

# HAVELOCK & OUTRAM : THE RELIEVERS OF LUCKNOW

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Sir Henry Havelock, returned from his Persian campaign, was summoned to Calcutta, informed of the facts of the Mutiny, given the command of the Cawnpore district, and hurried off to Allahabad, for the Government still hoped to be in time to relieve Wheeler. As he led his column through the streets of that city in a drenching rain, the natives from the house-tops scowled and spat and cursed the foreigner.

It was the 30th of June when he reached Allahabad, and after organising his little force he set out for Cawnpore on the evening of the 7th of July. He had heard that Cawnpore had fallen, but Colonel Neill, who had done wonders at Benares and had saved Allahabad, was loth to believe the news, and Havelock hoped it was untrue.

With 1000 English infantry and 150 Sikhs, and taking his own son from the 10th Foot to be his aide-de-camp, Havelock pushed on to join Major Renaud, who had been sent on by Neill with 400 Europeans, 300 Sikhs, and 120 troopers. They made a forced march of twenty-four miles without stopping to rest. Then they halted for their well-earned breakfast, smoked, lay back under the trees, when with a shout some horsemen sent out to reconnoiter

came in at a gallop; and well they might, for round-shot were bowling along the hard road close at their heels.

Drums beat the assembly, up jumped the soldiers, clutched their rifles and fell into line.

It was the Sabbath morn, but war takes no heed of Sabbaths. Brigadier Havelock came up to the 78th and cried, "Highlanders, I promised you a field-day in Persia, but the Persians ran away. We will have that field-day now—let yonder fellows see what you are made of."

Captain Maude, R.A., was directed to place his 8 guns in front, behind were the men armed with the new Enfield rifle, while the horse guarded the flanks, volunteers the right, irregulars the left. The rebels' guns were the first to open fire, but when Maude began he soon silenced the enemy: then advancing within 200 yards of the rebel infantry, he poured in a withering fire.

Meanwhile the rebel cavalry rode up to our native troopers and said, "Comrades, leave these white men and follow us."

As they hesitated, Palliser sounded the charge: only three or four men rode after him. Palliser was unhorsed, but was rescued by some of his own men who had at first refused to charge. Our men galloped into Futtehpur after the fleeing rebels, captured 12 guns, much ammunition, and some silver. Twelve of our men died that day of sun-stroke.

After the battle the men enjoyed a rest in a mango grove; and the next day too they were allowed to lie idle and recoup themselves. Amongst the spoil an ominous find was that of many dresses of English ladies: that reminded them that they had no time to lose.

On the 14th, Havelock resumed his advance along a road strewn with properties cast aside by the rebels.

The native troopers who had behaved so badly in the last fight were disarmed and placed on duty as baggage guards: but they seized an opportunity, when some alarm occupied the troops, to plunder the baggage: they were then dismounted and dismissed.

Next day they found the rebels in force at Aoung: in dislodging them Major Renaud was killed—a skilled and gallant soldier; after a few rounds of ‘Maude’s battery the sepoy gave way and some guns were taken.

As our men were resting reports came that the enemy had retired to a strong position, covered by a swollen stream, called Pandu River: here there was a stone bridge.

“We must secure that bridge before the rebels destroy it,” said Havelock: and the men had to rise and labour on.

Three miles’ hot marching under an afternoon sun brought them to the bridge, intact, but guarded by two guns.

Maude was ordered up, and at his first discharge he smashed their sponge-staffs and they could load no longer.

The Madras Fusiliers and Highlanders dashed across the bridge, bayoneted the gunners, and Maude pounded the rest as they ran.

Once more they lay down for a night’s sleep; but Havelock received a message that Nana Sahib with 7000 men was ready to oppose his entry into Cawnpore on the morrow; he was told also that 200 women and children were still held alive.

The news flew through the camp and cheered the weary fighters. “With God’s help, men,” Havelock exclaimed, “we shall save them,

or every man of us die in the attempt.”

