1857

A Turning Point in Indian History

Vol. 2

LEADERS AND SPREAD OF THE STORM

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Dedicated in memory of all those heroes
who shed their blood during
this memorable and
eventful year

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Preface

The year 1857 symbolizes a turning point in the history of modern India because in that eventful year an upsurge, invariably referred to as the 'Mutiny' in most contemporary accounts, took on the dimensions of a rebellion as the princes and people of India, following the lead given by the sepoys, challenged a well-established administrative set-up. Over the years, the nature and scope of this great struggle has been the subject of controversy with historians in India and overseas. Owing to the pliable nature of history no conclusive evidence has so far been reached. However, it goes without saying that this Revolt occupies a unique place in the annals of Indian freedom struggle.

Volume One : The Prelude

The uprising was due to the culmination of multifarious factors ranging from political, religious, military and even social causes. These causes lay deeper and are to be found in history of the hundred years of British rule from the Battle of Plassey (1757) to the year 1857 when Mangal Pandey murdered an English Adjutant. The discontent of the sepoys who suffered from numerous disabilities apart from the lack of prospects from further promotion, had manifested itself in periodic mutinies from 1806 onwards. The new judicial system introduced by the alien rulers became a thing of dismay and terror because of its complications and the ignorance of the judges of both the language and customs of the country. Dalhousie's policy of annexation by the application of 'Doctrine of Lapse' as well as on the ground of misgovernment filled the Indian princes with uneasiness as to the security of their thrones. Amongst the affected ruling chiefs, Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the dispossessed Peshwa Baji Rao II, and Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi took prominent part in organizing the Revolt and the latter even fought strenuously till her death. Further, the British reluctance to

recruit educated Indians into the covenanted services was taken as an insult to the capacity and competence of this new and relatively vocal class of people. British refusal to treat Indians as social equals, aggravated the situation further. It is interesting to note that as early as 1817, Sir Thomas Munro, writing to the Governor-General, Lord Hastings, after pointing out the advantages of British rule, said : "but these advantages are dearly brought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable.... The consequence, therefore, of the conquest of India by the British arms would be, in place of raising, to debase a whole people. There is perhaps no example of any conquest in which the natives have been so completely excluded from all shares of the government of their country as in British India".

Munro was pleading for the employment of Indians in the administration. A year later he wrote again: "Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence and often with great cruelty, but none has treated them with so much scorn as we; none has stigmatized the whole people as unworthy of trust, as incapable of honesty, and as fit to be employed only where we cannot do without them. It seems to be not only ungenerous, but impolitic to debase the character of a people fallen under our dominion".

Further, new innovations as the introduction of railways or the postal services under Lord Dalhousie also upset a traditional society. Added to this was the ruthless economic exploitation of the country which the British had turned into a source of supply of raw materials to feed the rapidly growing industrialization of England. This resulted a great blow to the indigenous cottage industries which had been the backbone of country's economy. The peasantry was devastated by famine and crushed by new economic burdens i.e. revenue assessments which were deemed to be unrealistic on high side.

Also, the proselytizing activities of missionaries and the rapid pace at which social reform, such as the abolition of *sati* and infanticide, the legislation of re-marriage of Hindu widows, the prohibition of the disinheriting of a Hindu on his conversion to Christianity—all accentuated to fill the mind of the common man—with the fear that his religion was in danger.

The immediate cause of the so-called revolt was the sepoys' refusal to bite the lard-coated cartridges that went into the Enfield rifle. It was widely held that the lard was made from the fat of cow and the pig. As the imposition of greased cartridges threatened the pollution of the religion of the Hindu as well as Muhammadan sepoys, this inflammable cause supplied the necessary spark and the mutiny broke out.

Volume Two : Leaders and Spread of the Storm

Under these multifarious circumstances, a stage was set when ominous clouds started gathering in the horizon, threatening a cloud burst at any moment. The feudal order, which apprehended inevitable cracks, initiated a secret conspiracy against the alien masters. In the United Provinces and in Central India, a secret organization spread the news that a date had been fixed for a revolt. But before that eventuality, some ambitious elements in the Indian regiments at Meerut went a step ahead to trigger a mutiny on 10th May, 1857. The immediate cause as stated above, was the greased cartridges which the sepoys avowedly refused on firm religious grounds. The impatient action taken by the authorities in imprisoning 85 sepoys, paved the way for the revolt. Its premature birth didn't prevent from spreading its tentacles far and wide. With the news of the successful capture of Delhi by the sepoys from Meerut and the proclamation of an unwilling Bahadur Shah II as Emperor of Hindustan, the whole of North India was convulsed with military uprisings and, in many cases, preceded by civil rebellion. Although widespread, the centers of intensive activity were, however, confined to the North-Western provinces, Rohilkhand, Central India and Bihar.

Slowly, Delhi fell into the British hands on 19th September, 1857. The feat was accomplished by the concerted efforts of Sir Colin Campbell, the newly appointed C-in-C of the British forces aided by contingent of the Punjab under John Nicholson. At Lucknow, a quite strong English force struggled hard against a number of mutinying soldiers led by Begum Hazrat Mahal of Oudh and Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad. However, they were relieved early in March 1858 by James Outram and Campbell. At Kanpur, fighting continued between Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope on the one hand and the British on the other until the former driven out by Henry Havelock. Rani

Lakshmi Bai who led the revolt in Central India was defeated and killed in June 1858. In Bihar, Babu Kunwar Singh challenged the British might. In Punjab, Rajasthan, Assam, etc the British successfully put down all sporadic cases of rebellion by apprehending local leaders. In Bengal and Madras there was widespread unrest but no organized movement *per se*. By the beginning of 1859, all the leaders had been killed, captured or so to say, all the resistance had been crushed.

Volume Three : Nature and Consequences

Historians have divergent opinions about the nature of the revolt. Earl Stanley, the Secretary of State for India, while reporting the events of 1857 to the Parliament used the term 'Mutiny'. Most English writers on this subject followed the lead. Thus, it was that T.R. Holmes, G.W. Forrest, M. Innes, J.W. Kaye, G.F. Macmunn, G.B. Malleson, C.T. Metcalfe, Earl Roberts, and others used the term 'Mutiny' to describe the upheaval. Benjamin Disraeli, the leader of the opposition while speaking in the House of Commons, declared that the movement was a 'national revolt' and not a 'military mutiny'. Again, in his speech delivered at Aylesbury on 30th September, 1857, he urged: "I believe it is now also the universal conviction that the description originally given of these unfortunate and extraordinary movements in India was not authorized by the circumstances of the case. Day by day, we have seen that which was at first characterized as a slight and accidental occurrence, is in fact one of those great events which form epochs in the history of mankind, and which can only be accounted for any considerations demanding the deepest attention from our statesmen and nations". Justice McCarthy, after a close study of the subject, refused to call it "a merely mutiny, for it was a combination of military grievances, national hatred and religious fanaticism against the English occupation of India". Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, wrote: "We must admit that, under the circumstances, the hostilities which have been carried out in Oudh have rather the character of legitimate war than that of a rebellion". Major Harriott, the Judge Advocate- General at the trial of Bahadur Shah II, after a thorough study of the documents produced at the trial came to the conclusion that: "the conspiracy from the very commencement was not confined to the sepoys and did not

even originate with them, but had ramifications throughout the palace and city".

Two Indian historians, R.C. Majumdar and S.N. Sen after making a exhaustive study of all available records, official as well as non-official, differ in their interpretations but agree that the uprising was not the result of careful planning nor were there any master-minds behind it. Both also agree that in the middle of the nineteenth century Indian nationalism was in an embryo form. "India in the first half of the nineteenth century" asserts Sen, "was a geographical expression". The leaders of the rebellion were no ' national leaders'. Most of the leaders were mutually jealous and continually intrigued against one another. The condition of the masses was no better. The majority of the people remained apathetic and neutral. The movement failed to enlist popular support except in Oudh and Shahabad district of Bihar. Nationalism, as it is understood today, had yet to come.

R.C. Majumdar believes that the uprising was not a war of independence. He stresses the point that the most important elements who fought against the British were the sepoys. He comes to the conclusion that "there is nothing in the conduct and behaviour of the sepoys which would justify us in the belief or even assumption, that they were inspired by love for their country or fought against the British with the definite idea of freeing their motherland".

According to another historian Tara Chand, the outbreak of 1857 may be viewed at best "as the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India on an extensive scale. The memory of 1857-58 substantiated the later moment, infused courage into the hearts of its fighters, furnished a historical basis for the grim struggle, and gave it a moral stimulus.... Whatever might have been its original character, it soon became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India. It remained a shiny example before nascent nationalism in India in its struggle for freedom from the British yoke". According to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, two facts stand out clearly in the midst of the tangle story of the rising: "the remarkable sense of unity among the Hindus and the Muslims of India, and the deep loyalty which the people felt for the Mughal crown".

However, the revolt was foredoomed to failure as it was an almost spontaneous, episodic outburst lacking a stable, well-ordered

organization to sustain the movement. The British forces on the other hand, were far superior, both in strategy and tactics, to their Indian counterparts. Undoubtedly, their commanders were well-trained and possessed extensive experience.

Though, the revolt was completely suppressed, it had far-reaching consequences. To begin with, it exposed the British rule in India from its very foundations. The thunder of the mutiny was the terrific shock to the alien rulers. Lord Cromer remarked that "I wish the young generation of the English would read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the history of the Indian mutiny: it abounds in lessons and warnings". One of the chief results of the rebellion was the firmer establishment of the British power in India and the administration of Indian empire passed from the hands of the East India Company into those of the British crown. The purely colonial character of the British rule was modified in the post-mutiny period and the British Government held high hopes to the Indian princes and people. In her proclamation of 1858, Queen Victoria solemnly assured the former that " We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions.... We shall respect the rights, the dignity, and honor of the Native Princes as our own".

On the other hand, to the people of India she promised the blessings of a good government, freedom of belief and worship, rights to public services, impartial protection of law etc. The proclamation was hailed by educated Indians as a historic announcement and as a *Magna Carta* of their rights. An attempt was also made in the direction of associating non-official elements with public administration. The Act of 1861 enlarged the Legislative Councils of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and the United Provinces and the Punjab. At least half of the new members were to be chosen from outside the rank of the Civil Service. This was certainly a departure from the old traditions. As the Indian army had been mainly instrumental for the uprising, the strength of the European troops in India was increased and those of Indian troops reduced. In short, the revolt of 1857 ended an era and sowed the seeds of a new era.

Volume Four (2 Parts) : Documents

Documents play a vital role in exercising their utmost utility while historians take up the task of writing the history of a country. As they constitute the backbone of any serious or objective study, their importance in the proliferation of knowledge and improved interpretations of academic/historical aspects can hardly be over-emphasized. Unlike conventional books, their character is different; they are lost to scholars unless they are brought to their notice in the form of a compendium.

Hence, realizing the magnitude and voluminous literature on this very important event of not only Indian history but also the world history, it was felt imperative by the Editor to make a systematic and careful compilation. The theme has been given the title: *1857—A Turning Point in Indian History* and has been categorized into the above four segments. However, the present four-volume set embraces almost every aspect of the so-called uprising. The material for these volumes has been culled from a number of periodicals, reports, books/documents scattered here and there in various libraries/ institutions viz. Archaeological Survey of India Library, Central Secretariat Library, Indian Council of World Affairs Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, etc. I feel much beholden to the staff of these institutions for affording me their academic support during my researches. My heartiest thanks are to all the contributors whose valuable writings have made my endeavour possible. Besides, I also express my thanks to Professor P.L. Mehra, S.V. Taneja, S.A. Abidi, Prakash Radhwani, Purnima Ray and Satyavir Sharma. Finally, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not remember at this stage, my family members and in particular Shilpa and Swarn, who helped me in numerous ways in the completion of this project.

EDITOR

1

LEADERS OF THE MUTINY

Bankura	:	Neelmony Singh
Birbhum	:	Kureem Khan
Midnapur	:	Bindabun Tewaree Meer Jungoo Sheik Zumeeroodin
Singhbhum	:	Urjoon Singh (Arjun Singh, the Zemindar of Porahat), Boijonath Singh Koonwar
Lohardugga	:	Bishonath Sahee Juggutnath Sahee Gunput Roi
Patna	:	Peer Ali Khan Aosaf Hosein Gholam Abbas Jeetun Loll Ally Kureem
Sahabad	:	Koer Sing Ummer Sing Reethnuryun Sing Nishan Sing Hurkissen Sing
Bihar	:	Reaz Ally Khan Jeodhur Sing Rajah Hossein Bux Khan Rajah Mcndhee Ally Khan Rajah Hoormut Ally Khan

Sambalpur	:	**Soorunder Sahee**
		Oodut Sahee
		Dhoorup Sahee
		Oojjub Sahee
		Mednee Sahee
		Chubilo Sahee
		Jadub Sahee
		Mitterbhou Sahee
		Kurna
		Khugo Naik
		Duriao Sing
		Dhun Sing
		Huttee Sing
		Arjoon
		Chundoo
		Monmohum Sing
		Markund Burheya
		Dayal Sirdar
		Dunardun Sing
		Archito Gounteah
		Annut Sahee
		Kerpa Sindhoo Burheya
		Sodashib Manjhee
		Khugsur Deo
		Kumawal Sing
		Petamaber Sing Dewan
		Mohadeb Gurbantea
		Dhun Sing

Vide Parl. Papers. Vol. 44 Part IV of 1857-58. Further papers No. 9 (in continuation of no. 7) relative to the Insurrection in the East Indies. Inclosure 135 in No. 17. PP. 466-467. The spellings as found in the Parl. Papers have been retained. Besides the above-mentioned leaders of the Mutiny there were many others as mentioned below :

Allahabad	:	**Mv. Liaqat Ali**
Aligarh	:	**Rao Bhopal Singh**
		Mahtab Singh
		Mangal Singh
		Naism-ullah

