice!" It is said this remark, testifying to the strength of discipline, touched the English General as much as his military success.

On the 9th May the Force marched back by another route towards the plains; and on the 19th, with little molestation, reached Bunnoo, where the column was broken up.

Thus the Force, bearing sixteen days' supplies for 8,000 men, led by Sir Neville Chamberlain—of whom it is not fitting to speak in such a paper as this—with a few English Officers, marched in triumph through a country which no native power had ever dared to enter,—160 miles, through clefts, over crags and mountains peopled by desperate marauders, watching and contesting every peak and point,—yet such was the force of discipline and system that three camp followers and as many camels were the only losses *en route*.

The casualties in action were 450:—

Killed:	1 English Officer.
	3 non-commissioned officers.
	100 men.
Wounded:	346.

I will not speak of Umbeyla in 1863; the expedition of a mixed force, English and native, reinforced as the necessity demanded, commanded also by Sir Neville Chamberlain, until a severe wound compelled him to hand over the command to General Garrock, though he remained in the field, and saw the successful end: the total casualties were 908:—

15 British Officers killed,	21 wounded.
34 „ soldiers „	118 „
4 native Officers „	20 „
185 soldiers „	504 „

Here again many well-known frontier names appeared in a distinguished manner. Wilde, Probyn, Brownlow, Keyes, all added to their reputation.

I will now quit the frontier and turn for a few minutes to the trials and glories of the Punjab Force at Delhi and Lucknow; these have been eloquently described by Kaye and Malleson, and do not call for other mention than bare record here.

Edwardes and the men of might at Peshawur and down the border so stirred the enthusiasm of the chiefs and tribes for our rule, that they submitted themselves to organization, and, proudly taking the place of the Frontier Force, kept the peace themselves, and so admitted of the despatch of regiment after regiment to Delhi.

The first corps to move, being the nearest to the road, was the Guides. Within a few hours of the massacre at Delhi, cavalry and infantry, 6 Officers and about 600 men, were on the march towards the scene. The grand old masters of India, the Court of Directors, thus wrote in August, 1858, of the Guides at Delhi:—"The corps, by the extraordinary alacrity with which they proceeded to Delhi—marching 580 miles in twenty-one days—in the months of May and June, turning off the road one night 12 miles to attack mutineers; by their remarkable services before Delhi, where for nearly four months both Officers and men were constantly in action, sometimes

twice a day; by their singular fidelity, as shown by the fact that not one man deserted, whilst 350 were killed and wounded."

For some weeks after the commencement of operations at Delhi, the only native troops with the British force were the Guides and Charles Reid's Goorkhas, the Sirmoor battalion. During July and August, the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Punjab Regiments, and 4th Sikh Infantry, squadrons of the Punjab Cavalry, old border soldiers, with new levies to meet the casualties of the daily struggles, poured in; and on the 11th September, 1857, some 3,000 men, of all ranks, of the Punjab Force, were in array outside the walls.

On the capture of the city, 28th September, the rolls were examined, when it was ascertained that the casualties in the Punjab Force during the operations were little short of 1,000. Of these, 250 were killed, including 9 British and 11 native Officers; 16 British and 28 native Officers wounded. No Punjab corps had a complement of more than five English Officers; and this number had with some regiments to be renewed more than once. In the Guides and 1st Punjab Infantry alone, 6 British Officers were killed, and 11 wounded; some were twice wounded; not one escaped without a mark.

Of those who fell I could tell of Lumsden, brother of the two distinguished soldiers, Sir Harry and Sir Peter; Travers, brother of the General who won the Victoria Cross by charging, with four or five Sikh troopers, Holkar's guns at Indore; Quentin Battye, the pride of the border, the beau-ideal of a soldier and horseman, fell amidst the wail of his men, murmuring, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori!*" Murray—young Murray—sorely wounded in the early days of the siege, rejoined the Guides on the morning of the assault, and found his death springing a trench some feet in advance of his eager men.

Many other gallant spirits closed their course, but the names of Quentin Battye, Lumsden, Travers, and Murray were in many mouths, and to this day have a hallowing influence in the ranks in which they died.