“Tomorrow we shall be in Cawnpore, and we will save the women and children,” so said many an excited soldier that night.

They started very early and marched fourteen miles out of the twenty-two—then they rested; the day was fearfully hot and exhausting.

Barrow, sent on to get information, met two faithful sepoy who were coming to inform Havelock of the Nana’s position at a spot where the road forks, a branch going off from the Grand Trunk road to Cawnpore.

The Nana, being sure the English would pass that fork, had measured the distance and trained all his eight guns on the spot. Therefore Havelock gave the men their dinners, and at half a mile from the fork turned off with most of his men to the right, while Barrow with the Fusiliers went straight on in skirmishing order. A thick grove concealed the main body until they were well to the right of the enemy. Before the guns could be brought round Havelock shouted to the 78th, “Now, my lads, go and take that battery.”

With sloped arms and measured tread they swept on in grim silence through the iron storm that whizzed above them, till at 100 yards’ range the word “Charge!” rang out.

Then with a cheer they dashed forward as the pipes skirled; not a shot was fired, so fiercely did they desire to use the bayonet, and in a few minutes they had climbed the mound and silenced guns and gunners.

“One more charge! take the big guns yonder!”

Again they dashed in and smashed up the enemy's centre, took the village and chased the rebels through the streets.

On the other wing the 64th and 84th had also forced back the enemy, one regiment racing against the other.

Havelock now thought the battle had been won—his men had marched twenty miles and fought a fierce battle; they fell down worn out; in a few minutes they again rose and mounted the low rise which separated them from Cawnpore.

As they reached the summit they saw the reunited forces of the rebels half a mile in front. In the centre was Nana Sahib, seated on an elephant, and native music was playing.

Three guns opened fire from their centre and a fierce discharge of musketry saluted the worn-out soldiers.

Havelock's guns were a mile in the rear, and their horses were done; he knew he must call on his infantry for one more effort. So he rode to the front on his pony—his horse having been shot and said, "The longer you look at it, men, the less you will like it. The brigade will advance, left battalion leading."

Major Sterling and Havelock's son led the 64th through round-shot and grape, charged and routed the foe.

Then to sleep on the bare ground—no tents, no food, no grog! But dimly in the short twilight they could discern the roofless barracks of Cawnpore, and they were well content.

Early next morning they heard a loud explosion—the Nana had blown up his magazine!

Tytler reported that the rebels had left the city and its environs, so they stepped joyously forth to rescue the women and children.

Alas! As they drew near the house in which they had been confined, they were told that all had been just massacred!

In a horror of silence they heard the awful news.

Many went into the rooms and courtyard, seeing the fragments of dress and hair, the children's socks soaked in blood, the marks on the walls of bullet and sword-cut. Some came out with oaths of vengeance, some with tears; some vowed they could never go near that spot again.

The number of victims counted by General Havelock's order as buried in the well was 118 women and 92 children.

It has been said that the walls bore on them penciled messages: but a friend of the writer who was there with Sir Colin's force informs him that he saw none; they must have been added by soldiers visiting the house.

What was seen at Cawnpore, and what was told in England, explains, if it does not justify to all minds, the terrible vengeance which was taken: similar scenes had occurred at Meerut and Delhi and elsewhere, but nothing on so large a scale as at Cawnpore.

After one day's rest Havelock marched to Bithoor and burnt the Nana's palace, that chief having fled over the Ganges.

Havelock then designed and armed a fortified work commanding the Ganges, in which he left 300 men under Neill.

On the 25th July he crossed the river with some 1200 European troops, ten small field-pieces and a few Sikhs.

When he had fought his way but 15 miles towards Lucknow, Havelock had lost 170 men by wounds or sickness and had used up one-third of his gun ammunition: at this moment too he learnt of

the mutiny at Dinapur and knew he could receive no reinforcements. In a moment of despondency he fell back, on the 31st, on Mangalwar(Tuesday), 5 miles from Cawnpore; thence he wrote to Neill and said he should need another 1000 men to reach Lucknow. To this letter Neill replied almost insultingly, which so stung Havelock that he advanced again, fought more battles, lost more men, and with the consent of his staff again fell back, and re-crossed the Ganges on the 13th of August.