		Muhammad Ghaus Khan Mahbub Khan Hasan Khan
Assam	:	Maniram Datta Madhu Mallik Piyali Barua
Bijnor	:	Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Naji-babad who proclaimed himself the Nawab of Bijnor
Bulandshahr	:	Walidad Khan
Delhi	:	Prince Feroze Shah
Gorakhpur	:	Rajas of Satasi, Narharpur, Barhiapar and Nagar, Muhammad Hasan
Gaya	:	Hyder Ali Khan Kosheal Singh
Hamirpur	:	Landlords of 'Mauza' Ramari, Subahdar Ali Bakhsh
Jubbulpur	:	Raja Shankar Shah Raghunath Shah
Jhansi	:	Rani Lakshmi Bai
Kanpur	:	Nana Saheb Tantia Tope Azimullah Jawala Prasad
Malhura	:	Debi Singh
Muzaffarnagar	:	Khairati Khan Qazi Mahbub Ali Inayat Ali
Moradabad	:	Abbas Ali Saiyad Gulzar Ali Majju Khan Asad Ali Khan Mv. Mannu
Oudh	:	Mv. Ahmad Shah Bande Husain

		Begum of Oudh
		Beni Madho
Patna	:	Waris Ali
		Luft Ali Khan
		Mv. Muhammad Hussain
		Mv. Waizul Huq
Palamau	:	Nilambar
		Pitambar
Rohilkhand	:	Khan Bahadur Khan
		Mobarik Shah
Saharanpur	:	Umrao Singh
Shahjahanpur	:	Mv. Sarfaraz Ali
		Kudrut Ali
		Niaz Ali
		Qadir Ali
		Ghulam Husain Khan
Sitapur (Oudh)	:	Raja of Mitauli
		Raja of Oel
Saugor and Narbada territories	:	Rajas of Banpur and Shahgarh
		Raja Shankar Shah
		Raghunath Shah
		Delun Shah

(From *The Sepoy Mutiny, 1857—A Social Study and Analysis* by HARAPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA, 1957)

2

THE HEROES OF 1857

By

M. Abel

ONE day, nearly three and a half centuries ago, when Jehangir, the Great Moghul Emperor, was seated with all his pomp and splendour on the glittering golden throne of the Moghul Empire in his resplendent court at Ajmer a messenger came and announced the arrival of Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador from the Court of St. James. As the courtiers were watching, the ambassador walked up to the throne and made obeisance to the Emperor, the plume of his hat touching the floor. Then, along with some appropriate presents, he handed over a letter to the Emperor. The Emperor glanced through the letter which contained a request from James I, the King of England, for opening trade relations between his country and the Moghul dominions. The Durbar rose for the day and a week later the ambassador received a letter from the Emperor in which the latter signified his assent to the request of the English sovereign.

Accordingly, in the course of a few years, the English East India Company established factories on the coasts of India. Unfortunately in the eighteenth-century the mighty Moghul Emperor shrank to an insignificant phantom, too powerless to control the course of events. Therefore, anarchy set in. During this chaotic period, when property became insecure, the Company's settlements were walled in and garrisoned. These well-fortified settlements soon attracted the

attention of the warring Princes of India who began to invoke the aid of the Company against their enemies. Therefore, the Company was drawn into alliances with one or another of the local states. As a result, within the short period of fifteen years from 1746 to 1761 British influence spread in India with an astonishing rapidity. Ever since the Battle of Plassey in 1757 the British power advanced steadily in India till 1803 when the ghost of the Moghul Empire was finally laid down and the remote successor of Akbar was reduced to the abject condition of a titular sovereign and pensioner of the East India Company. In the course of a century from 1757, the Company, ably assisted by the native sepoys, won Bengal and Bihar from the Satraps of the Moghuls, wrested Benaras and the delta of the Ganges from the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, expelled the Marathas from, the North-West Provinces, and acquired the Punjab.

At first all people acquiesced in the British supremacy as it inaugurated an era of peace and order after a long reign of strife and anarchy. But the techniques adopted by the British rulers to extend their sway throughout the length and breadth of India procreated seeds of resentment and discontent. Therefore as time went by, these seeds began to sprout in many parts of India. Lord Dalhousie's "Doctrine of Lapse" created a host of dethroned princes, and dispossessed widows and heirs whose emissaries began to move freely among the sepoys and undermine their loyalty by bribes, promises, and also by exposing the bad features of the foreign regime. The annexation of Oudh on the ground of maladministration set at large swarms of unemployed men of various ranks who converted the entire province of Oudh into a hotbed of conspiracy. The new revenue settlement antagonized the local chiefs who had been accustomed to ruling their estates as petty autocrats. All the disbanded soldiers of the deposed king of Oudh hung about the sepoys, instigating them to join in a general rising to expel the British. Nana Sahib, the dispossessed Peshwa's son, hated the Company as he was refused the pension which his father enjoyed. The young widowed Rani of Jhansi felt that she had been wronged by the Company's annexation of her little stale under the Doctrine of Lapse. The proposed removal of the Moghul Imperial family from their ancestral palace in Delhi to Kutub—an old royal residence near Delhi—roused

the most furious opposition, especially on the part of Begum Zenat Mahal, the favourite wife of the old king. Lord Dalhousie's refusal to recognise her son as the next successor to the imperial title added insult to injury. Thus Delhi was smarting under a sense of wrong and indignity. The spread of western ideas and the activities of the Christian missionaries among the native population provoked the devotees of the two prominent faiths of India to infect the sepoy mind with rebellious ideas. This general feeling of unrest expressed itself in the circulation of the mysterious chapattis from village to village and the red lotus-flowers among the sepoy regiments. Thus, a hundred years ago, India was like a huge magazine, waiting only for a spark to burst into flames.

On this inflammable material the story of the greased cartridges fell like a spark on a heap of dry hay. A rumour was set afloat that a new type of cartridge, greased with the fat of cows and pigs, was carried to the troops. As the fat of pigs was hateful to the Muhammadans and the fat of cows was abominable to the Hindus, the sepoy got very much excited over this. It was also noised abroad that bones of pigs and cows had been ground into powder, and thrown into the wells, and mixed with flour and butter. A report, started by political agitators, spread like wild fire among the native troops that the greased cartridge and the bone powder were part of a plot to destroy their caste and convert them to Christianity. These stories of sinister designs on the part of the English were sharpened by the grievances of the sepoys concerning the conditions and emoluments of their service. Consequently, the sepoys were wild with panic and indignation.

Evidence of the excitement of the sepoys was first manifested at Barrackpur. On the 29th of March, 1857, a Sunday afternoon, Mangal Pande, a sepoy belonging to the 34th Native Infantry came out with a loaded pistol and walked about the lines, calling upon his comrades to rise, and threatening to shoot the first European he should see. On hearing this, Lieutenant Baugh, the Adjutant, at once buckled on his sword, put loaded pistols in his holsters, mounted a horse and galloped to the parade-ground. As he neared the Quarter-guard, Mangal Pande took a deliberate aim at him and fired. He missed Baugh, but wounded the horse which immediately fell down. As the Adjutant was trying to disentangle himself from the fallen animal, the

sepoy inflicted a severe blow upon him with his sword. All this while, a guard of sepoys under a Jamadar stood by and did nothing. Thereupon the English Sergeant came up and tried to seize Mangal Pande ; but he too was struck down. At this moment General Hearsay appeared on the scene and rode straight at the rebel. The latter, seeing that his end was up, tried to shoot himself, but the wound did not prove fatal. Then he was taken to the hospital, and was eventually tried by a Court-Martial, sentenced to death and hanged in the presence of all the troops at Barrackpur. The regiment was disbanded, and the order of disbandment was read at every military station.

A few weeks after this incident a parade of the sepoy cavalry at Meerut had been ordered for the morning of the 6th of May, 1857. Eighty-five troopers of the regiment refused to receive the cartridges. They were immediately arrested for breach of discipline, tried by a Court-Martial and sentenced to various periods of rigorous imprisonment. The condemned mutineers were marched to the parade-ground on the 9th of May and there, in the presence of all regiments, were stripped of their uniforms and fetters were fastened on their ankles, and then they were escorted to the jail. This humiliating scene filled the Native infantry and cavalry regiments with indignation. At the same time they were smitten with a mad fear that the European soldiers would be let loose upon them. They decided to set free their eighty-five comrades whom they regarded as martyrs.

The next day was Sunday, the 10th of May. As the Europeans were getting ready for the evening service, the Native cavalry rode to the jail, broke into the cells, and released their comrades along with a host of jail birds. The two Native infantry regiments took the law into their own hands and the work of destruction then began in right earnest. People from the bazaars and the neighbouring villages poured forth in thousands from all directions to participate in the carnival of loot, murder and arson. All the houses of the European officers were burnt and gutted. Besides Colonel Finnis and other officers, every stray European—man, woman or child in the outskirts of the cantonment was massacred. The sepoys, having set on the populace to keep their English masters well occupied, and leaving behind them smouldering fires of their officers' houses and the lifeless bodies of their English victims, marched to Delhi under the cover of night.

They reached the Jamuna early on Monday morning, crossed it by the bridge of boats and entered the city, proclaiming that they had come to fight for the Faith. The rabble of Delhi soon joined the rebels who directly proceeded to the palace of Bahadur Shah, the puppet Moghul Emperor. The three Native infantry regiments and the battery of artillery, stationed at Delhi also threw in their lot with the mutineers. The revolt spread throughout the whole city. The work of murder and devastation went on throughout the day. The British in Delhi were taken by surprise; most of them were massacred; but a young telegraph lad had the presence of mind to wire a message to Lahore, while a young British soldier blew up the magazine in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the mutineers. By evening all was lost and the city of Delhi was in the hands of the insurgents. Bahadur Shah was placed on the throne of Delhi and proclaimed Badshah. Delhi became the centre and headquarters of the rebellion.

The seizure of the Moghul capital by the rebels was the prelude to a general revolt in Northern India. The movement spread rapidly over the North-West provinces and Oudh. Soon insurrections broke out in Benaras, Allahabad, Bareilly and other parts of the North-West provinces. Lord Canning, the Governor-General ordered Colonel Neill to proceed from Madras to Benaras. No sooner had Neill arrived in Benaras than he heard the news of disturbances at Azamgarh. Immediately Neill went there and put down the mutiny with an iron hand. He caused his military officers to hunt down criminals of all kinds and hang them up without any compunction. He erected a row of gallows on which he hanged mutineer after mutineer as they were brought in. When there were not enough gallows he converted mango trees into gibbets and the captured rebels were hung up by their tuft knots until they died. He dropped some natives from the backs of elephants and had them crushed under their feet. He even sentenced to death some young boys, who, in mere sport had gone about with flags of the rebels in their hands.

The mutiny of Benaras and the mercilessness with which it was crushed by Neill decreed the ordeal of Lucknow, the capital of Oudh. The flames of revolution raged over the entire province. Sir Henry Lawrence, the Commissioner of Oudh, anticipating the impending

danger, fortified and provisioned the Machchhi Bhavan and the Residency as well as he could to stand a siege. The sepoys broke out into rebellion on the 30th of May and began to burn down the bungalows and shoot their European officers. Then the insurgents besieged the Residency. On the fourth day of the siege Sir Henry Lawrence was mortally wounded. Yet the gallant defenders never lost heart, and continued the struggle. At last, after nearly three months, a relieving force came under Havelock, Outram and Neill. The mutineers tried in vain to repel it. The relieving force fought its way through the streets of Lucknow and reached the Residency. But Colonel Neill was shot dead while passing through a narrow lane. Then Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-chief, arrived in Oudh with a large and well-equipped force, and cutting his way into Lucknow, effected the relief of the Residency. The Begum of Oudh, the Nawab of Bareilly and Nana Sahib tried their utmost to instigate the mutineers to fresh exertions. But they were all, finally, defeated at Bareilly and driven out by Sir Colin. By the end of 1857 the province was cleared of all the insurgents and the broken remnant was driven across the frontier of Nepal.

The news of Meerut and Delhi reached Kanpur on the 14th of May, 1857. Sir Hugh Wheeler, the General in command of the station ordered all the Europeans into an entrenched position, which he had prepared to meet any emergency that might arise. Dhundu Pant, popularly known as Nana Sahib, the adopted son of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II, was residing at Bithor, about six miles from Kanpur. The Company had refused to award him the life pension of eighty thousand pounds sterling which had been granted to his nominal father. Therefore he was angry with the British. He had, however, successfully concealed his apathy and hatred for the British behind his professions of great love for European society and the luxurious hospitality which he generously extended to English officers. General Wheeler, therefore, posted Nana's men at the treasury when symptoms of revolution began to appear.

As things were at this stage, late at night on the 4th of June, 1857, the Native troops rebelled, fell upon the treasury and looted it. They also raided the prison and released the convicts. Then the sepoys elected Nana Sahib as their leader and asked him to lead them to Delhi. The same afternoon they marched seven miles to Kalyanpur

on the road to Delhi and there they halted. Nana Sahib persuaded the rebels to march back and besiege Kanpur. Accordingly they returned to Kanpur and Nana Sahib wrote to General Wheeler that he was going to attack the entrenchment. The siege went on for nineteen days, causing much suffering and bloodshed in the entrenchment. People were dying like rats in a cage.

At last Nana Sahib offered a safe passage to the British from Kanpur to Allahabad if they gave up resistance. The idea of capitulation was revolting to every soldier. But their ammunition and food supplies were almost exhausted. There was but one alternative to save the women and children, and that was to surrender. Therefore General Wheeler accepted Nana's offer. On the appointed day the British marched out from the entrenchment to the Ganges and embarked on country boats to go to Allahabad. But no sooner had the boats been pushed into the stream than a murderous fire of grape shot and musketry was opened upon the passengers from the banks of the river. The doomed occupants of the boats made frantic efforts to save themselves, but only four men, who swam down the river till they secured the protection of a friendly Raja living on the opposite bank, survived to tell the story of massacre.

After a few days, a force headed by Havelock, hastened to the relief of Kanpur. Nana Sahib marched against and met them in a pitched battle, but he was defeated and forced to retreat to Kanpur. Two days after this incident the British entered Kanpur and drove out Nana Sahib.