The heavy losses caused by the lengthened operations made the pressure great for qualified Officers, but the spirit among them was high, and men pressed to serve where duty pointed. As an instance of this, Nicholson, who had marched down with a squadron of Sam Browne's, the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, brother of Brigadier-General John Nicholson—who, as recorded on his tomb, "led the assault of Delhi, but fell in the hour of victory, mortally wounded"—volunteered to join and lead the 1st Punjab Infantry at the storm; because the border men of the regiment knew him, and Major Coke and their own Officers were either disabled from wounds or dead. Nicholson lost an arm on this occasion.

Neville Chamberlain, severely wounded in July, had never ceased to cheer the army by his presence, and was the moving spirit in the dark days between the storm and capture, 14th and 23rd September.

Coke recovered from his wounds, and led a brigade in the subsequent operations in Rohilkund with marked distinction.

The squadrons of Punjab Cavalry, under Probyn, Watson, and

Younghusband; the Sikhs, 2nd and 4th Punjab Infantry, under Wilde, subsequently Sir Alfred, formed part of the column which joined Sir Colin Campbell at Lucknow. The Punjab squadrons were everywhere conspicuous for gallant work; Probyn, Sir Dighton, and Watson, Major-General and C.B., both won the Victoria Cross, and the native Officers and men were worthy of their leaders. Young-husband was killed during the advance on Futteghur.

The 4th Punjab Infantry, at the assault of the Sikundurabagh, Lucknow, vied with the 93rd Highlanders; when the bugle sound gave the signal for the attack, an eye-witness wrote:—"It was a glorious rush; on went, in generous rivalry, the Sikh, Pathan, and Highlander; Subahdar Gokal Sing, of the Sikhs, mentioned by the Commander-in-Chief, waving his tulwar above his head, dashed on 5 yards in front of his men."

In the succeeding operations at Lucknow, and throughout the campaign, the Punjab Force bore itself with conspicuous glory; many Officers, English and native—in their gallant leading there was no distinction—fell or were disabled. Wilde was sorely wounded, but recovered, and in after years distinguished himself on the frontier as the leader of the force which held him in honour. Sam Browne too—now Lieutenant-General, K.C.B., and K.C.S.I.—performed a gallant feat of arms. He was in command of a column, 250 sabres of his regiment and 350 infantry, hastily detached to save an important town in Rohilkund from falling into the hands of the rebels. He found the enemy in a strong position on a mound, within a short distance of the threatened city, with a wide tract of inundated ground in front, which prevented attack, or even approach. At midnight, with an old woman and boy as guides, Captain Browne moved his force round the swamp, and with break of day was in the enemy's rear. He halted a breathing space to refresh men and horses, for the march had been heavy. The enemy caught sight of him and at once turned three 9-pounders into action. Captain Browne, seeing a 9-pounder open with grape within 80 yards of his flank, galloped down, sword in hand, on the gun, attended by his orderly only. A desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued—the gun was captured, but not without terrible wounds to the heroic leader, whose life was saved by a native Officer, an old friend, badly wounded himself, devotedly rushing with two or three troopers to the rescue.

Sir Samuel Browne's empty sleeve and the Victoria Cross on his breast tell of the struggle and honour of that day.

The town was saved, the enemy crushed, and guns captured.

Sir William Mansfield, then Chief of the Staff, not wont to be keen of praise, described "the affair as very brilliant, the attack being made in the most soldierly manner and *secundum artem*."

The Punjab Force has, since the time of which I have been speaking, and since Sir Neville Chamberlain, shattered with wounds, left the command, maintained its reputation for discipline and daring. Wilde and Keyes have both commanded the troops amongst whom they had served as subalterns.

It was while serving as Brigadier-General Commanding the Frontier

Forces that Roberts began his career of a General, and developed that capacity for command which won the love and honour of the soldiers he led over the Peiwar, at Kabul, and to Kandahar.