On the 16th he led his men out again to Bithoor, attacked 4000 rebels and took two guns.

Sir Colin assumed command of the army on the 17th August and at once telegraphed to Sir James Outram his hope that after Eyre's signal success the 5th and 90th regiments might go on to Allahabad in order to reinforce Havelock.



*Sir James Outram (Oil Painting on paper by Alfred Buxton, 1863)*

To Havelock he telegraphed: “The sustained energy, promptitude and vigorous action by which your whole proceedings have been marked during the late difficult operations deserve the highest praise. . . . I beg you to express to the officers and men under your command the pride and satisfaction I have experienced in reading your reports of the intrepid valour they have displayed.”

There was no delay now in sending troops to reinforce; no more hesitation in councils, or keeping regiments at Calcutta. Sir Colin spared nobody, not even himself: the idle and the indifferent, the timid and the boastful, felt the lash of his anger and set to work in silence and dismay.

But for many weeks Sir Colin was unable to leave Calcutta, so important was it to organise a relief for Havelock.

We must now return to this hero, who had fought his way so gallantly to Cawnpore with so small a force at his disposal. On the 17th of August, the day after he had beaten 4000 rebels at Bithoor, Havelock read in the Calcutta Gazette that General Sir James Outram had been appointed to the command of Cawnpore.

Perhaps as he sat in his tent pondering on this news, his heart may have been wrung with a twinge of regret that he could not

complete his duty of relieving Lucknow as general in command. For now Outram was coming to supersede him at the critical moment, when reinforcements were beginning to arrive. Outram! His thoughts reverted to all he had heard of that brave soldier: how he had made a name for himself by his exploits in hog-hunting in Bombay, and had been chosen to lead a wing of his regiment when only a junior lieutenant, and was nicknamed “the little general,” because of his inches. How for some years he was employed in keeping in order the Bhils, a wild hill-folk, and had killed many tigers and earned the gratitude of many an Indian mother.

Outram was at the storming of Ghuzni in 1839, and at Kabul, and at the siege of Kelat. Then, disguised as an Afghan, travelled far through a dangerous land to carry dispatches to Karachi: there he surprised his brother-in-law, General Farquharson, who only saw in him a dirty native in turban and slippers and native tunic.

“Well, my man, what do you want here?” said the suspicious general.

“I want a good dinner and a wash!”

“The devil you do! Then, who are you—an Englishman?”

“Why, my good fellow, don’t you know Jemmy Outram?”

Then Havelock would remember how Outram came under Lord Ellenborough’s censure, and how Lord Auckland defended him in the House of Lords, saying, “A more distinguished servant of the public does not exist than Major Outram.”

Again, how at a dinner given in his honour when he was leaving Sind, Sir Charles Napier had called him “the Bayard of India, sans

peur et sans reproche.”

Outram always spoke out freely when he thought things were wrong, as in deposing the Ameers of Sind, and he had helped in putting down bribery at Baroda.

Outram arrived at Calcutta near the end of July 1857, and Lord Canning gave him the command of the divisions of Dinapur and Cawnpore. But when he heard how Havelock had gallantly and heroically led his small force through thousands of opposing rebels under Nana Sahib to Cawnpore, his chivalrous heart smote him that he should be superseding his old friend. As thus Havelock might have recalled some of the passages in his comrade's life, and feeling a little disappointed at not having the honour to relieve Lucknow, a telegram was put into his hands—it was from Sir James Outram: “I shall join you with the reinforcements, but to you shall be left the glory of relieving Lucknow, for which you have already so nobly struggled. I shall accompany you only in my civil capacity as commissioner . . . serving under you as volunteer.” Here was a wonderful self-effacement! Outram was surrendering the general's share of the prize-money—and he was a poor man,—he might also be losing the chance of a baronetcy and a big pension; but he did what he thought right. And Havelock, who was a deeply religious man, no doubt thanked God for this act of Divine Providence, for all his life he had lived as the servant of the Most High God. From a small boy at Bishop-Wearmouth and later at Dartford in Kent, Henry Havelock learnt from his pious mother to take life seriously. At nine he went to the Charterhouse and made friends with Julius Hare and Thirlwall, the learned bishop to be of St. David's, with George Grote, the historian of Greece, and William Macnaghten of Kabul fame, and Eastlake, the artist.