While these events were happening at Kanpur a British force was sent to Delhi. This was further strengthened by the reinforcements which arrived from the Punjab under Brigadier Nicholson. Gurkhas, Jammu troops, and some loyal regiments of the Company also co-operated with the British troops. Early in September 1857, siege guns arrived, drawn by elephants. On September 14, five columns stormed the city, effected a breach in the wall, and entered the fort. General Nicholson, the soul of the assault, fell mortally wounded at the head of the storming party. At last, on the 20th of September fighting stopped and Delhi was captured. The next day Bahadur Shah and his sons were taken prisoners. The latter were shot dead by Captain Hodson. Bahadur Shah was later on tried and being found guilty of

treason and murder, was exiled to Burma where he was kept as a state prisoner till his death.

Bihar also was one of the storm centres of 1857. The Danapur sepoys became restless ever since they heard the stories of Meerut and Benaras. The authorities, therefore, wanted to disarm, the suspected sepoys. But the sepoys refused to be disarmed and. opened fire on the European officers who tried to force them to lay down their arms. Then the rebel sepoys hurried to Arrah and placed themselves under Babu Kunwar Singh, the aged landowner of Jagdishpur. The sepoys plundered the treasury, let loose the convicts from the prison, and besieged the fort of Arrah. Major Vincent Eyre was sent to relieve Arrah who defeated Kunwar Singh and drove him from Arrah. Pursued by Eyre, Kunwar Singh retired to his ancestral castle of Jagdishpur. There also he was defeated and forced to flee. Then the victorious army entered the fort, hanged all the wounded sepoys and reduced the Jagdishpur Palace to ruins. The old lion then entrenched himself in the hills of Rhotas and started guerilla attacks upon the British forces that pursued him. From there he went to Lucknow and secured Azamgarh with the aid of Oudh rebels. But Kerr re-captured the city and forced Kunwar to return to Bihar, his home province. While he was crossing the Ganges he had one of his hands shattered by a cannon-ball. The old man immediately cut off the limb and threw it into the sacred river as his last offering. He reached Jagdishpur, defeated the British and re-occupied the city. But the hero did not survive long. The old lion died in his lair, a victor at last.

Rani Laxmi Bai raised the banner of revolt in Jhansi. Laxmi Bai was a lady of high character and was much respected by every one at Jhansi. She was born at Benaras to Moropant Tambe and Bhagirathi Bai who belonged to the personal retinue of Chimnaji Appa. Her real name was Manikarnika, but after her marriage with Gangadhar Rao, the ruler of Jhansi, she came to be known as Laxmi Bai, Gangadhar Rao died childless in 1854. The Rani wanted to adopt Damodar Rao as the heir to her deceased husband. But Lord Dalhousie refused to recognise this adoption and declared that Jhansi had lapsed to the paramount power of the British. When Major Ellis communicated to her the Government's decision to annex the state

she declared boldly in a ringing tone "Mera Jhansi Nahi Denge: I will not surrender my Jhansi."

The high-handed measure of the Governor-General transformed the Rani into a veritable tigress as far as the English were concerned. She was burning to be revenged for not having been entrusted with the adoption of a son, and the management of the little principality. Therefore when the sepoys at Jhansi mutineed on the 4th of June, 1857, she seized upon the opportunity and asked the Resident and other Englishmen to quit Jhansi. Then Laxmi Bai took the reins of administration into her own hands. But within a short while Sir Hugh Rose appeared before Jhansi and laid siege to the fort. On an appeal from the Rani, Nana Sahib sent Tatya Tope with twenty thousand men to relieve Jhansi, but Tatya was repulsed. Sir Hugh Rose followed up his victory, stormed the fortress and marched on to the palace. The Rani herself assumed the command of defence. The battle raged furiously from street to street, from house to house, and the defenders fought like tigers. But finally the resistance was broken and the rebels were driven from the city. The city was ruthlessly sacked by the victorious forces and many fell victims to the thirsting vengeance of the British soldiers. But the Rani escaped to Kalpi where she joined Nana and Tatya.

Sir Hugh Rose, without losing any time, marched upon Kalpi and worsted the rebels from their last strong-hold. From Kalpi the rebels rode to Gwalior and with the connivance of the Gwalior Regiment defeated Scindhia who was loyal to the British, and occupied the city. There they proclaimed Nana Sahib the Peshwa. But Sir Hugh Rose soon followed and besieged Gwalior. The rebel force was routed in the Battle of Gwalior and Rani Laxmi Bai died in the battle, fighting boldly to the last.

Tatya Tope, however, was a born general, and so extraordinary was his genius that he kept the British armies in perpetual movement against him for nine months. At last a cordon of hunters surrounded him. He was driven from pillar to post until ho took refuge in the Paron jungles. In April 1859, his hiding place was betrayed by Man Singh, Tatya's own comrade. At mid-night, on the 7th of April. Tatya was taken unawares as he slept, was arrested and hanged on the 18th of April, 1859. Tatya's master, Nana, after the fall of

Gwalior went to Lucknow from where he was driven into the forests of the Terai. No one knows what happened to him afterwards.

With the disappearance of Nana Sahib, Rani of Jhansi and Tatya Tope, the rebellion practically came to an end. That was the tragic end of the first great heroic attempt of the Indians to throw off the foreign yoke. Yet all was not in vain. The great example of sacrifice and suffering set by the Heroes of 1857 supplied a great source of inspiration, courage and strength.to the future fighters of freedom and independence.

(From author's *March to Freedom*, 1957)

3

ITS LEADERS

By

Ashoka Mehta

IT is the fate of all leaders of rebellion that if they succeed they arc hailed as statesmen, but if they fail they are traduced as criminals. The leaders of '1857' have been no exception to this rule. Sober history, however, discovers in them men of commanding stature, men who dared to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm. At first sight it appears as if they were flung up like a constellation from the abyss of dark night. Such a review is mistaken. The revolt was the result of long preparation and careful organization.

It is difficult to discover the parts, to disentangle the contributions, of different leaders in the organization of the rebellion. How the army was won over, how discordant elements were brought together and conflicting claims harmonized, we have today no means of knowing. The devices they employed to stir up mass interest and evoke enthusiasm—such as the circulation of the red lotus, the mysterious movements of *chapatis*—show them to be men of deep psychological insight.

In the organization of the rebellion, there is reason to believe that Nanasahib and Azimulla Khan played a leading part. Their tour just before the Mutiny of important stations of Northern India undoubtedly gave a fillip to, and forged closer links among the scattered nuclei of the revolt.

Nanasahib (1824—?) had, among the English, the reputation of bring an easy-going, soft-headed socialite. His parties were the talk of the town and his hospitality became more lavish as 1856 drew to its end. His breezy exterior however, hid a man of great shrewdness, boundless patience and grim determination. Though in preparation of the uprising Nanasahib had toured some provinces, and had sold out his investments in Government Paper and kept Rs. 50,00,000 in liquid cash, the Government had no inkling of his intentions, much less of his doings. It is noteworthy that, on the eve of the mutinous outbreak, Nanasahib was invited to Cawnpore by an English general and a British collector to guard the Government treasury. He was verily a prince among conspirators, and his name has become a legend. Behind his daring moves worked the subtle brain of Azimulla Khan.

Azimulla Khan had a romantic career—almost like a character from the *Arabian Nights*. He began life as a *khansama*. His perspicacity enabled him to turn even that humble position to advantage; he learnt from his European employers English and French. He ultimately rose to be the principal adviser of Nanasahib who sent him to England to plead the Peshwa's case before the Court of Directors. He was lionized in Mayfair, voted charming and witty by the titled ladies of London. He utilized his stay in England to assess the strength and weakness of the British; and he went to the Crimean front to form an estimate of their fighting capacity. Before returning to India, he tried to enlist Turkish and Afghan support for the Indian rebellion.

If Azimulla was a clever diplomat, Maulvi Ahmed Shah of Fyzabad was an outstanding organizer. He was an effective speaker and an able commander. It was his impassioned preaching—his lightning phrases—that enabled Oudh to spit out fire at the first spark of the Mutiny. Caught and condemned to death by the British Government, he was snatched from the gallows by the rebellion. From the cell of the condemned he stepped forth as the tribune of his people. Alike in peace and war, the Maulvi showed himself a dauntless and daring leader of men.

The military leaders of the revolt—Ahmed Shah, Kumar Singh, Tantia Tope and Laxmibai—lacked experience in the art of war. Arrayed against them were Britain's most seasoned generals. In open warfare, therefore, Indians were generally worsted by the English

commanders. The rebel leaders showed themselves at their best in guerilla warfare. With much originality, flexibility and daring they harried the British forces and kept for over two years (May 1857 to November 1859) parts of India in turmoil.

The strategy of the rebellion was based on guerilla tactics that hinged on surprise attacks. Capture of Government treasuries, release of prisoners and disruption of communications were systematically carried out. Eleven to twelve thousand prisoners were set free, crores of rupees were seized from Government treasuries, Railway lines and telegraph wires were among the principal targets of attack. Ranigunj, the railway terminus, was attacked immediately on the outbreak of the Mutiny, and nearly two thousand miles of telegraph wires were cut. Other methods of transport were rendered equally unsafe. Khan Bahadur Khan had, for instance, issued the following General Order :

"Do not attempt to meet the regular columns of the infidels, because they are superior to you in discipline and *bandobast* and have big guns; but watch their movements, guard all the *ghats* on the rivers, intercept their communications, stop their supplies, cut their *daks* and posts, and keep constantly hanging about their camps, give them no rest."

A contemporary British account shows how faithfully the plan was carried out :

"Never has the enemy been met without being routed, scattered, and his guns taken, but though constantly beaten he ever more rallies, and appears again ready for a fresh encounter. No sooner is one city taken or another relieved, than some other one is threatened..... No sooner is one district pronounced safe through the influx of British troops, than another is disturbed and convulsed. No sooner is a highway opened between places of importance, than it is again closed, and all communications for a year are cut off. No sooner are the mutineers, and rebels scoured out of one locality, than they reappear, with double or treble force, in another. No sooner does a mobile column force its way through hostile ranks, than they re-occupy the territory behind it. All gaps in the numbers of foes seem to be instantaneously filled up and no permanent clearance or impression appears anywhere to be made. The passage of our brave

little armies through these swarming myriads instead of leaving deep traces of a mighty ploughshare through a roughened field, seems more to resemble that of an eagle through the elastic air, or stately vessel through the un-furrowed ocean."[1]

The doyen of the guerilla fighters was Kumar Singh. In rapidity of movement and gallantry in action, he, notwithstanding his four-score years, eclipsed his younger colleagues. The decimation of Dunbar's army shows how devastating guerilla tactics could be in the Bihari's skilful hands. It was the glory of the intrepid old man to die under the flag of freedom in his beloved Jagdishpur cleared of British authority. He who had firmly saddled the steed of his body for the war of freedom rightly died in harness and the sword drawn in the cause of liberty never returned to the scabbard.

The military genius on the rebel side was Tantia Tope(1819?-59), a childhood friend and life-long companion of Nanasahib. In his blood flowed all the daring and cunning of his race; he was an heir to Shivaji's traditions, the last great bearer of the mighty mantle. His resourcefulness was a veritable talisman for the rebels.....From the nettle danger it often plucked for them the flower of safety. When all seemed lost it was his imaginative daring that put the rebels in possession of the kingdom of Gwalior with its treasury, army and historic fort. Alone among the rebel leaders, he succeeded in crossing the Narmada that separated the smouldering south from the blazing north. He kept the British armies racing after him over 3,000 miles for nine months, like a cat pursuing its tail! Swift-footed and nimble-witted, he proved more than a match for the veterans of the British army. Betrayed by an ally, he died a felon's death but with the martyr's nimbus. "Show my head to the people," well might he have said with Danton, "they don't see such a head every day!"

The most inspiring figure, the nation's immortal favourite, is the flame-like Laxmibai, Rani of Jhanai (1835-58). Brave and beautiful, she was wise beyond her years. When the Mutiny broke out, she hurried to the field.

"She snatched the spear and left the shield." She died fighting in man's garb, with a man's courage, sword in hand. She possessed

1. Duff, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

an iron will and a determination that knew no surrender. When her little principality was annexed, she had said: "*Mera Jhansi deungi nahin.*" She sealed that resolve with deathless heroism. Her amazing endurance and superb horsemanship are seen in her epic escape, after the fall of Jhansi, to Kalpi, a distance of 102 miles in twenty-four hours, evading and fighting her English pursuers. On the throne and on the battlefield she evoked allegiance and inspired heroism. She was the embodiment of the rebellion; its inspirer and architect; her name has passed into the legend, history and songs of our people. Her ardent soul has lit up with a quenchless flame the altar of liberty.

The real, though unsung, heroes of the rebellion were the two hundred thousand gallant sons of India who chose death to slavery. No monuments stand to enshrine their memory, no lamps are lighted, no wreaths offered, no bells ever toll for these unknown warriors. The rulers have sought to erase their memory, but they live in the heart of every true Indian.

> "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,
> At the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall
> remember them."

(From author's *1857—The Great Rebellion*, 1946)

4

MUNGUL PANDY

By

W. H. FITCHETT

THE scene is Barrackpore, the date March 29, 1857. It is Sunday afternoon; but on the dusty floor of the parade-ground a drama is being enacted which is suggestive of anything but Sabbath peace. The quarter-guard of the 34th Native Infantry—tall men, erect and soldierly, and nearly all high-caste Brahmins—is drawn up in regular order. Behind it chatters and sways and eddies a confused mass of Sepoys, in all stages of dress and undress; some armed, some unarmed; but all fermenting with excitement. Some thirty yards in front of the line of the 34th swaggers to and fro a Sepoy named Mungul Pandy. He is half-drunk with bhang, and wholly drunk with religious fanaticism. Chin in air, loaded musket in hand, ho struts backwards and forwards, at a sort of half-dance, shouting in shrill and nasal monotono, "Come out, you blackguards! Turn out, all of you! The English are upon us. Through biting these cartridges we shall all be made infidels!"

The man, in fact, is in that condition of mingled bhang and "nerves" which makes a Malay run amok; and every shout from his lips runs like a wave of sudden flame through the brains and along the nerves of the listening crowd of fellow-Sepoys. And as the Sepoys off duty come running up from every side, the crowd grows ever bigger, the excitement more intense, the tumult of chattering voices more passionate. A human powder magazine, in a word, is about to explode.

