

country, rent with anarchy, and powerless to defend those who have trusted themselves to her protection. This propaganda is sometimes ascribed to Rome and it is sometimes attributed to other sources. So far as Italy is concerned, we can quite understand its motive, in view of what I have just

written. By visiting Tripoli with so much publicity, Mussolini wished to convey the impression that he and his countrymen are seeking a colonial empire. Consequently it is in the Mediterranean, and more particularly in North Africa, that his designs affect the interests of France.

'HANDY,' THE LAW OVER THE BORDER¹

BY SIR JOHN MAFFEY

[THIS character sketch of Mr. E. C. Handyside, Commandant of the Frontier Constabulary on the Afghan border, who was shot dead last April while searching for outlaws in a frontier hamlet, is written by the former Chief Commissioner of the Northwest Frontier province. It portrays an instance where the white man's burden is no sinecure and where his service is by no means superfluous.]

WHEN we exchanged a parting smile and a grasp of the hand on Peshawar platform, in July 1923, I think we both realized that the end of a long association had come at last. After all, it was always extremely unlikely that 'Handy' would be alive in six months' time. And now he has been shot through the heart in a successful round-up of outlaws in a frontier village.

Evidently his scheme worked out according to plan. He would not mind death, but he would have hated a fiasco; and such was his genius, his flair, his own Handyside touch, that he was

never associated with fiasco, though in that wild borderland in which he worked 'the odds are on the cheaper man,' as we learn, year in, year out, to our bitter cost.

There was no doubt that Handyside had in him a call to the Frontier. Happily for the province, he pushed his way in, though he did not rightly belong there. I remember his first arrival in 1913, when I was serving in the Peshawar district, and he got his first chance. He knew nothing of Pathans then and not a word of Pashto. A puny tribe, the Khudukhel, beyond but adjacent to the borders of the Peshawar district, were sheltering criminals and refusing to pay up a fine. There was to be a nocturnal round-up by the Frontier Constabulary, and Handyside got the job. When we drew up our secret plans we did not realize what a tremendous recruit the Frontier had got in this enthusiastic débutant.

The round-up was a great success. Handyside and his men arrested the leading recalcitrants, captured more than enough Khudukhel cattle to pay the fine, and the Khudukhel ate humble

¹ From the *Times* (London Independent Conservative daily), April 20

pie. But with the captive train there marched back the most dejected and pathetic Handyside. Not a shot had been fired! The tribesmen were the most miserable, contemptible, gutless set of rats! The whole fabric of his dreams had crumbled. These illusions did not last long, however, and in strenuous service on the Mahsud and Wazir borders Handyside learned that his dreams had been true, that the Pathan is a man, and the Frontier red in tooth and claw.

Most people are now familiar with the peculiar conditions prevailing on the Northwest Frontier that place such a heavy burden on those responsible for the maintenance of law and order. You have the long line of British districts, prosperous, policed, with good roads over the level plains, all the paraphernalia of Indian administration, irrigation, education, taxation. Alongside stretches the craggy starved borderland of the independent hill tribes, Mahsuds, Afridis, Orakzais, Wazirs, and so forth, of the same religion and the same race as the Pathans in the British districts, but outside the pale of law and order, fanatical, well armed, impoverished. The temptation to raid into the British districts is obvious. Equally obvious is the inducement offered to lawbreakers in the British districts to seek asylum across the border, whence they may still retain touch with their old homes. These outlaws are mostly desperate characters, but not necessarily so. They may have transgressed the law of the British district by playing a part, considered honorable in the society to which they belong, in prosecuting the family blood feuds common in our frontier districts.

But once across the border they must earn the hospitality they receive, and this they do by helping raiding gangs with information and guidance.

A vicious circle is established, and such a problem did the increasing number of outlaws present that the local administration was from time to time forced to hold 'Outlaw Conciliation Committees,' on whose recommendation outlaws were allowed back to their homes on easy terms. Naturally crime increased and the problem grew more grave instead of less grave.

An entire change of policy was necessary, and these details have been given in order to show the background against which Handyside worked and in order to emphasize the fact that he was an instrument, a wonderful instrument, of a definite policy, not a mere lucky opportunist in a losing game.