When Napoleon escaped from Elba, the Danish blood in Henry Havelock urged him to enter the army. But it was not until 1823 that he got transferred from the Rifle Brigade to the 13th Light Infantry and sailed for Calcutta.

In 1825 he was serving with Sir A. Campbell in Burma, where he distinguished himself by coolness and daring, storming works, forcing a way through swamp and jungle, often knee-deep in water, struggling against malaria from Rangoon to Prome, mounting the marble steps of the king's palace with bare feet to witness the royal signature to the peace. His men, whom he had taught to pray and sing as well as fight, were called "Havelock's saints."

Then came experiences amongst the Afghans with Colonel Sale: Quetta, Kandahar, Ghuznee called him, and then he had the honour of belonging to the brave garrison that held Jellalabad. Later, as lieutenant-colonel, he engaged in the Sikh War: Ferozepur, Aliwal, Sobraon saw Havelock often in danger, and often, as it seemed to him, miraculously preserved.

Often he was sneered at by empty-headed officers; but when danger to the Empire called for the best and truest men, Havelock was sent for, and, as we have seen, led his Highlanders of the 78th at Futtehpur and Pandu Nuddi and Cawnpore, marching in all that heat 130 miles in seven days, fighting four battles and taking twenty-four guns.

It was not until the 16th of September that Sir James Outram reached Cawnpore, bringing Eyre's battery of 18-pounders: the latter had crushed a body of rebels who were intent on cutting Outram's communications.

Havelock was now strong in artillery, having Maude's battery and Olphert's and Eyre's—the whole commanded by Major Cooper.

Leaving some 400 men to hold Cawnpore, the force of 3179 men set out through drenching rain on the 19th of September, and on the 22nd reached the bridge of Bunnee which was neither broken down nor defended. Havelock bivouacked for the night on the farther bank and fired a royal salute to hearten the defenders of the Residency: but it was not heard! On the morning of the 23rd, though Lucknow was only sixteen miles distant, they could hear no booming of guns. Doubtless, the sepoy were saving up their resources to meet the relieving force.

After a good breakfast, they marched on till they came near the Alumbagh, when the guns made play right and left and the 5th Fusiliers stormed the wall: the 78th and Madras Fusiliers followed, and in ten minutes the Alumbagh was cleared. As Outram was cantering back from the pursuit near the Charbagh Bridge, a dispatch was brought him. Outram galloped to Havelock and, baring his head, shouted to the soldiers, "Hurrah! Boys-Delhi is at last in our hands." Cheer after cheer rose as the news went round: and, though no tents were up and no supper forthcoming, they made merry, cheered by their late success and by the splendid news.

On the morrow, after leaving the sick and wounded under Major M'Intyre of the 78th in the Alumbagh, at half-past eight the advance sounded, Maude's battery in front; and Outram pushed forward to the right to clear the Charbagh garden, while the main body lay down till Maude's guns had done their work on the earthen rampart, seven feet high, which defended the bridge. But the sepoy were firing under cover and had made havoc of

Maude's gunners, so that Maude himself and his lieutenant, Maitland, were serving the guns themselves.

"I say!" shouted Maude to Havelock's son, who was on horseback near, "I can't fight these guns much longer—can't you fellows do something?"

Young Havelock rode at once to Colonel Neill and suggested he should charge the bridge.