Suddenly there appears upon the scene the English adjutant, Lieutenant Baugh. A runner has brought the news to him as he lies in the sultry quiet of the Sunday afternoon in his quarters. The English officer is a man of decision. A saddled horse stands ready in the stable; he thrusts loaded pistols into the holsters, buckles on his sword, and gallops to the scene of trouble. The sound of galloping hoofs turns all Sepoy eyes up the road; and as that red-coated figure, the symbol of military authority, draws near, excitement through the Sepoy crowd goes up uncounted degrees. They arc about to witness a duel between revolt and discipline, between a mutineer and an adjutant!

Mungul Pandy has at least one quality of a good soldier. He can face peril coolly. Ho steadies himself, and grows suddenly silent. He stands in the track of the galloping horse, musket at shoulder, the man himself moveless as a bronze image. And steadily the Englishman rides down upon him! The Sepoy's musket suddenly flashes; the galloping horse swerves and stumbles; horse and man roll in the white dust of the road. But the horse only has been hit, and the adjutant struggles, dusty and bruised, from under the fallen beast, plucks a loaded pistol from the holster, and runs straight at the mutineer. Within ten paces of him he lifts his pistol and fires. There is a flash of red pistol-flame, a puff of white smoke, a gleam of whirling sword-blade. But a man who has just scrambled up, half-stunned, from a fallen horse, can scarcely be expected to shine as a marksman. Baugh has missed his man, and in another moment is himself cut down by Mungul Pandy's tulwar. At this sight a Mohammedan Sepoy—Mungul Pandy was a Brahmin—runs out and catches the uplifted wrist of the victorious Mungul. Here is one Sepoy, at least, who cannot look on and see his English officer slain—least of all by a cow-worshipping Hindu!

Again the sound of running feet is heard on the road. It is the English sergeant-major, who has followed his officer, and he, too—red of face, scant of breath, but plucky of spirit—charges straight at the mutinous Pandy, But a sergeant-major, stout and middle-aged, who has run in uniform three-quarters of a mile on an Indian road and under an Indian sun, is scarcely in good condition for engaging in a single combat with a bhang-madened Sepoy, and he, in turn, goes down under the mutineer's tulwar.

How the white teeth gleam, and the black eyes flash, through the crowd of excited Sepoys! The clamour of voices takes a new shrillness. Two sahibs are down before their eyes, under the victorious arm of one of their comrades! The men who form the quarter-guard of the 34th, at the orders of their native officer, run forward a few paces at the double, but they do not attempt to seize the mutineer. Their sympathies are with him. They halt; they sway to and fro. The nearest smite with the butt-end of their muskets at the two wounded Englishmen.

A cluster of British officers by this time is on the scene; the colonel of the 34th himself has come up, and naturally takes command. Ho orders the men of the quarter-guard to scize the mutineers, and is told by the native officer in charge that the men "will not go on." The colonel is, unhappily, not of the stuff of which heroes are made, He looks through his spectacles at Mungul Pandy: A six-foot Sepoy in open revolt, loaded muskot in hand— himself loaded more dangerously by fanaticism strongly flavoured with bhang—while a thousand excited Sepoys look on trembling with angry sympathy, does not make a cheerful spectacle. "I felt it useless," says the bewildered colonel, in his official report after the incident, "going on any further in the matter... It would have been a useless sacrifice of life to order a European officer of the guard to seize him... I left the guard and reported thc matter to the brigadier." Unhappy colonel! He may have had his red-tape virtues, but he was clearly not the man to suppress a mutiny. The mutiny, in a word, suppressed him! And let it be imagined how the spectacle of that hesitating colonel added a new clement of wondering delight to the huge crowd of swaying Sepoys.

At this moment General Hearsey, the brigadier in charge, rides on to the parade-ground: a red-faced, wrathful, hard-fighting, iron-nerved veteran, with two sons, of blood as warlike as their father's, riding behind him as aides. Hearsey, with quick military glance, takes in the whole scene—the mob of excited Sepoys, the sullen quarter-guard, the two red-coats lying in the road, and the victorious Mungul Pandy, musket in hand. As he rode up somebody called out, "Have a care; his musket is loaded." To which the General replied, with military brevity, "Damn his musket!" "An oath," says Trevelyan,

"concerning which every true Englishman will make the customary invocation to the recording angel."

Mungul Pandy covered the General with his musket. Hearscy found time to say to his son, "If I fall, John, rush In and put, him to death somehow." Then, pulling up his horse on the flank of the quarter-guard, he plucked a pistol from his holster, levelled it straight at the head of the native officer, and curtly ordered the men to advance and seize the mutineer. The level pistol, no doubt, had its own logic; but more effective than even tho steady and tiny tube was the face that looked from behind it, with command and iron courage in every line. That masterful British will instantly asserted itself. The loose line of the quarter-guard stiffened with instinctive obedience; the men stepped forward; and Mungul Pandy, with one unsteady glance at Hearsey's stern visage, turned with a quick movement the muzzle of his gun to his own breast, thrust his naked toe into the trigger, and fell, self-shot. He survived to be hanged, with due official ceremonies, scven days afterwards.

It was a true instinct which, after this, taught the British soldier to call every mutinous Sepoy a "Pandy." That incident at Barrackporo is really the history of the Indian Mutiny in little. All its elements are there: the bhang-stimulated fanaticism of the Sepoy, with its quick contagion, running through all Sopoy ranks; the hasty rush of the solitary officer, gallant, but ill-fated, a single man trying to suppress a regiment. Here, too, is the colonel of the 34th, who, with a cluster of regiments on the point of mutiny, decides that it is " useless" to face a dangerously excited Sepoy armed with a musket, and retires to "report" the business to his brigadier. He is the type of that failure of official nerve—fortunately very rare—which gave tho Mutiny its early successes. General Hearsey, again, with his grim "D——his musket!" supplies the example of that courage, swift, fierce, and iron-nerved, that in the end crushed the Mutiny and restored the British Empire in India.

The Great Mutiny, as yet, has found neither its final historian, nor its sufficient poet. What other nation can show in its record such a cycle of heroism as that which lies in the history of the British in India between May 10, 1857—the date of the Meerut outbreak, and the true beginning of the Mutiny—and November 1, 1858, when the

Queen's proclamation officially marked its close? But the heroes in that great episode—the men of Lucknow, and Delhi, and Arrah, the men who marched and fought under Havelock, who held the Ridge at Delhi under Wilson, who stormed the Alumbagh under Clyde—though they could make history, could not write it. There are a hundred " Memoirs," and " Journals," and " Histories " of the great revolt, but the Mutiny still waits for its Thucydides and its Napier. Trevelyan's " Cawnpore," it is true, will hold its readers breathless with its fire, and movement, and graphic force; but it deals with only one picturosquo and dreadful episode of the Great Mutiny. The " History of the Mutiny," by Kayō and Malleson, is laborious, honest, accurate; but no one can pretend that it is very readable. It has Kinglake's diffuseness without Kinglake's literary charm. The work, too, is a sort of literary duet of a very controversial sort. Colonel Malleson, from the notes, continually contradicts Sir John Kaye in the text, and he does it with a bluntness, and a diligence, which have quite a humorous effect.

Not only is the Mutiny without an historian. hut it remains without any finally convincing analysis of its causes. Justin McCarthy's summary of the causes of the Mutiny, as given in his "History of Our Own Times," is a typical example of wrong-headed judgment. Mr. McCarthy contemplates the Mutiny through the lens of his own politics, and almost regards it with complacency as a mere struggle for Home Rule! It was not a Mutiny, he says, like that at the Nore; it was a revolution, like that in France at the end of the eighteenth century. It was "a national and religious war," a rising of the many races of India against the too oppressive Saxon. The native princes were in it as well as the native soldiers.

The plain facts of the case are fatal to that theory. The struggle was confined to one Presidency out of three. Only two dynastic princes—Nana Sahib and the Ranee of Jhansi—-joined in the outbreak. The people in the country districts were passive; the British revenue, except over the actual field of strife, was regularly paid. If their own trained native soldiery turned against the British, other natives thronged in thousands to their flag. A hundred examples might be given where native loyalty and valour saved the situation for the English.

There were Sepoys on both sides of the entrenchment at Lucknow. Counting camp followers, native servants, etc.; there were two black faces to every white face under the British flag which fluttered so proudly over the historic Ridge at Delhi. The "protected" Sikh chiefs, by their fidelity, kept British authority from temporary collapse betwixt the Jumna and the Sutlej. They formed what Sir Richard Temple calls "a political breakwater," on which the fury of rebellious Hindustan broke in vain. The Chief of Pattiala employed 5000 troops in guarding the trunk road betwixt the Punjaub and Delhi, along which reinforcements and warlike supplies were flowing to tho British force on the Ridge, This enabled the whole strength of the British to be concentrated on the siege. The Chief of Jhind was the first native ruler who appeared in the field with an armed force on the British side, and his troops took part in the final assault on Delhi. Golab Singh sent from his principality, stretching along the foot of the Himalayas, strong reinforcements to the British troops besieging Delhi. "The sight of these troops moving against the mutineers in the darkest hour of British fortunes produced," says Sir Richard Temple, "a profound moral effect on the Punjab."

If John Lawrence had to disband or suppress 36,000 mutinous Sepoys in the Punjaub, he was able to enlist from Grhoorkas and Sikhs and, the wild tribes on the Afghan borders more than another 36,000 to take their places. He fed the scanty and gallant, force which kept the British flag flying before Delhi with an ever-flowing stream of native soldiers of sufficient fidelity. At the time of the Mutiny there were 38,000 British soldiers in a population of 180,000,000. If the Mutiny had been indeed a "national" uprising, what chances of survival would the handful of British have had?

It is quite true that the Mutiny, in its later stages, drew to itself political forces, and took a political aspect. The Hindu Sepoy, says Herbert Edwardes, "having mutinied about a cartridge, had nothing to propose for an Empire, and fell in, of necessity, with the only policy which was feasible at the moment, a Mohammedan king of Delhi. And so, with a revived Mogul dynasty at its head, the Mutiny took the form of a struggle between the Moslem and the Christian for empire, and this agitated every village in which there was a mosque or a mollah." But the emergence of the Mogul dynasty in the struggle was an afterthought, not to say, an accident. The old

king at Delhi, discrowned and almost forgotten, was caught up by the mutineers as a weapon or a flag.

The outbreak was thus, at the beginning, a purely military mutiny; but its complexion and character later on were affected by local circumstances. In Oude, for example, the Mutiny was welcomed, as it seemed to offer those dispossessed by the recent annexation, a chance of revenge. At Delhi it found a centre in the old king's palace, an inspiration in Mohammedan fanaticism, and a nominal leader in the representative of the old Mogul dynasty. So the Mutiny grow into a new struggle for empire on the part of some of the Mohammedan princes.

Many of the contributing causes of the Mutiny are clear enough. Discipline had grown perilously lax throughout Bengal; and the Bengal troops were, of all who marched under the Company's flag, the most dangerous when once they got out of hand. They consisted mainly of high-caste Brahmins and Rajpoots. They burned with caste pride. They were of incredible arrogance. The regiments, too, were made up largely of members of the same clan, and each regiment had its own complete staff of native officers. Conspiracy was easy in such a body. Secrets were safe. Interests and passions were common. "When the British officers had all been slaughtered out, the regiment, as a fighting machine, was yet perfect. Each regiment was practically a unit, knit together by ties of common blood, and speech, and faith, ruled by common superstitions, and swayed by common passions.

The men had the petulance and the ignorance of children. They believed that the entire population of England consisted of 100,000 souls. When the first regiment of Highlanders landed, the whisper ran across the whole Presidency, that there were no more men in England, and that, in default of men, the women had been sent out! Later on, says Trevelyan, the native mind evolved another theory to explain the Highlanders' kilts. They wore petticoats, it was whispered, as a public and visible symbol that their mission was to take vengeance for the murder of English ladies.

Many causes combined to enervate military discipline. There had been petty mutinies again and again, unavenged, or only half avenged. Mutineers had been petted, instead of being shot or hanged. Lord Dalhousie had weakened the despotic authority of the commanding

officers, and had taught the Sepoy to appeal to the Government against his officers.

Now the Sepoy has one Celtic quality: his loyalty must have a personal object. He will endure, or even love, a despot, but it must be a despot ho can see and hear. He can be ruled; but it must be by a person, not by a "system." When the commander of a regiment of Sepoys ceased to be a despot, the symbol and centre of all authority, and became only a knot in a line of official red tape, he lost the respect of his Sepoys, and the power to control them. Said Rajah Maun Singh, in a remarkable letter to the Talookdars of his province: "There used to be twenty to twenty-five British officers to every 1000 men, and these officers were subordinate to one single man. But nowadays there are 1000 officers and 1000 kings among 1000 men: the men are officers and kings themselves, and when such is the case there are no soldiers to fight."

Upon this mass of armed men, who had lost the first of soldierly habits, obedience, and who were fermenting with pride, fanaticism, and ignorance, there blew what the Hindus themselves called a "Devil's wind," charged with a thousand deadly influences. The wildest rumours ran from barracks to barracks. One of those mysterious and authorless predictions which run before, and sometimes cause, great events was current. Plassey was fought in 1757; the English raj, the prediction ran, would last exactly a century; so 1857 must see its fall. Whether the prophecy was Hindu or Mohammedan cannot be decided; but it had been current for a quarter of a century, and both Hindu and Mohammedan quoted it and believed it. As a matter of fact, the great Company did actually expire in 1857!