That policy was to strike at the roots of outlawry. No more conciliation. Let the outlaw do his worst, and we would do our worst. The pressure on tribes harboring outlaws was increased; the search for outlaws in their home villages was persistent; whenever possible they were combed out from the tribal area by nocturnal dashes of the Frontier Constabulary; the machinery was perfected to make raiding more hazardous; and every encouragement was given to our villages by generous rewards and a more liberal issue of arms.

As an instrument of this policy Handyside was a gift from high Heaven. But he could not succeed except where others had worked. It was not for him to prepare the ground or to sift the information, and he was most generous in recognizing the collaboration of the men who did this less spectacular work.

Handyside raised the morale of the Frontier Constabulary to such a point that we learned to expect success. In every enterprise he must be there himself. It was agony to him to learn that the Constabulary was unexpectedly out in Pezu when he was in Peshawar; and the Royal Air Force, which paid him

such a fine last tribute at his burial, was always sympathetic in hustling this restless spirit into the fighting line.

He was adored by his men. He had those gifts of humor and sympathy that win Pathan hearts, and with reckless courage he coupled extreme care in preparing his plans and deep regard for every other life but his own. His presence inspired the confidence that begets success, and, as his men came to regard him as a mascot, he was tempted to be with them even on minor enterprises when he might well have stayed away. His last day's work was an example of this.

For his friend the enemy he had the greatest admiration. A successful raider was a subject of high esteem and praise. Talking late into the night when the Viceory, Lord Reading, was paying his first visit to the Frontier and studying our various forms of turpitude, Handyside gave a list of notorious raiders, punctuated with comments of 'splendid fellow,' 'topping chap,' 'one of the best.' Lord Reading, much amused, drily remarked: 'Mr. Handyside, you must let me have your recommendations for the Birthday Honors list.'

All his preparatory work, when a definite coup had been planned, was most thorough and painstaking. Secrecy was terribly important, and he would indulge in the most wonderful camouflage of his plans, sending his luggage to Lahore with his bearer, ordering out companies on wild-goose chases, spreading ridiculous rumors — often much to our amusement; but if success be the test, there was something in it, and the need for complicated camouflage was with him almost a superstition.

He certainly was superstitious. We were very anxious to rout out a nest of outlaws from the Kabalkya country across the border. It seemed a promising proposition, but he did not like

it, and I did not press him. It appeared that there was a shrine of much repute on the mountain pass guarding the tribal settlement, and he did not fancy the job on that account. So it was never done.

How he dug out the notorious Ibrahim from the Mullagori country, how he counter-raided the settlements of the Hathikhel — all these things should be told. But the tale of one exploit must suffice. On a stormy night of January 1923 forty-one .303 rifles disappeared from a Government magazine in the heart of the Kohat cantonment. A hole in the wall was the only clue! It was indeed a most humiliating occurrence, and the Government of India had a good deal to say about it. But the curtain had fallen and we were left scratching our heads. Patience was necessary. It would not be easy to break up such a parcel of rifles, even across the border, without some news reaching us. But patience was not easy. At last a clue came and was most skillfully developed by our secret service. There was good reason to believe that the rifles lay in cold storage in the settlement of a notorious Bostikhel Afridi not far from Kohat and only a few miles across the border.

At last the plot was thick enough to bring in Handyside. It was a task after his own heart. The *mise en scène* was near Kohat, and obviously our blow could be delivered from Kohat. But Handyside would have none of it. Kohat must remain dead asleep. He would not even bring the necessary forces from the Frontier Constabulary lines in Peshawar. They should be moved at the last moment from Shabqadr, sixty miles away, and travel by motor lorries to a point within striking distance of the Bostikhel ravines. This wise proposal was accepted, and there is no need to go into the tangle of orders and rumors in

which Peshawar became involved while Kohat remained sunk in slumber.

At 3 A.M. one frosty morning Handyside and his men established their cordon round the Bostikhel towers, and nobody was allowed to get through. At dawn a mountain battery from Kohat crowned the heights, and the fun began. Handyside announced to the Bostikhel elders his intention of searching the house and tower on which our suspicions centred. Indignant protestations of innocence burst forth, murmurs against the insult to Moham-medan women — the whole place buzzed like a nest of angry wasps. Certainly, if our intrusion proved to be based on false information, there would be some awkward questions to answer.