"I can't take the responsibility in the absence of Outram: he will be round soon—no, I really can't do it."

But Outram had been detained in his flank movement: the position was critical, something must be done.

Then the valiant son of a valiant father tried a daring ruse: young Havelock rode to the rear out of sight, then came galloping back, rode up to Neill and, saluting him, said, as though the order had come from his father, "You are to carry the bridge, Sir."

Then Neill gave the order to form up: Havelock, Tytler and Arnold and twenty-eight men made for the barricade. Then a hurricane of missiles opened upon them.

Arnold fell, shot through both thighs. Tytler's horse was killed, and he himself was shot through the groin.

Only young Havelock and a private named Jakes were unhurt: Havelock on his horse waved his sword and called on the main body to come on: Jakes stood by his side, loading and firing as fast as he could. As Mr. Malleon writes: "There they stood, the hero officer and the hero private, for fully two minutes exposed to the full fire of the enemy; and they stood unharmed!" Then with a wild cry the Madras Fusiliers stormed the barricade and bayoneted

the rebel gunners where they stood.

By storming this fortified bridge they had won the entrance to the city. As it grew towards evening, Outram proposed a halt for the night, but Havelock decided for an attempt to reach the Residency.

Meanwhile, the beleaguered garrison had been painfully and pleasurably excited all day: hearing the boom of big guns, and the sharp crackle of the rifle-fire.

On 25th September about 11 a.m. they saw how agitated the natives were in town: at 1.30 they saw many leaving the city with bundles on their heads: their bridge of boats must surely have been destroyed, for they perceived many swimming their horses across the Gomti. Yet still the rebels kept up a heavy cannonade.

At 5 p.m. the Minie-bullet began to whiz over their heads; then they knew their friends were near.

But would they be repulsed? Their hearts asked for anxiety. It is growing dusk, but they can hear and see the red-coats fighting their desperate way through street and alley.

Suddenly, all pent-up feelings burst forth like a broken weir in a succession of mad, delighted cheers.

From pit, trench and battery, from behind sand-bags and on shattered roofs, and even from the dim hospital men rose to cheer. The wounded crawled forth to wave a hand; ladies fell on their knees and wept with many a prayer of thanksgiving for deliverance from the unspeakable horrors that had threatened them.

Quickly the defences were thrown down, and Havelock and Outram and many a hero of lesser note stepped over into the grounds of the Residency that had been held so staunchly for

eighty-seven days. "And ever above the topmost roof our banner of England blew."

Only a portion of the force entered the Residency that night: many lay on the ground and slept peacefully after their toils.

We had 196 killed and 535 wounded; of the latter about 40 were stabbed in their dhoolies or litters on their way to the Residency.

After a brief conference it was decided that no attempt should be made to withdraw the women and children to Cawnpore: if it had cost them so much to cut their way in, what might it not cost to break through the thousands of sepoys outside? In fact, Lucknow had been reinforced, not relieved.

Outram and Havelock and the men had done all that men could do: but they had been given an absurdly weak force. People at Calcutta had not yet realised how strong the rebels were in numbers, equipment, discipline and artillery.

So Outram and Havelock remained in Lucknow: the first thing was to find room for the increased force. With this view the palaces along the winding river were strongly occupied under the command of Havelock. M'Intyre of the 78th with 250 men fit for duty and others nearly convalescent, held the Alumbagh. The rebels could not now fire into the Residency from close quarters, and they made no more desperate assaults: they had enough to do in repelling sorties and counter-mines from the British posts.

Outram was busy repairing the defences and erecting new batteries during the six weeks which followed.

On the 9th of October they heard of Greathed's column relieving Agra, and of Sir Colin's proposed march to relieve Lucknow.

Then Sir James looked about for someone who could carry a message and plans of the city for Sir Colin's information. But he could not bring himself to ask anyone to incur a risk so great, and which promised almost certain death, as hostile masses surrounded them on all sides and guarded every avenue.