In the troubles and triumphs in Afghanistan the Punjab Force bore an honourable share, with Sir Donald Stewart on his march from Kandahar, with Roberts at Sherpore, and in scenes too numerous to mention. In all these operations the Punjab troops were mingled with the army at large; but in any case the events are too recent for more than this general comment.

The Frontier Force, by May, 1857, had broadened into—

3 Horse Field Batteries, each with a Commandant and subaltern,
R.A.

2 Mountain Batteries, each with a Commandant and 2 subalterns,
R.A.

5 Regiments of Cavalry.

The Corps of Guides.

4 Regiments of Sikh Infantry.

6 „ Punjab Infantry.

At which, with the exception that the horse field batteries have been changed to mountain guns, and one garrison company, and the addition of one Goorkha regiment, the Huzara, the Force still stands.

The armament has changed with the times. In the early period Brown Bess and the two-grooved rifle did not proudly compete with the long matchlock and Jezail of the Affredi. The cavalry, under the orders of their Commanders, provided themselves with arms and horses, clothing and equipments; the State supplies were confined to medicine and surgical instruments, and carriage for these only. In the Bengal Irregular Cavalry of that period the trooper had a matchlock swung at his back. The trooper of the regular regiments bore a heavy carbine, provided by the State, fastened to his saddle. The Punjab Cavalry, following the example of Jacobs' Scinde Horse, were armed with a light percussion carbine bought by themselves, and carried on their persons, for which the State found ammunition; all wore good swords, and in several regiments half of the men had lances. This order of things, which lasted for many years, has also changed, and the position of the trooper greatly improved; the State now pays him better, and supplies him with an arm of precision free of cost.

The horses of the Punjab Cavalry for a long time were chiefly imported from Afghanistan and Persia: in these countries there are tribes of dealers who for generations have been in the habit of bringing strings of horses into India; hardy, clever animals, bearing distinct marks of Arab parentage, well suited to the requirements of the trooper, and costing about 25*l.* on the average.

The Punjab Force, raised under the direct orders of the Governor-General, has never been, as regards the selection of Officers for its ranks, and promotion within, subject to the Commander-in-Chief. This, which doubtless seems anomalous to those not familiar with the working and constitution of the government of India, has proved to possess many advantages, and the Force has not suffered in discipline or prestige. The Viceroy has the power of selection from the armies

of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. Wilde and Keyes were both Officers of Madras.

The negotiations with the border tribes, and our relations and treaties with chiefs and rulers, rest with the Viceroy, and are traditionally known to the Punjab Government, through whom work and mediation of varied kinds is conducted. The Officers and men of the Force, moving from place to place on a border of seven or eight hundred miles, are thus personally imbued with knowledge, valuable and almost necessary for life and duty. The work which falls to them could hardly be done in its daily uncertainties by the interchange of regiments of the army at large, and by Officers trained merely on the lines of military discipline, moving about under the routine of reliefs.

Discipline and military science being maintained, experience has proved that the State enjoys special advantages from having this border Force at its disposal. On all expeditions, when serving with corps of the Line, the Punjab regiments are subject to the same rules and regulations as others, and no distinction exists between them. There is no jealousy; for the Officers are drawn from the army at large, and appointments to the Force are prizes which many seek. With the men, transfers and exchanges are also frequent.

That great Administrator, Sir Henry Lawrence, trusted, however, to other means than force for quieting and civilizing the trans-Indus territory.

As the first regiments settled down along the border, Sir Henry Lawrence impressed on Medical Officers the necessity of establishing dispensaries. All Officers were specially instructed to seize every opportunity of making these institutions popular. The consequence of this was many a strange scene of war and confidence: men wounded on the hill-side fighting against us were brought to our picquets, and shouts came across the rocks for permission to bring their wounded to our hospital—even while the fight was going on. It so happened that a few days after our first occupation of Kohat, we had many casualties, and many wounded prisoners fell into our hands. Chloroform, then a new introduction in science, was used; and the fame of its soothing power spread far and wide. For months afterwards, men journeyed from long distances, merely to see the Doctor Sahib who sent people to sleep and then did what he liked with them without giving pain.