Good authorities hold that the greased cartridges were something more than the occasion of the Mutiny; they were its supreme producing cause. The history of the greased cartridges may be told almost in a sentence. "Brown Bess" had grown obsolete; the new rifle, with its grooved barrel, needed a lubricated cartridge, and it was whispered that the cartridge was greased with a compound of cow's fat and swine's fat, charged with villainous theological properties. It would destroy at once the caste of the Hindu, and the ceremonial purity of the Mohammedan ! Sir John Lawrence declares that "the proximate cause of the Mutiny was the cartridge affair,

and nothing else." Mr. Lecky says that "recent researches have fully proved that the real, as well as the ostensible, cause of the Mutiny was the greased cartridges." He adds, this is "a shameful and terrible fact." The Sepoys, he apparently holds, were right in their belief that in the grease that smeared the cartridges was hidden a conspiracy against their religion! "If mutiny," Mr. Lecky adds, "was ever justifiable, no stronger justification could be given than that of the Sepoy troops,"

But is this accusation valid? That the military authorities really designed to inflict a religious wrong on the Sepoys in the matter of the cartridges no one, of course, believes. But there was, undoubtedly, much of heavy-handed clumsiness in the official management of the business. As a matter of fact, however, no greased cartridges were actually issued to any Sepoys. Some had been sent out from England, for the purpose of testing them under the Indian climate; largo numbers had been actually manufactured in India; but the Sepoys took the alarm early, and none of the guilty cartridges were actually issued to the men. "From first to last," says Kaye, "no such cartridges were ever issued to the Sepoys, save, perhaps, to a Ghoorka regiment, at their own request."

When once, however, the suspicions of the Sepoys were, rightly or wrongly, aroused, it was impossible to soothe them. The men were told that they might grease the cartridges themselves; but the paper in which the new cartridges were wrapped had now, to alarmed Sepoy eyes, a suspiciously greasy look, and the men refused to handle it.

The Sepoy conscience was, in truth, of very eccentric sensitiveness. Native hands made up tho accused cartridges without concern; the Sepoys themselves used them freely—when they could get them—against the British after the Mutiny broke out. But a fanatical belief on the part of the Sepoys, that these particular cartridges concealed in their greasy folds a dark design against their religion, was undoubtedly the immediate occasion of the Great Mutiny. Yet it would be absurd to regard this as its single producing cause. In order to assert this, we must forget all the other evil forces at work to produce the eataclysm: the annexation of Oude; the denial of the sacred right of "adoption" to the native princes; the decay of discipline in the Sepoy ranks; the loss of reverence for their officers by the men, etc.

The Sepoys, it is clear, were, on many grounds, discontented with the conditions of their service. The keen, brooding, and somewhat melancholy genius of Henry Lawrence foresaw the coining trouble, and fastened on this as one of its causes. In an article written in March 1856, he says that the conditions of the Indian Army denied a career to any native soldier of genius, and this must put the best brains of the Sepoys in quarrel with the British rule. Ninety out of every hundred Sepoys, he said in substance, are satisfied; but the remaining ten are discontented, some of them to a dangerous degree; and the discontented ten were the best soldiers of the hundred ! But, as it happened, the Mutiny threw up no native soldier of genius, except, perhaps, Tantia Topee, who was *not* a Sepoy !

"The salt water" was undoubtedly amongst the minor causes which provoked the Mutiny. The Sepoys dreaded the sea; they believed they could not cross it without a fatal loss of caste, and the new form of military oath, which made the Sepoy liable for over-sea service, was believed, by the veterans, to extend to them, even though they had not taken it: and so the Sepoy imagination was disquieted.

Lord Dalhousie's over-Anglicised policy, it may be added, was at once too liberal, and too impatient, for the Eastern mind, with its obstinacy of habit, its hatred of change, its easily-roused suspicioasness. As Kaye puts it, Lord Dalhousie poured his new wine into old bottles, with too rash a hand. "The wine was good wine, strong wine, wine to gladden the heart of man;" but poured into such ancient and shrunken bottles too rashly, it was fatal. It was because we were "too English," adds Kaye, that the great crisis arose; and "it was only because we were English that, when it arose, it did not overwhelm us." We trod, in a word, with heavy-footed British clumsiness on the historic superstitions, the ancient habitudes of the Sepoys, and so provoked them to revolt. But the dour British character, which is at the root of British clumsiness, in the end, overbore the revolt.

The very virtues of the British rule, thus proved its peril. Its cool justice, its steadfast enforcement of order, its tireless warfare against crime, made it hated of all the lawless and predatory classes. Every native who lived by vice, chafed under a justice which might

be slow and passionless, but which could not be bribed, and in the long-run could not be escaped.

Some, at least, of the dispossessed princes, diligently fanned these wild dreams and wilder suspicions which haunted the Sepoy mind, till it kindled into a flame. The Sepoys were told they had conquered India for the English; why should they not now conquer it for themselves? The chupatties—mysterious signals, coming whence no man knew, and moaning, no man could tell exactly what—passed from village to village. Usually with the chupatti ran a message—"Sub lal hojaega" ("everything will become red")—a Sibylline annquncement, which might be accepted as a warning against the too rapid spread of the English raj, or a grim prediction of universal bloodshed. "Whence the chupatties came, or what they exactly meant, is even yet a matter of speculation. The one thing certain is, they were a storm signal, not very intelligible, perhaps, but highly effective.

That there was a conspiracy throughout Bengal for the simultaneous revolt of all Sepoys on May 31, cannot be doubted, and, on the whole, it was well for the English raj that the impatient troopers broke out at Meerut before the date agreed upon.

Sir Richard Temple, whose task it was to examine the ex-king of Delhi's papers after the capture of the city, found amongst them an immense number of letters and reports from leading Mohammedans—priests and others. These letters glowed with fanatical fire. Temple declared they convinced him that "Mohammedan fanaticism is a volcanic agency, which will probably burst forth in eruptions from time to time." But were Christian missions any source of political peril to British rule in India? On this point John Lawrence's opinion ought to be final. He drafted a special despatch on the subject, and Sir Richard Temple, who was then his secretary, declares he "conned over and over again every paragraph as it was drafted." It represented his final judgment on the subject. He held that "Christian things done in a Christian way could never be politically dangerous in India." While scrupulously abstaining from interference in the religions of tho people, the Government, he held, "should be more explicit than before "—not less explicit—" in avowing its Christian character."

The explanation offered by the aged king of Delhi, is terse, and has probably as much of truth as more lengthy and philosophical theories. Colonel Vibart relates how, after the capture of Delhi, he went to see the king, and found him sitting cross-legged on a native bedstead, rocking himself to and fro. He was "a small and attenuated old man, apparently between eighty and ninety years of age, with a long white beard, and almost totally blind." Some one asked the old king what was the real cause of the outbreak at Delhi. "I don't know," was the reply; "I suppose my people gave themselves up to the devil!"

The distribution of the British forces in Bengal, in 1857, it may be noted, made mutiny easy and safe. We have learned the lesson of thc Mutiny today, and there are now 74,000 British trcops, with 88 batteries of British artillery, in India, while the Sepoy regiments number only 150,000, with 13 batteries of artillery. But in 1857, the British garrison had sunk to 38,000, while tho Sepoys numbered 200,000. Most of the artillery was in native hands. In Bengal itself, it might almost be said, there were no British troops, the bulk of them being garrisoned on the Afghan or Pegu frontiers. A map showing tho distribution of troops on May 1, 1857—Sepoys in black dots, and British in red—is a thing to meditate over, Such a map is pustuled with black dots, an inky way stretching from Cabul to Calcutta; while the red points gleam faintly, and at far-stretched intervals.

All the principal cities were without European troops. There were none at Delhi, none at Benares, none at Allahabad. In the whole province of Oudo there was only one British battery of artillery. The treasuries, the arsenals, the roads of the North-West Provinces, might almost be said to be wholly in the hands of Sepoys. Betwixt Meerut and Dinapore, a stretch of 1200 miles, there were to be found only two weak British regiments. Never was a prize so rich held with a hand so slack and careless! It was the evil fate of England, too, that when the storm broke, sonie of the most important posts were in the hands of men paralysed by mere routine, or in whom soldierly fire had been quenched by the chills of old age.

Of the deeper sources of the Mutiny, John Lawrence held, that the great numerical preponderance of the Sepoys in the military forces holding India, was the chief. "Was it to be expected," he asked, "that the native soldiery, who had charge of our fortresses, arsenals,

magazines, and treasuries, without adequate European control, should fail to gather extravagant ideas of their own importance?" It was the sense of power that induced them to rebel. The balance of numbers, and of visible strength, seemed to be overwhelmingly with them.

Taken geographically, the story of the Mutiny has three centres, and may be covered by the tragedy of Cawnpore, the assault on Delhi, and the heroic defence and relief of Lucknow. Taken in order of time, it has three stages. The first stretches from the outbreak at Meerut in May to the end of September. This is the heroic stage of the Mutiny. No reinforcements had arrived from England during these months. It was the period of the massacres, and of the tragedy of Cawnpore. Yet during those months Delhi was stormed, Cawnpore avenged, and Havelock made his amazing march; punctuated with daily battles, for the relief of Luck-now. The second stage extends from October 1857, to March 1858, when British troops were poured upon the scene of action, and Colin Campbell recaptured Lucknow, and broke the strength of the revolt. The third stage extends to the close of 1858, and marks the final suppression of the Mutiny.

The story, with its swift changes, its tragical sufferings, its alternation of disaster and triumph, is a warlike epic, and might rather be sung in dithyrambic strains, than told in cold and halting prose, If some genius could do for the Indian Mutiny what Napier has done for the Peninsular War, it would be the most kindling bit of literature in tho English language. What a demonstration the whole story is, of the Imperial genius of the British race! "A nation," to quote Hodson—himself one of the most brilliant actors in the great drama—"which could conquer a country like the Punjaub, with a Hindoostanee army, then turn the energies of the conquered Sikhs to subdue the very army by which they were tamed; which could fight out a position like Peshawur for years, in the very teeth of the Afghan tribes; and then, when suddenly deprived of the regiments which effected this, could unhesitatingly employ those very tribes to disarm and quell those regiments when in mutiny—a nation which could do this, is destined indeed to rule the world !"

These sketches do not pretend to be a reasoned and adequate "history " of the Mutiny. They are, as their title puts it, the "Tale" of the Mutiny—a simple chain of picturesque incidents, and, for the

sake of dramatic completeness, the sketches are grouped round the three heroic names of the Mutiny —Cawnporc, Lucknow, and Delhi. Only the chief episodes in the great drama can be dealt with in a space so brief, and they will be told in simple fashion as tales, which illustrate the soldierly daring of the men, and the heroic fortitude of the women, of our race.

On the evening of May 10, 1857, the church bells were sounding their call to prayer across the parade-ground, and over the roofs of the cantonment at Meerut. It had been a day of fierce heat; the air had scorched like a white flame; all day long fiery winds had blown, hot as from the throat of a seven times heated furnace. The tiny English colony at Meerut—languid women, white-faced children, and officers in loosest undress—panted that long Sunday in their houses, behind the close blinds, and under the lazily swinging punkahs. But the cool night had come, the church bells were ringing, and in the dusk of evening, officers and their wives were strolling or driving towards the church. They little dreamed that the call of the church bells, as it rose and sank over the roofs of the native barracks, was, for many of them, the signal of doom. It summoned the native troops of Meerut to revolt: it marked the beginning of the Great Mutiny.

Yet the very last place, at which an explosion might have been expected, was Meerut. It was the one post in the north-west where the British forces were strongest. The Rifles were there, 1000 strong; the 6th Dragoons (Carabineers), 600 strong; together with a fine troop of horse artillery, and details of various other regiments. Not less, in a word, than 2200 British troops, in fair, if not, in first-class, fighting condition, were at the station, while the native regiments at Meerut, horse and foot, did not reach 3000. It did not need a Lawrence or a Havelock at Meerut to make revolt impossible, or to stamp it instantly and fiercely out if it were attempted. A stroke of very ordinary soldiership might have accomplished this; and in that event, the Great Mutiny itself might have been averted.

The general in command at Meerut, however, had neither energy nor resolution. He had drowsed and nodded through some fifty years of routine service, rising by mere seniority. He was now old, obese, indolent, and notoriously incapable. He had agreeable manners, and a soothing habit of ignoring disagreeable facts. Lord Melbourne's favourite question, "Why can't you leave it alone?" represented

General Hewitt's intellect. These are qualities dear to the official mind, and explain General Hewitt's rise to high rank, but they are not quite the gifts needed to suppress a mutiny. In General Hewitt's case, the familiar fable of an army of lions commanded by an ass, was translated into history once more.

On the evening of May 5 cartridges were being served out for the next morning's parade, and eighty-five men of the 3rd Native Cavalry refused to receive or handle them, though they were the old familiar greased cartridges, not the new, in whose curve, as we have seen, a conspiracy to rob the Hindu of his caste, and the Mohammedan of his ceremonial purity, was vehemently suspected to exist. The men were tried by a court-martial of fifteen native officers—six of them being Mohammedans and nine Hindus—and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

At daybreak on the 9th, the whole military force of the station was assembled to witness the military degradation of the men. The British, with muskets and cannon loaded, formed three sides of a hollow square; on the fourth were drawn up the native regiments, sullen, agitated, yet overawed by the sabres of the Dragoons, the grim lines of the steady Rifles, and the threatening muzzles of the loaded cannon. The eighty-five mutineers stood in the centre of the square.

One by one the men were stripped of their uniform—adorned in many instances with badges and medals, the symbols of proved courage and of ancient fidelity. One by one, with steady clang of hammer, the fetters were riveted on the limbs of the mutineers, while white faces and dark faces alike looked on. For a space of time, to be reckoned almost by hours, the monotonous beat of the hammer rang over the lines, steady as though frozen into stone, of the stern British, and over the sea of dark Sepoy faces that formed the fourth side of the square. In the eyes of these men, at least, the eighty-five manacled felons were martyrs.

The parade ended; the dishonoured eighty-five marched off with clank of chained feet to the local gaol. But that night, in the huts and round the camp fires of all the Sepoy regiments, the whispered talk was of mutiny and revenge. The very prostitutes in the native bazaars with angry scorn urged them to revolt. The men took fire. To wait for the 31st, the day fixed for simultaneous mutiny

throughout Bengal, was too sore a trial for their patience. The next day was Sunday; the Sahibs would all be present at evening service in the church; they would be unarmed. So the church bells that called the British officers to prayer, should call their Sepoys to mutiny.

In the dusk of that historic Sabbath evening, as the church bells awoke, and sent their pulses of clangorous sound over the cantonment, the men of the 3rd Native Cavalry broke from their quarters, and in wild tumult, with brandished sabres and cries of "Deen! Deen!" galloped to the gaol, burst open the doors, and brought back in triumph the eighty-five "martyrs." The Sepoy infantry regiments, the 11th and 20th, ran to their lines, and fell into rank under their native officers. A British sergeant, running with breathless speed, brought the news to Colonel Finnis of the 11th. "For God's sake, sir," he said, "fly! The men have mutinied."