Handyside promised all respect to the women, and indicated the position of the mountain battery. He always had a high decisive morale about him that kept things moving. The women began to file out of the gateway under respectful scrutiny. Two of them had surprisingly large hairy hands; another did not sufficiently conceal his beard under his veil. One of these fairies was found to have four Mills bombs concealed in his pyjamas. All three were outlaws. This looked promising. The search of the courtyard and tower began. The most careful examination revealed nothing. The tribal elders redoubled their protestations, and things began to look black.

Handyside, stamping on the plastered floor at the base of the tower, thought that it gave forth a hollow

sound, and he gave orders for some digging to be done. Access to a secret tunnel was established, and a helio message, flashed up to the mountain battery and passed on to us at Peshawar, brought considerable relief. 'Twenty-one Kohat rifles recovered. Rest expected shortly.'

Primo avulso non deficit alter. Handyside has gone. The work will not cease. His genius and personality expressed themselves in their own fashion, and made a mark that will not be obliterated from the proud records of the Frontier. But there is a spirit in the fine forcè to which he belonged that will bring successors in the great tradition, men able to make their mark in their own way, and I can think of more than one who has the root of the matter in him.

But to me one of the most vivid pictures of frontier life that memory brings back is that of 'Handy' coming in late at night just before starting off on one of his adventures, going over the maps and explaining the final plan of action — 'Handy' in shorts, with Pathan sandals on his feet, a revolver sling and full cartridge-belt, a Balac-lava cap, a heavy *poshtin* coat, happy as a schoolboy, hard as nails and ready to walk for a week on Pathan bread and water. 'Well, good-night! I'm off now' — and he would disappear into the night, leaving us to wonder how early in the morning we might hope to get a telephone message from our frontier posts, and what that message would be.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT. IV¹

BY CAPTAIN NICOLA POPOFF

DEFEATED in their first effort to get my Korean friend, T—, the Japanese hired *hunkuz*, or Chinese bandits, to assassinate him. But that gentleman was on his guard; he never went abroad unless accompanied by several friends, and always carried a revolver in his pocket. His chief protector, however, was himself a famous Chinese bandit nicknamed Black-Eye. This man defended T—, not because he liked him personally, but because he bitterly hated the Japanese. This hatred dated from the Russo-Japanese War, when the Japanese made an arrangement with four important gangs of Chinese bandits to harry the rear of the Russian army, and in particular to attack their munition and provision convoys. The bandits fulfilled their part of the bargain. In addition they served as spies in the rear and at the front of the Russian forces. When the war was over the Japanese invited the chiefs of these gangs to come to Port Arthur to receive their pay. Instead of paying them, however, they arrested them on various pretexts and beheaded them. Among those executed on this occasion was a near relative of Black-Eye, who swore vengeance for his kinsman's death.

During my period of service at Irkutsk several officers of the Japanese General Staff employed in Manchuria mysteriously disappeared. They were killed by Black-Eye. Everybody knew

that the latter lived on the concession of Mr. Akidelskii between Harbin and Vladivostok, but the Chinese dared not arrest him; and the Russians let him severely alone, since he never molested them.

Black-Eye was a sort of Robin Hood, who preyed upon the rich and gave liberally to the poor. His gang consisted of three thousand men, and it was common rumor that he might have easily recruited ten thousand warriors under his banner, for he was extremely popular among the common people.

I personally became acquainted with Black-Eye in the summer of 1914, immediately after the declaration of war. Several Germans and Austrians were living in Manchuria, especially Harbin, at that time. When hostilities broke out I had to arrest and intern these people. Some of them passively accepted their fate, but most of them tried to escape across the Chinese border. In order to reach Chinese territory, however, they had to cross the Sungari River, which was patrolled by a Russian flotilla day and night. They were usually ferried across by Chinese boatmen, who exacted large sums for this service. Naturally, they were always taken across at night and at some deserted point on the river. Several of the fugitives carried large sums of money and other valuables with them, and the boatmen, unable to resist the temptation, not infrequently murdered and robbed their passengers.

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