The Medical Officers of the Force, upon whose tact and capacity the success of the civilizing influence of medicine and surgery depended, were men selected for their energy and ability; and well and broadly did they lay the foundation of trust in the Englishman's skill and kindness. As the Chief Commissioner subsequently wrote to Lord Dalhousie, "the presence of such men tends to strengthen our rule." In some cases, the English doctors so won the gratitude of the faithless Afghan that his life would have been safe and his wants attended to, where a dog, outside the camp, would have had no chance.

Vaccination all along the border was another source of power to us. Kafilas from distant countries coming through the passes with their

horses, camels, and merchandize; their women and children, were vaccinated by hundreds every year: they too carried the tale of the Englishman's power far and wide; and Hakims from Kabul and Kandahar came down to be instructed in the Englishman's art of escape from the sore disease, which carried disfigurement and death to so many of their countrymen.

Mohammedan fanaticism, often nurtured to madness by men who, after the commission of crime, have sought refuge from punishment and recognition by their fellows in the solitude of caves and rocks, at the sources of rivers, has many disciples scattered about along the border in places rarely visited by others than those who seek an asylum. These fanatics from time to time come out, sometimes at the bidding of others, sometimes of their own accord, deliberately to murder; generally the selection falls on some prominent man who is not of the Moslem faith. This to the fanatic is martyrdom. "I have destroyed the Infidel; do with me what you will." So spake the man who calmly stabbed to death, at Peshawur in 1853, the most famous frontier Englishman of his time, Colonel Mackeson, whose epitaph, written by the great Governor-General, the Marquis of Dalhousie, is sculptured on a monument facing the Khyber:—"He was the beau-ideal of a soldier, cool to conceive, brave to dare, and strong to do. The Indian army was proud of his presence in its ranks. The reputation of Colonel Mackeson is known to and honoured by all. His value as a political servant of the State is known to none better than to the Governor-General himself, who in a difficult and eventful time had cause to mark his great ability.

"The loss of Colonel Mackeson's life would have dimmed a victory. To lose him thus by the hand of a foul assassin is a misfortune of the heaviest gloom for the Government which counted him among its bravest and its best."

Mackeson's was a noble nature: death would have been proudly met by him for such an epitaph by such a hand.

Major Adams, an Officer of distinction, conspicuous at Peshawur and in Huzara as a political Officer (he was trained in the Guides), was signalled out by a fanatic and openly cut down.

Meeham, a gallant young soldier of artillery, who had served in many fields with honour, was another victim of the assassin on that border.

Healy, Carne, Tapp, good servants of the State, though little known to the outside world, met death in the same foul way, doing their duty.

Godby, of the Guides, and the grand John Nicholson, both were attacked by fanatics. Godby escaped, through the devotion of his men, with a ghastly wound. Nicholson freed himself, and thus describes the scene:—

"I was standing at the gate of my garden with Sladen and Cadell (both General Officers now), and four or five native official attendants, when a man with a drawn sword rushed suddenly up and called out for me. I was wearing a long fur pelisse of native make, which prevented his recognizing me at first; this gave time for the only native attendant who had a sword to get between us, to whom he

cried out contemptuously. to stand aside, saying he had come to kill me, and did not want to hurt a common soldier. The relief sentry for the front of my house happening to pass opportunely at this moment, I snatched his musket, and, presenting it to the would-be assassin, told him I would fire if he did not put down his sword and surrender. He replied, 'Either you or I must die:' so I had no alternative, and shot him through the heart, the ball passing through a religious book which he had tied on his chest as a charm.

"The poor wretch was religiously mad; he had disposed of his property in charity the day before he set out for Bunnoo; his religious instructor here has disappeared mysteriously and got into the hills.

"My police orderly replied to his cry for my blood, 'All our names are Nikhul Seyn here,' and I think would have got the better of him had I not interfered; but I could not allow the man to risk his life when I had such a sure weapon as a loaded musket and bayonet in my hand."

I think I did well to speak of the frontier on which these foul scenes occurred as a "troubled frontier." They are now scenes of the past; resolute rule and the undaunted courage of Englishmen have stamped out the assassin, and put bounds even to Mohammedan fanaticism.