Finnis, a cool and gallant veteran, was the last of men to "fly." He instantly rode down to the lines. The other British officers gathered round him, and for a brief space, with orders, gesticulations, and appeals, they held the swaying regiments steady, hoping every moment to hear the sound of the British dragoons and artillery sweeping to the scene of action. On the other side of the road stood the 20th Sepoys. The British officers there also, with entreaties and remonstrances and gestures, were trying to keep the men in line. For an hour, while the evening deepened, that strange scene, of twenty or thirty Englishmen keeping 2000 mutineers steady, lasted: and still there was no sound of rumbling guns, or beat of trampling hoofs, to tell of British artillery and sabres appearing on the scene. The general was asleep, or indifferent, or frightened, or helpless through sheer want of purpose or of brains!

Finnis, who saw that the 20th were on the point of breaking loose, left his own regiment, and rode over to help its officers. The dusk by this time had deepened almost into darkness. A square, soldierly figure, only dimly seen, Finnis drew bridle in front of the sullen line of the 20th, and leaned over his horse's neck to address the men. At that moment a fiercer wave of excitement ran across the regiment. The men began to call out in the rear ranks. Suddenly the muskets of the front line fell to the present, a dancing splutter of flame swept irregularly along the front, and Finnis fell, riddled with bullets. The Great Mutiny had begun !

The 11th took fire at the sound of the crackling muskets of the 20th. They refused, indeed, to shoot their own officers, but hustled them roughly off the ground. The 20th, however, by this time were shooting at every white face in sight. The 3rd Cavalry galloped on errands of arson and murder to the officers' houses. Flames broke out on every side. A score of bungalows were burning. The rabble in the bazaar added themselves to the mutineers, and shouts from the mob, the long-drawn-out splutter of venomous musketry, the shrieks of flying victims, broke the quiet of the Sabbath evening.

Such of the Europeans in Meerut that night as could make their escape to the British lines were safe; but for the rest, every person of European blood who fell into the hands of the mutineers or of the bazaar rabble was slain, irrespective of age or sex. Brave men were hunted like rats through the burning streets, or died, fighting for their wives and little ones. English women were outraged and mutilated. Little children were impaled on Sepoy bayonets, or hewn to bits with tulwars. And all this within rifleshot of lines where might have been gathered, with a single bugle-blast, some 2200 British troops!

General Hewitt did, indeed, very late in the evening march his troops on to the general parade-ground, and deployed them into line. But the Sepoys had vanished; some on errands of murder and rapine, the great body clattering off in disconnected groups along the thirty odd miles of dusty road, barred by two rivers, which led to Delhi.

One trivial miscalculation robbed the outbreak of what might well have been its most disastrous feature. The Sepoys calculated on finding the Rifles, armed only with their side-arms, in the church. But on that very evening, by some happy chance, the church parade was fixed for half-an-hour later than the previous Sunday. So the Native Cavalry galloped down to the lines of the Rifles half-an-hour too soon, and found their intended victims actually under arms! They wheeled off promptly towards the gaol; but the narrow margin of that half-hour saved the Rifles from surprise and slaughter.

Hewitt had, as we have seen, in addition to the Rifles, a strong troop of horse artillery and 600 British sabres in hand. He could have pursued the mutineers and cut them down ruthlessly in detail The gallant officers of the Carabineers pleaded for an order to pursue, but in vain. Hewitt did not even send news to Delhi of the revolt!

With a regiment of British rifles, 1000 strong, standing in line, he did not so much as shoot down, with one fierce and wholesome volley, the budmashes, who were busy in murder and outrage among the bungalows. When day broke Meerut showed streets of ruins blackened with fire, and splashed red with the blood of murdered Englishmen and Englishwomen. According to the official report, "groups of savages were actually seen gloating over the mangled and mutilated remains of their victims." Yet Hewitt thought he satisfied all the obligations of a British soldier by peacefully and methodically collecting tho bodies of slaughtered Englishmen and Englishwomen. He did not shoot or hang a single murderer!

It is idle, indeed, to ask what the English at Meerut did on the night of the 10th; it is simpler to say what they did not do. Hewitt did nothing that night; did nothing with equal diligence the next day —while the Sepoys that had fled from Meerut were slaying at will in the streets of Delhi. He allowed his brigade, in a helpless fashion, to bivouac on the parade-ground; then, in default of any ideas of his own, took somebody else's equally helpless advice, and led his troops back to their cantonments to protect them!

General Hewitt explained afterwards that while he was responsible for the district, his brigadier, Archdale Wilson, was in command of the station. Wilson replied that "by the regulations, Section XVII.," he was under the directions of General Hewitt, and, if he did nothing, it was because that inert warrior ordered nothing to be done. Wilson, it seems, advised Hewitt not to attempt any pursuit, as it was uncertain which way the mutineers had gone. That any attempt might be made to dispel that uncertainty did not occur, apparently, to either of the two surprising officers in command at Meerut! A battery of galloper guns outside the gates of Delhi might have saved that city. It might, indeed, have arrested the Great Mutiny.

But all India waited, listening in vain for the sound of Hewitt's cannon. The divisional commander was reposing in his arm-chair at Meerut; his brigadier was contemplating "the regulations Section XVII.," and finding there reasons for doing nothing, while mutiny went unwhipped at Meerut, and was allowed at Delhi to find a home, a fortress, and a crowned head! It was rumoured, indeed, and believed for a moment, over half India, that the British in Meerut

had perished to a man. How else could it be explained that, at a crisis so terrible, they had vanished so completely from human sight and hearing? Not till May 24—a fortnight after the outbreak—did a party of Dragoons move out from Meerut to suppress some local plunderers in the neighbourhood.

One flash of wrathful valour, it is true, lights up the ignominy of this story. A native butcher was boasting in the bazaar at Meerut how he had killed the wife of the adjutant of the 11th. One of the officers of that regiment heard the story. He suddenly made his appearance in the bazaar, seized the murderer, and brought him away a captive, holding a loaded pistol to his head. A drum-head court-martial was improvised, and the murderer was promptly hanged. But this represents well-nigh the only attempt made at Meerut during the first hours after the outbreak to punish the mutiny and vindicate law.

Colonel Mackenzie, indeed, relates one other incident of a kind to supply a grim satisfaction to the humane imagination even at this distance of time. Mackenzie was a subaltern in one of the revolting regiments—the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry. When the mutiny broke out he rode straight to the lines, did his best to hold the men steady, and finally had to ride for his life with two brother officers, Lieutenant Craigie and Lieutenant Clarke. Here is Colonel Mackenzie's story. The group, it must be remembered, were riding at a gallop.

> The telegraph lines were cut, and a slack wire, which I did not see, as it swung across the road, caught me full on the chest, and bowled me over into the dust. Over my prostrate body poured the whole column of our followers, and I well remember my feelings as I looked up at the shining hoofs. Fortunately I was not hurt, and regaining my horse, I remounted, and soon nearly overtook Craigie and Clarke, when I was horror-struck to see a palanquin-gharry—a sort of box-shaped venetian-sided carriage— being dragged slowly onwards by its driverless horse, while beside it rode a trooper of the 3rd Cavalry, plunging his sword repeatedly through the open window into the body of its already dead occupant—an unfortunate European woman. But Nemesis was upon the murderer. In a moment Craigie had dealt him a swinging cut across the back of the neck, and Clarke had run him through the body. The wretch fell dead, the first Sepoy victim at Meerut to the sword of the avenger of blood.

For the next few weeks Hewitt was, probably, the best execrated man in all India. We have only to imagine what would have happened if a Lawrence, instead of a Hewitt, had commanded at Meerut that night, to realise for how much one fool counts in human history. That Hewitt did not stamp out mutiny or avenge murder in Meerut was bad; his most fatal blunder was, that he neither pursued the mutineers in their flight to Delhi, nor marched hard on their tracks to the help of the little British colony there.

Lord Roberts, indeed, holds that pursuit would have been "futile," and that no action by the British commanders at Meerut could have saved Delhi; and this is the judgment, recorded in cold blood nearly forty years afterwards, by one of the greatest of British soldiers. Had the Lord Roberts of Candahar, however, been in command himself at Meerut, it may be shrewdly suspected the mutineers would not have gone unpursued, nor Delhi unwarned! Amateur judgments are not, of course, to be trusted in military affairs; but to the impatient civilian judgment, it seems as if the massacres in Delhi, the long and bitter siege, the whole tragical tale of the Mutiny, might have been avoided if Hewitt had possessed one thrill of the fierce energy of Nicholson, or one breath of the proud courage of Havelock.

(From author's *The Tale of the Great Mutiny*, 1901)

5

THE MAN OF DESTINY

By

Dharm Pal

Tatya Tope's Plan

After the loss of Cawnpore on July 16 the Nana along with Tatya Tope, his military adviser, and other supporters escaped to Fatehpur Churasi in Oudh. The greater portion of the troops in Cawnpore escaped to Oudh and helped to swell the nationalist force engaged in the siege of the Lucknow Residency. It was apparent that Havelock would make an earnest effort to relieve the Residency. Tatya Tope's plan was therefore to collect a large force at Bithur and recapture Cawnpore, while the British force was engaged in the operations for the relief of the Residency. It was an admirable plan and showed that Tatya Tope was a great strategist. Unfortunately the plan could not be successfully implemented because the assumption on which it was based proved to be wrong. Tatya Tope calculated that the British force would be kept engaged by the nationalist troops in Lucknow sufficiently long to enable him to launch the attack on Cawnpore. Unfortunately Havelock refused to swallow the bait and frightened by the tough resistance which he encountered, he beat a hasty retreat and was thus back in Cawnpore before Tatya Tope was prepared to attack it. Tatya Tope had by that time been able to build up a strong force of 4,000 men consisting of the sepoys of the three Bengal Infantry Regiments—the 17th, the 42nd and the 31st. The Cavalry consisted of troopers of the 2nd Light Cavalry and the

3rd Irregulars. In addition there was a portion of the Nana's troops. With this force and two guns Tatya Tope took possession of Bithur and prepared to strike a blow for the recovery of Cawnpore. But before Tatya Tope could carry out his plan Havelock returned to Cawnpore resolved to destroy his force. To understand clearly why Havelock unexpectedly returned to Cawnpore (thus upsetting Tatya Tope's plan) instead of pushing on boldly for the relief of the Residency it is necessary to bear in mind the difficulties which he had to encounter.

Bravery of the Oudh Gunners

After capturing Cawnpore on July 17 Havelock waited for fresh reinforcements before resuming his advance on Lucknow. Three days later Brigadier-General Neill arrived from Allahabad with a detachment of 270 men. As Havelock could spare only 300 men for the defence of Cawnpore, while he led his force for the relief of the Lucknow Residency, he took precautions to select a suitable place, on the bank of the Ganges near the bridge-of-boats, to serve as an entrenchment against sudden attack. Thus assured about the defences of Cawnpore, Havelock collected boats (the bridge-of-boats having been destroyed by the Nana's troops) so that by July 25 his whole force, comprising 1,500 men and ten light guns crossed the Ganges and moved forward on July 26 to the village of Mangalwar, about six miles distant from the river. Next day the advance was resumed. The nationalist troops were holding in strength the town of Unao, hardly three miles off. They displayed considerable skill in the selection of a suitable defensive position. The heavy rains had covered the country around with marshes and swamps; taking advantage of this favourable factor they so designed their defensive position that it could not be outflanked. That was indeed a great advantage for the position could only be stormed by a frontal attack. The nationalist troops held in strength the town of Unao and a small village forward of it. Their right was protected by a swamp, which could neither be forced nor turned. The centre was strongly held—here the village, whose walls were loopholed, had been strongly fortified. The advance guard in front of the centre occupied a garden enclosure, which had been fortified so as to serve as a bastion. Only a narrow path led from the village to the town of Unao, which extended three-quarters

of a mile on their left. Thus their left was also strongly held; on account of the flooded country around, it was not possible to force or turn their left. Havelock realised that there was no alternative to launching a frontal attack on the strongly fortified position. The attack was launched by the 78th Highlanders and the 1st Madras Fusiliers, supported by two guns. After a desperate struggle the nationalist troops were driven from the garden enclosure to the village. As the British troops advanced to attack the village they were subjected to a destructive musketry fire from the loopholed houses. The bullets flew thick and fast and the British troops failed to force an entry into the village. They were then reinforced by the 64th. Every house was defended with obstinate courage. The murderous fire from one house in particular worked havoc in the British ranks. This house was stormed and captured only after heavy casualties. Still the desperate struggle continued from house to house. The village was set on fire but still the nationalist troops did not give in and carried on the heroic struggle until they were dislodged by artillery shells bursting in their midst. Their guns were captured but they escaped to the town of Unao.

The nationalist troops in the town of Unao were considerably reinforced by fresh troops and guns. Havelock took up position on a spot of dry ground between the village, which he had just cleared of the nationalist troops, and the town of Unao. It was a very advantageous position for the road was surrounded by a swamp and there was no other alternative for the nationalist troops except to advance along the road to attack the British force. Havelock planted the guns so that they could sweep the road with their fire. The nationalist troops made the mistake of advancing in dense masses thus presenting a good target to the guns. Havelock reserved his fire till the nationalist troops were well within range. The musketry fire and the grape from the guns took a heavy toll of the nationalist troops. They could not stand this murderous fire for long and broke and fled in confusion, thus unmasking 15 guns, which though unsupported by infantry, belched forth death and destruction amongst the British troops. The Oudh, gunners, highly trained soldiers, maintained the conflict with singular obstinacy and perished fighting round the guns.