But Outram's anxiety reached the ears of Thomas Henry Kavanagh, a civil office clerk, and he at once volunteered for the duty. Kavanagh is certainly one of the heroes of the Mutiny, and we must devote a few lines to his memory.

At first Outram thought the tall Irishman unfitted for the disguise he proposed; for he was fair and ruddy, and his hair glittered like red gold. But Outram found he could speak the patois of the country like a native, and he learnt how brave he was. This moved Outram, for he loved a brave man.

So Kavanagh had his hair cut short and stained with lamp-black, as well as his face, arms, hands and legs. He dressed himself as a badmash—a native cut-throat—and set out one dark evening on the 9th of November, attended by a faithful native who had been employed as a spy on various occasions, Kunonjee Lal.

Both Sir James Outram and Colonel Napier wished him God-speed, and Captain Hardinge, as he squeezed his hand, murmured, "Noble fellow! You will never be forgotten."

He passed out from the Residency feeling he was a hero. But the very first thing he had to do was to strip and go through a stream carrying his clothes on his head.

The chill took away all heroic feelings for a time. They had to dress under a grove of trees, cross the Gomti twice by bridges, and answer several challenges from native sentries. Through the

streets they tramped without notice, and on reaching green fields where every plant was fragrant they enjoyed the new surroundings after months of nasty smells: they ate fresh carrots and chatted merrily for five miles.

Then Lal said, "I have lost my way, Sahib."

They were in the Dilkoosha Park, and it was occupied by the enemy.

But they got through safely and spoke to several peasants in the fields. Wet shoes and sore feet troubled Kavanagh; he often fell and hurt himself: once a woman got out of bed to show them the way. By three o'clock they reached a grove of mango trees and heard a man singing. As they drew near he called out a guard of sepoy, who began to ask a torrent of questions. These men they satisfied, and their next adventure was to fall into a lake, or swamp, when they had to wade waist-high for two hours.

After a rest they crossed a plain, dodged more sentries, met villagers fleeing with their chattels on buffaloes from the terrible English soldiers: then they slept for an hour.

After this as they entered a grove, "Who comes there?" was uttered in native dialect. Another sepoy guard?

No! There were too many voices! Lal thought they must be British.

"This sahib is an English officer," he stammered in his fright.

Silence! Suspicion! Incredulity!

Then the Sikh commander came forward and shook hands with Kavanagh, and he knew that after all his perils and fears he was safe! "Rash! Very rash! But plucky!" said the Sikh, and gave him two sowars as escort to the camp.

Lieutenant Goldie of the 9th Lancers gave him dry clothes, and Captain Dick of the 29th Foot lent him his Burma pony and showed him the way to Sir Colin's tent. What a relief it was to feel safe!

We have seen how Sir Henry Norman met the disguised messenger at the entrance of the tent, and suspecting him of some treachery, half drew his sword before Kavanagh cried, "I come from Lucknow—from Outram and Havelock—with important plans of the city for Sir Colin."

Sir Colin was immensely glad to see him, and spent some hours in his company working out his route so as to avoid the narrow streets which had proved so costly in Outram's case.

Kavanagh, who knew the city well, remained with Sir Colin's force and directed the advance. The Home Government rewarded this Irishman with the Victoria Cross and some substantial gifts. He died in St. Thomas' Hospital in 1883.

The success of Sir Colin Campbell in safely withdrawing the women and children from Lucknow was saddened by the illness and death of the gallant Havelock. Dysentery had worn him to a shadow, but he had tried to do his duty to the last.

He died in the Dilkoosha Palace as the army was retiring, and General Outram had only a few minutes to spare, to bid his old comrade a last good-bye.

Sir Colin, in a general order, conveyed to the army his last tribute: "His march of this year from Allahabad to Cawnpore, his frequent victories gained over immensely superior numbers, when he was nearly without artillery and cavalry . . . concluded by the onslaught and forced entrance into Lucknow, have established a renown

which will last as long as the history of England.”

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