Sir H. D. DALY: There is one remark I should like to make, Mr. Chairman. The other day it chanced that I read one of the last letters which the Duke of Wellington wrote from India. It was a letter to Major Shaw, who was the Secretary to the Government, and he said, speaking of returning to Europe and his anxiety to do so—"I have long felt that services in this country, whatever they may be, are not recognized or rewarded on the same scale as services rendered in any other part of the world." I believe that is the same to this day. I have spoken to you of men whose names are known on that border of which I have been speaking, whose names are known throughout India and throughout the Indian army as household words; yet here, barring the great ones, the Lawrences, the Napiers, and perhaps probably Neville Chamberlain, they fall upon the English public coldly and with a chill. Services, as the Duke wrote when Sir Arthur Wellesley in 1805, services in that country are not recognized and rewarded on the scale in which they are in any other part of the world.

Major-General Sir JAMES HILLS-JOHNES, V.C., K.C.B., R.A.: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—There is little in this most interesting lecture which we have had the pleasure of listening to that requires any comment other than that of unqualified praise, but there is one point on which I differ in opinion from the gallant Officer who has given us this interesting lecture, and that is his opinion that it is well for the Punjab Frontier Force that it should be kept out of the hands of the Commander-in-Chief in India. I have no doubt that when it was first raised it was well that it should be kept as a special force, and I do not wish to see anything but a special force raised and kept for duty on the frontier, working entirely on the same lines as it is now with this exception, that it should be under the orders of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, and that the nomination of all the Officers should be in his hands. I think this view is now entertained by most of the Officers of the force. I was serving with them for a short period, certainly nothing in comparison to the time that the gallant Officer (Sir Henry Daly) served, nor did I hold the high position in it that he held, but still I saw a great deal of the troops and Officers, and I think almost all are now of the opinion that it would be to their advantage to be under the Chief. They felt it much in the late campaign, when they thought that there were difficulties about getting their services rewarded because they were not under the protection of the Chief, and that he did not take the same interest in them

as he took in the Officers under his own command. It is still more felt now on account of the rule which has been lately introduced into India, and which deprives Officers of their command after certain tenure thereof. Thus Officers who are still in command of their regiments are actually being turned out of their regiments and handed over to the Chief for general duty. They have held high position in the force, and having done their duty well, expect to get more important commands; but as they now have to compete with Officers of the Regular Force who have served directly under the Chief, and who are also equally entitled by their services to commands, it is only natural that they should go to the wall. The Chief must—at least it is natural that he should—look after his own children. That is a point which is very much felt now; in fact, I had a letter only two or three mails ago from one of the best Officers in the force saying that he was suddenly turned adrift, and that he had nothing to look forward to. It is this which makes these Officers all desire to come under the Chief. I will not say much more, but I cannot sit down without expressing my highest approbation of the magnificent material of the force. The men are simply splendid, the native Officers brave and self-reliant. I will give an instance of one man belonging to the 1st Punjab Infantry. He was left in the Pisheen valley, with a small detachment of from fourteen to twenty men, in charge of a large convoy many miles away from other troops. He had to bivouac in a camping ground, and he heard that he was likely to be attacked that night. He put the baggage into a small camp formation and entrenched himself with his men behind it, and at daylight he was ready for the attack which was made by about 100 or more of the Kakar tribe, and this Officer with his men was able to drive them off with great loss. This instance shows the material of the native Officers, and there are many of them like him. As for the European Officers, I am glad to say they still hold the foremost place which was held by the gallant Officers brought to your notice by the gallant lecturer, Sir Henry Daly, who is as well known for his deeds in that force as those whom he has honourably mentioned. The one special excellence of the Frontier Force, putting aside its fighting qualities, is its mobility. The system of regimental transport, which it has brought to great perfection, enables it to hold the first place in the Indian army in this essential respect, and now that a Commission is sitting at home investigating the question of transport, I cannot but express a hope that the system in use in the Punjab Frontier Force may be inquired into and taken good note of.