A Keenly Contested Action

Although the nationalist troops suffered a repulse at the first action of Unao (July 29) yet they had given a good account of themselves. The heroic stand which they made in the village and the stubborn valour of their gunners created a profound impression on the mind of Havelock, who realised that it would not be an easy task to drive. them from Lucknow. This lesson was still further brought home to him by another keenly contested action at Bushirat Gunj (July 29) six miles further off towards Lucknow. Here again the nationalist troops showed great skill in the selection of a strong defensive position. The walled town was intersected by the high road to Lucknow. In its rear was a broad sheet of water, over which the road was carried by a causeway. The main gate, at the entrance of the town, was well defended by an earthwork, a trench, and four guns. It was flanked on each side by loopholed turrets and walls. It was further completely covered by a large building within the town.[1] It was indeed a position of great strength and Havelock realised that an attempt to launch a frontal attack, unless supported by a flanking movement, would cause heavy losses. His plan was to plant three guns on the high road to cannonade the earthwork and the gateway in front. At the same time guns placed on the flank were to direct converging fire on the same point. Under cover of the artillery fire the 78th Highlanders and the Madras Fusiliers were to storm the gateway while the 64th were to wheel to the left, and marching round the town were to take up position between the farther gate and the causeway to cut off the retreat of the nationalist troops. The 84th and the Sikhs were to be in reserve—ready to support the frontal or the flank attack according to the circumstances. The battle commenced with an artillery duel which lasted for sometime. Then the Highlanders and the Fusiliers moved forward to attack but they were held up by the effective fire of the guns. The iron storm which burst upon them was so severe that they were ordered to lie down while the British artillery tried to silence the troublesome guns. When the fire of the guns was subdued the Highlanders and the Madras Fusiliers made a wild charge. The nationalist troops were disheartened by the impetuosity of the charge, as well as by the flanking movement Abandoning the guns they fled through the town and over the causeway They had taken care to keep safe their line of

communication; by a well-directed fire from the walls they had checked the advance of the 64th with the result that the flanking column failed in its mission of cutting off their retreat. Thus although they sustained a defeat and lost their guns they were able to escape from the town in safety.

Difficult Situation Facing Havelock

The two actions of Unao and Bushirat Gunj fought on one and the same day (July 29) revealed to Havelock the gravity of the situation. During these keenly contested actions the British force had sustained eighty-eight casualties. The fighting strength of the British force was still further reduced by heavy mortality due to cholera and dysentery. A sixth of the British force had perished and a third of the gun ammunition had been expended. Only one day's fighting had revealed to Havelock the temper of the nationalist troops. The troops who fought in barricaded houses amidst blazing fires, when the village had been set on fire, and the gunners who died fighting to the last in defence of their guns, could not be merely mercenary troops. Suddenly, as in a flash, the bitter truth dawned on Havelock—the men who fought so valiantly and so courageously were inspired by nationalist fervour to rid the country of the foreign yoke. That alone could account for the fanatic zeal they displayed in defence of the vital posts, which they had occupied. Thirty-thousand nationalist troops still barred his way to Lucknow. To push on to Lucknow through the serried ranks of the nationalist troops would be nothing but to court disaster. Further Havelock found to his consternation that his line of communication was in grave peril of being cut off. Tatya Tope's troops, 4,000 strong and ably led, could swoop down on Cawnpore from Bithur and seize his base of operations. Further 3,000 sepoys at Dinapore had made an important contribution to the struggle, which was being waged by the nationalist troops to protect Lucknow. These troops under the leadership of Kunwar Singh, a local zemindar, were threatening to cut off the communication with Calcutta. No commander can afford to see his base of operations fall into the hands of the enemy and his line of communication cut off. This dangerous threat to his base and line of communication, coupled with the stubborn valour of the nationalist troops, convinced Havelock that the task of capturing Lucknow was beyond his limited

resources. He well knew the repercussions of a retrograde movement for that would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and would encourage the waverers to throw in their lot with the nationalist troops. But Havelock was a realist and he faced unpleasant facts by resolving to return to Mangalwar to wait for fresh reinforcements. On August 3 he was reinforced by a company of the 84th and Olphert's half-battery. These reinforcements fell far short of his expectations. The British authorities at Calcutta, alarmed by the mutiny of the three native regiments at Dinapore withheld the reinforcements—the 5th Fusiliers and the 90th Foot— which had been originally earmarked for the relief of Lucknow. 3,000 armed and disciplined troops from Dinapore now swelled the ranks of the nationalist force engaged in the task of cutting off the British line of communication with Calcutta. Thus the European troops—the 5th Fusiliers and the 90th Foot — were detained to keep under control Western Bihar and to keep open the line of communication with Calcutta. The mutiny of the sepoys at Dinapore considerably helped the nationalist troops at Lucknow by preventing British troops from being sent to strengthen Havelock's force.

Another Contested Action

Bitter was the disappointment of Havelock for instead of receiving two European regiments he received from Cawnpore only 257 men. Still he thought of again testing the enemy defences at Bushirat Gunj, which the nationalist troops had re-occupied. On August 4 Havelock moved from Mangalwar and halted at a place, about a mile beyond Unao. In the morning on August 5 the march was resumed and the second battle of Bushirat Gunj was fought. This time Havelock made use of a strip of land beyond the marsh to his right. His plan was simple but effective. Two heavy guns (24-pounders) and two 24-pounder howitzers were to advance along the road and play on the defences in front. After the enemy fire was subdued the 64th and the 84th were to storm the gate. At the same time a strong column was to carry out the flanking movement on the right so as to sweep round the town and take up position behind it, between the farther gate and the causeway. The turning force consisted of the 78th Highlanders, the 1st Madras Fusiliers, and the Sikhs, supported by Maude's battery, and a troop of the Volunteer

Cavalry. The heavy guns were pushed along the road and cannonaded the gate from a range of 300 yards. The heavy cannonade, as well as the flanking movement disconcerted the nationalist troops who tried to escape by the causeway. They were subjected to the withering fire of the turning column and suffered casualties. But they managed to escape over the causeway and took up position in the village of Bijapuri and in another village on the left of the causeway. Havelock ordered the 84th to attack the village on the left of the causeway and the Madras Fusiliers to clear Bijapuri village of the nationalist troops. After a tough resistance the two villages were captured. The nationalist troops fell back on another strong position at Nawabgunj, at a distance of five miles.

Havelock's Return to Cawnpore

Havelock received an alarming report from Neill about the situation at Cawnpore. Tatya Tope was preparing to launch an attack on Cawnpore and therefore Neill urged on Havelock the desirability of returning to Cawnpore immediately. Havelock returned to Mangalwar. He ordered the engineers to build a bridge-of-boats. This bridge was completed by August 11. On that day Havelock received an urgent call for help from Neill, who was apprehensive of an attack on Cawnpore by Tatya Tope's troops. But before retiring to Cawnpore Havelock wanted to wipe out the disgrace of the retrograde movement by some spirited action. So he marched on Bushirat Gunj, which had been re-occupied by the nationalist troops. On August 11 after gaining some advantage over the nationalist troops he retraced his steps to Mangalwar, and returned to Cawnpore on August 13, having failed to make any impression on the strong nationalist force of Lucknow.

Tatya Tope's Strong Defensive Position

Although Havelock's force had been considerably reduced by casualties and heavy mortality due to cholera and dysentery, he could not afford to let Tatya Tope build up his force at Bithur, so near to Cawnpore. Therefore he lost no time in marching at the head of his force to Bithur to remove this dangerous threat to his base of operations. In the morning on August 16, leaving Neill with only a hundred men at Cawnpore, Havelock marched to Bithur at the head

of a force composed of some 750 Europeans and 250 Sikhs. Tatya Tope awaited the approach of the British force with quiet confidence. He showed considerable skill in the selection of a suitable defensive position. The main position, consisting of thick ramparts and flanked by entrenched quadrangles, was held in strength. Connected by earthworks were two villages, one on either flank. These villages, as well as the town of Bithur, served as a support to the main position. In front of this strong position was a plain covered with dense plantations of sugarcane and castor oil, interspersed with villages. Thus the plantations afforded excellent cover to the infantry. There was a nulla or rivulet, not fordable, which flowed in front of the town. It could be crossed only by a narrow stone bridge, well defended by a breastwork on its flank. Thus the defensive position, which Tatya Tope had selected, was very strong.

Stubborn Resistance at Bithur

When the British column, after a weary march of eight hours, approached this defensive position, Tatya Tope sent his cavalry to reconnoitre the enemy position. When the cavalry hovered on the left flank of the British force a few shells from the guns dispersed them, unmasking the two guns, which at once returned the fire. Havelock quickly made a plan to advance in direct echelon from his right. The 78th Highlanders, the Madras Fusiliers and Maude's battery formed the right wing, while the 64th, the 84th, the Sikhs, and Olphert's battery constituted the left wing. The Fusiliers were moving in extended order on the extreme right when they were subjected to a sharp fire from some high cultivation, and a village, which had been concealed by it. Their commander at once wheeled two companies to the right. Thus strengthened the Fusiliers engaged in a hand to hand conflict with Tatya Tope's troops. The latter fought gallantly and even crossed bayonets with the Fusiliers. But after a hard struggle they fell back on the strong defensive position. From behind the entrenchment Tatya Tope's gunners operated their two guns with admirable precision. Fourteen British guns, including the 24-pounders, played on the entrenchment but could not silence the two guns, which continued to be admirably served by the gunners. When the British guns, drawn by the slow moving bullocks, moved forward to within 40 yards of the entrenchment the fire was smartly

returned by Tatya Tope's guns. The British guns were still not able to silence the well-camouflaged guns. On the other hand not only were the two guns well served by the gunners, but also masses of infantry, sheltered behind the breastwork, sent forth a tempest of bullets, which swept through the British ranks. The enemy fire was so severe that it evoked the remark from Havelock that he had seen nothing to equal it since the day of Ferozeshah, when the Sikhs had offered stout resistance in the First Sikh War. Havelock realised the futility of returning the fire. The work had to be done with cold steel. Hence he ordered the 78th Highlanders and the Madras Fusiliers to move off to the right and screened by sugar-cane plantations to emerge on the left of the breastwork and storm it. This movement was skilfully executed. The British infantry successfully stormed the breastwork and captured the guns after a bitter struggle. Tatya Tope's troops fled over the bridge to the town. The British soldiers were too exhausted to pursue them. Meanwhile the remaining portion of the British force drove Tatya Tope's troops out of some sugar-cane fields on the left. Then the entire British force was across the bridge to clear Tatya Tope's troops from the town. It was no easy matter to drive them out of the town for they offered resistance from the barricaded houses. After offering stout resistance Tatya Tope's troops escaped from the town.

Although Tatya Tope was defeated yet his skill in selecting a strong defensive position and the obstinacy with which his troops fought and the guns were served established his reputation as a great general. Havelock paid a well deserved tribute to Tatya Tope's troops. "I must do the mutineers," he wrote in his Despatch, " the justice to pronounce that they fought obstinately; otherwise they could not for a whole hour have held their own, even with much advantages of ground, against my powerful artillery fire."[2] High praise indeed! Such was the profound impression created on Havelock by the gallant stand of Tatya Tope's troops that when he received intelligence from his spies that a part of the nationalist force had fled towards Fatehgarh and the rest to Sheorajpur, about twelve miles from Cawnpore, he decided to return at once to Cawnpore (although his troops were utterly exhausted) lest Tatya Tope should attack and plunder the town in his absence.

Operations in Western Bihar

Havelock's failure to push on to the relief of the Lucknow Residency was due to two important factors—the threat to his base at Cawnpore by Tatya Tope's 4,000 troops at Bithur and the threat to his line of communication by the revolt of the native regiments at Dinapore. Dinapore, situated at a distance of twelve miles from Patna (the capital of Western Bihar) was garrisoned by three native regiments, the 7th, 8th and 40th Bengal Native Infantry, one company of European and one of native artillery, and the 10th Foot. On July 25 the sepoys rose in revolt and marched towards Arrah to rally under the banner of Kunwar Singh, an influential zemindar of nationalist leanings. Though eighty years old Kunwar Singh proved a bold and resolute soldier and a capable leader. The 12th Bengal Irregular Cavalry also rose at Segowlie and dispersed throughout the country. The nationalist troops were now in a position to give serious trouble to the British authorities on both banks of the Ganges, and threaten to cut off the British line of communication between Calcutta and Cawnpore. The nationalist troops, reinforced by Kunwar Singh's levies, besieged a party of European civilians and fifty Sikhs, who had taken refuge in a fortified house at Arrah. A relief force consisting of 300 Europeans and 70 Sikhs, which was sent out from Dinapore to Arrah, was ambushed by the nationalist troops and forced to return after suffering heavy casualties. Then on July 30 Major Vincent Eyre at the head of a force consisting of 154 men of the 5th Fusiliers, three guns (two 9-pounder guns and one 24-pounder howitzer) and 18 mounted Volunteers advanced from Baksar, a station a few miles from Dinapore, for the relief of Arrah. Kunwar Singh's troops took up position in a wood about five miles from Arrah to check the advance of the British force. By a well-directed attack Eyre, however, forced Kunwar Singh to abandon his strong position. Kunwar Singh's troops fell back on another strong position about a mile in the rear. Eyre realised that to make a frontal attack on the strong position would cause heavy casualties. Under cover of the fire of his three guns, he decided to make a flanking movement towards the railway embankment. Kunwar Singh however adopted admirable tactics; he despatched a small force to take up position at the railway embankment and at the same time sent a strong detachment to harass the rear of the British force. The nationalist

troops sheltered in a wood, which flanked the embankment, poured a withering musketry fire on the advancing British force, making Eyre's position extremely critical. Eyre's guns failed to make any impression but his infantry charged into the wood and after a desperate struggle cleared it of; Kunwar Singh's troops. The latter fled to Jagdishpur, Kunwar Singh's stronghold. Eyre however attacked and captured Jagdishpur. Kunwar Singh's troops fled to Banda, where they were welcomed by the Nawab, one of the nationalist leaders. In spite of defeat of Kunwar Singh's troops, Western Bihar continued to be a nationalist stronghold and carried on the struggle until a very late period of the following year.