General Sir FREDERICK HAINES, G.C.B.: I have really no remark to make on the lecture, which has been a most interesting one, evidently very carefully prepared by Sir Henry Daly, and put forward in a very clear manner. But with regard to the difficulty which arises as to the recognition by the Commander-in-Chief of the services of the Officers of the Frontier Force, if Sir James Hills refers in any way to the honours distributed after a campaign, I must positively and emphatically dissent from the opinions he has given. The Commander-in-Chief, as all here know, receives reports from the responsible Officers commanding troops in the field. These are most carefully tabulated with reference to the service of every individual named. It is impossible that the Commander-in-Chief can provide honours for all. It is impossible that he should be right at every point in laboriously going through these papers, but I must say that, assisted by an admirable and totally impartial Staff, the Commander-in-Chief does his best so to award honours and promotions not only to troops who serve under his command, but to those for whom he has an equal sympathy, the Officers of the Punjab Frontier Force, whenever they may have distinguished themselves. As regards the individual case alluded to, of course I personally know nothing about it, but the system now is to cut short the career of most valuable Officers. I look upon it that many most valuable Officers are turned out of the Service by this lapse of time system which has been introduced, and I have no doubt that the Officer to whom Sir James Hills refers is an Officer who has been bitterly disappointed. I daresay there may be some little difficulty in bringing men, after a long service in the Frontier Force, separated from the Commander-in-Chief, into the general line of commands, brigade or division, but I can see many cases in which a man such as General Hills alludes to may fall out of the Service in exactly the manner he describes without any fault of the Commander-in-Chief, or any neglect on the part of the Commander-in-Chief to recognize his

services. No doubt the Officers do serve entirely apart from the Commander-in-Chief, but I particularly wish to disclaim anything like favour towards those who have served directly under the Commander-in-Chief detrimental to the interests of Officers of the Frontier Force who come under his command simply for a time.

Sir JAMES HILLS: I suppose I must have expressed myself badly, but it was not my intention to say for a moment that the Commander-in-Chief did not weigh the services and tell off honours to the Officers of the Punjab Frontier Force brought under his notice for services owing to any ruling which was affected by their not being under his command; far from it, I am quite aware that all these matters are most carefully gone into and most justly dealt out by the Officer who holds that most honourable position of Commander-in-Chief in India. What I mean is that these Officers do consider themselves as not likely to meet with the same justice. I do not think they are right, but they do feel that they would be better off if they were under the Chief direct, and that is one reason why I know they desire to come under the Chief in India. General Sir Frederick Haines has not made any observation with regard to his opinion as to the point which I raised, which was simply a difference of opinion with Sir Henry Daly as to the advantages of the force being separated or not from the immediate control of the Commander-in-Chief. I think it would be better for the force that it should be under the Chief, and I should like very much to know Sir Frederick Haines's opinion on that point.

General Sir FREDERICK HAINES: I think it would be more discreet if I were to say nothing on this point. I have often written on it, but I specially avoided making any allusion to the peculiar circumstances under which the Frontier Force now serves.

The CHAIRMAN: I think, gentlemen, I may be permitted in your name to tender our best thanks to Sir Henry Daly for his very interesting and able lecture.

Sir HENRY D. DALY: In returning my thanks to you, I venture to make one comment upon what my friend Sir James Hills has said. I can well believe that individual Officers of a large force, Officers of the army serving in the manner in which he has seen them, when they are Frontier Officers, might be of opinion that it would be more advantageous to them to be under the Chief. But that is not the point here. You have, as I ventured to say just now, discipline and prestige being maintained as they are maintained, and the power which the Viceroy exercises in maintaining that force, and with great submission and deference to the Commander-in-Chief—not alone the distinguished man who sits here to-day, or others—with great deference to him, the five years' command which a Commander-in-Chief exercises over the army does not give him that power of putting his fingers upon men in every part of India in the way which I think the Viceroy can do. We have this noble force ready to go anywhere, the first self-reliant, movable force which we have ever had; the power of that force extends throughout the army, and I think, judging from the past, it would be getting on very dangerous ground if we were now to break it up.