The Crisis

About the middle of August the situation did not appear to be very favourable for the nationalist cause. Although Havelock's force had been checked by the nationalist troops of Oudh, fresh British reinforcements were expected at Cawnpore to enable Havelock to march at the head of a large force for the relief of the Lucknow Residency. Thus a serious danger threatened the nationalist force in Lucknow. Similarly a very serious danger threatened the nationalist troops at Delhi, for on August 14 Brigadier Nicholson arrived at the Ridge with the Punjab Movable Column, which increased the effective strength of the British to 8,000 rank and file of all arms. A siege-train with large supplies of ammunition was on its way from Ferozepore and with its arrival the British force would be enabled to take up the offensive instead of remaining on the defensive as it had done so far. Thus a crisis was developing—both Delhi and Lucknow were threatened with a serious danger. Frantic efforts were made by the nationalist leaders to rush reinforcements to Delhi. Effective reinforcements could possibly come only from one source—the Gwalior Contingent and the 10,000 troops of Maharaja Sindhia. It was to secure this effective aid that Tatya Tope bent all his energies.

Efforts to Meet the Crisis

After his defeat at Bithur on August 16 Tatya Tope transferred his activities to the territories of Maharaja Sindhia. He never lost sight of the chief objective—the recapture of Cawnpore with a view to disrupting the enemy's line of communication. This aim could be

realised only if he could build up a strong force. He bent all his energies in winning over to his side the redoubtable Gwalior Contingent and Sindhia's 10,000 troops. The Maharaja however remained steadfast in his loyalty to the British Government. That was indeed unfortunate for it seriously imperilled the nationalist cause. He played a dexterous game; he kept the Gwalior Contingent in good humour by liberal allowances and fair promises of active support for the nationalist cause. His sincerity was however soon put to the test. On July 31 there arrived at Gwalior a large nationalist force from Indore and Mhow. It comprised the sepoys of the regiments, which had mutinied at these stations. Their ranks were swelled by 600 men of Holkar's army and the 5th Infantry Regiment of the Gwalior Contingent which had mutinied at Agar (a large town in the dominions of Maharaja Sindhia, about 36 miles from Ujjain). There were also 1,000 seasoned troops led by Prince Feroze Shah. The artillery consisted of seven guns. The arrival of such a large force at Gwalior naturally created a tense situation for the Contingent and Sindhia's troops were carried away by the nationalist impulse and demanded that the Maharaja should lead them to the help of their brethren in Delhi. Sindhia played a subtle game—he said that the nationalist force from Indore and Mhow should proceed to Delhi while he would lead his troops and follow them alter the rainy season. He took a firm stand on one principle—namely, that his troops should trust him to follow a sound strategic policy *i.e.* to conduct operations only after the rainy season. On September 7 the nationalist force from Indore and Mhow and some of his own troops who could not be restrained crossed the Chambal. Lest they might return and create further trouble in his dominions, Sindhia secretly removed all the boats from both banks of the river. This treachery infuriated the Contingent and now events moved to a crisis. A new leader had arrived to infuse new hope and courage in the sepoys of the Contingent. This was none other than Tatya Tope, the emissary of the Nana. After his repulse at Bithur he had repaired to Jalaun, from where he had been watching the course of events in Sindhia's dominions. When the tension mounted with the arrival of the strong nationalist force from Indore on the way to Delhi, Tatya Tope seized the opportunity of establishing contacts with the leaders of the Contingent. It was not difficult for him to win them over to his side

but it remained to be seen whether he would also succeed in seducing Sindhia's troops. The trial of strength took place on September 7 and 8. On September 7, the Contingent made a last and final effort to bring over Sindhia to their side. They appealed to him to lead them to Delhi. Sindhia replied firmly that he was opposed to any advance on Delhi until after the monsoon. This unequivocal and firm declaration of policy provoked the Contingent so much that they prepared their batteries in their camp to coerce Sindhia into submission. The 8th of September proved to be a turning point in the history of the nationalist struggle in India for on that day the main issue was to be decided whether Gwalior was to become a nationalist stronghold or not. The Maharaja was racked with anxiety for he was not sure even of the loyalty of his Maratha troops. In the morning on September 8 he paraded his force and made a stirring appeal to his Maratha troops to prevent the Hindustani sepoys of the Contingent from coercing their sovereign. The appeal went home and assured of the loyalty of his Maratha troops, he made preparations for the conflict with the Contingent. But the latter were dicouraged and withdrew their guns. Tatya Tope had not been able to get sufficient time to work up the feelings of the Maratha troops and therefore he only partially succeeded in his mission, for though he won over the Gwalior Contingent to his side he failed in his chief object of making Gwalior a strong nationalist stronghold.

Fall of Delhi

It was not till September 3 that the issue was decided whether Gwalior was to be a nationalist stronghold or not. Thus much valuable time was lost and troops could not be sent to Delhi to help the nationalist force in the defence of that important city. The nationalist troops in Delhi were in fact facing a serious crisis. They knew that the siege-train from Ferozepore was on its way to Delhi. They resolved to intercept it and sent a large force for that purpose. But Nicholson too marched at the head of a well-chosen and well-equipped force and defeated them at Najafgarh on August 25 after a sanguinary struggle. The siege-train, consisting of fifty pieces of heavy ordnance arrived at the Ridge on September 7. This breaching batteries were established and on September 14 the grand assault of Delhi took place. Fifty-four pieces of heavy ordnance opened a

destructive fire and having silenced the enemy guns, columns of attack were launched against the defences. The main fortifications were captured after a grim struggle; then street fighting of a most savage character took place. The nationalist troops fought with the courage of despair and from each nook and corner poured forth destructive musketry fire on the assailants. In this sanguinary struggle the British columns suffered heavy casualties to the extent of about one-third of the entire force engaged. Delhi fell after a heroic struggle on September 21. On that day the Mughal King was captured and on the next day his two sons and a grandson were seized and shot dead. So that was the tragic end of the Mughal Empire. The British flag once more waved over Delhi. The loss of Delhi was a severe blow to the nationalist cause though it did not seriously affect the effective strength of the nationalist forces for a very large number of troops escaped from Delhi and helped to swell the nationalist forces in the Doab, Oudh, Rohilkhand and Central India.

Reinforcements for the Lucknow Residency

Delhi had fallen and there was a possibility that Lucknow would share the same fate. The nationalist troops had failed to capture the Residency though the place had been invested since July 1. The garrison consisting of 927 Europeans and 765 natives had maintained the struggle, although they had been subjected to artillery and musketry fire. The attempts of the nationalist troops to effect breaches by mining had been frustrated by counter-mining. And now British forces were mustering for the relief of the Residency. By September 15 sufficient reinforcements had arrived at Cawnpore to enable Havelock to push on at the head of a large force to Lucknow. Major-General Sir James Outram, who had been appointed to the command of the united Dinapore and Cawnpore Divisions, by a rare act of self-abnegation waived his military rank, allowed Havelock to command the force, and agreed to serve as a volunteer until Lucknow should be reached. Havelock's force numbered more than three thousand men, the infantry being distributed into two brigades, of which the first was commanded by Neill and the second by Hamilton. Leaving a small force to guard Cawnpore, Havelock crossed the Ganges on September 19. After a brush with the nationalist troops at Mangalwar the force arrived on September 23 within six miles of

Lucknow. Opposition now stiffened. The nationalist troops, 10,000 strong, were occupying a formidable position in and about the Alambagh. When this place was captured after a severe struggle the nationalist troops fell back on another strong position in the village of Char Bagh. The village was on the city side of the canal. The bridge over the canal was defended by a breastwork and a battery of six guns, one of them being a 24-pounder. The guns were so positioned as to sweep all the approaches to the bridge. A large number of gardens and walled enclosures provided shelter to the sharp-shooters, who poured a most destructive musketry fire on the advancing British troops. The guns were well served by the sepoy gunners and took a heavy toll of the British troops. The British guns could not cope with their superior artillery and almost every man at the British gun was killed. The position of the British force became critical. Then a few determined British troops led by their officers dashed across the bridge only to be swept off almost to a man by a storm of grape. But their sacrifice was not in vain for the rest of the British force charged the bridge and drove the nationalist troops from their strong position. The British troops had gained an entrance into Lucknow. The city lay before them—"a vision of palaces, minars, domes azure and golden, cupolas, colonnade, long facades of fair perspective in pillar and column, terraced roofs — all rising up amid a calm still ocean of the brightest verdure."[3]

After capturing the Char Bagh bridge the British force pushed up a winding lane, which skirted the left bank of the canal. Then turning to the left they pushed through the fortified palaces and bazaars, which covered the ground extending to the very gates of the Residency. The British force overcame the determined opposition of the nationalist troops and in spite of the heavy fire poured on them through the loopholed houses, entered the Residency on September 25.

Although Havelock's force had succeeded in forcing its way into the Residency the nationalist troops had closed up behind it " like water in the wake of a diver." Havelock had succeeded in *reinforcing* the garrison but not in *relieving* it. He realised that it would not be possible for him to escort about a thousand non-combatants safely out of the Residency. Outram, who had now assumed command, was faced with a serious situation. Encumbered with the non-

combatants, it was not possible to reach Cawnpore safely. At the same time it was not possible to keep the additional force in the Residency as the stocks of the provisions were reported to be depicted. After a search however it was discovered that the reserves of grain were sufficient to maintain the additional troops also for two months. Outram therefore resolved to stay in the Residency until further reinforcements arrived for the relief of the garrison.

Surprise Attack on Agra

The nationalist forces had suffered a set-back — Delhi had fallen and the British garrison in the Lucknow Residency had been reinforced. The loss of Delhi particularly had serious consequences for it enabled the British authorities to divert a large number of troops from Delhi to Cawnpore for the relief of the Lucknow Residency. A movable column of 1,500 infantry, 900 cavalry, and 18 guns, under command of Colonel Greathed, was despatched from Delhi south-east to open up communications with Cawnpore and Lucknow. After a severe fight with the nationalist troops at Bulandshahr the column reached Agra on October 10. But a large nationalist force was also converging on Agra. A nationalist force from Indore, which had reached Gwalior at the end of July, had crossed the Chambal early in September and had concentrated at Dholpur, 34 miles from Agra. Here it was joined by some of the nationalist troops who had escaped from Delhi. Thus reinforced they increased their activities in the districts between Dholpur and the Jumna, thereby causing considerable apprehension to the British garrison in the fort of Agra. But when the British column reached Agra on October 10 the British authorities in Agra assured Greathed that the menace of his advance had sent the nationalist troops in haste across the Kari Nadi, twelve miles away. As a result of this assurance the British force did not take the necessary precautions to post pickets and to send out cavalry patrols to examine the country in the vicinity of the camp on the brigade parade-ground, a mile and a half from the fort. The result was that the nationalist troops made a surprise attack on the British camp at a time when most of the officers had gone out for breakfast in the fort. Most of the men were asleep, when first one round shot, then another came right into their midst from a battery concealed in the high crops. At the same time half a dozen nationalist troops rode

quietly up to the Quarter-Guard of the 9th Lancers, and cut down the sentry. This was followed by a general rush of the native cavalry. Meanwhile at the first sound of the firing of the guns the British officers in the fort rode hard towards the parade-ground. Soon they were engulfed in a seething mass of humanity. Thousands of the inhabitants of Agra, who had gone out to see the Feringhis who had captured Delhi, were seized with sudden panic as they heard the firing of the guns and rushed back in utter confusion along the road whence they had come. On the way they met a long string of transport animals which were carrying the baggage to the British camp. The transport animals too were seized with panic and a general stampede ensued. Then was witnessed a remarkable scene which beggars description — men, women and children running away in terror; the elephants madly screaming and trumpeting; the frightened drivers twisting the tails of the bullocks yoked to the heavy carts; and camels bubbling with their nostrils tugged at in urgency to haste. By dint of ' blows, threats and shouts' the British officers managed to force their way through the surging multitude.[4] They reached the parade-ground and were soon in the thick of the fighting, which raged furiously. The British artillery also showed energy in repelling the attacks. It was however the cavalry, which by repeated charges broke up the nationalist troops, who were pursued as far as the Kari Nadi. The British pursuing column captured guns but the nationalist troops escaped without serious losses.[5]

Threat to the Line of Communication

Delhi had fallen and the surprise attack at Agra had failed. The main struggle now centred round Lucknow. On the one hand Sir Colin Campbell, who had been appointed the Commander-in-Chief in India in August, was taking steps to rush reinforcements to Cawnpore—the Naval Brigades from H.M.S. *Pearl* and *Shannon* were landed at Calcutta and troops were diverted from China and the Cape of Good Hope. On the other hand Tatya Tope, at the head of a large force in the area Jalaun-Kalpi, was preparing to swoop down on Cawnpore, while another nationalist force under the Nawab of Banda was preparing to cut off the line of communication between Calcutta and Cawnpore. During September the three native infantry regiments from Dinapore, the 5th Bengal Irregular Cavalry, and

Kunwar Singh's levies had arrived at Banda, where they had been welcomed by thc Nawab, one of the nationalist leaders. They made an attempt, though not very vigorous, to threaten the British line of communication. At the end of October, the 7th and 8th Bengal Native Infantry and other nationalist troops crossed the Jumna and pushed on to Fatehpur. On November 1 a small force of 500 men commanded by Lt.-Col. T. S. Powell, 53rd Foot, supported by two 9-pounder guns advanced from Fatehpur to intercept the nationalist troops. The nationalist troops fought bravely but suffered a repulse and escaped without serious losses to Banda.

Tatya Tope—The Man of Destiny

Depression was the mood of the hour—Delhi had fallen, the British garrison in the Lucknow Residency had been reinforced, the surprise attack on Agra had failed, and the attempt to cut off the Brtiish line of communication had proved abortive. British forces were concentrated at Cawnpore for the relief of the Lucknow Residency. The trial of strength was about to take place, for the nationalist troops at Lucknow, considerably reinforced by the troops who had escaped from Delhi, were also resolved to prevent the British force from capturing Lucknow, At this crisis Tatya Tope played a decisive part. At the head of a large force, consisting of the redoubtable Gwalior Contingent and other levies, he had taken up a strategic position of great importance at Jalaun, for he was in a position to threaten the British base at Cawnpore in case the British force advanced to Lucknow. By his admirable strategy Tatya Tope in fact placed the British Commander-in-Chief on the' horns of a dilemma. If the latter advanced to the relief of the Lucknow Residency, Tatya Tope would seize the opportunity to swoop down on Cawnpore. If he succeeded in seizing Cawnpore and destroying the bridge over the Ganges Sir Colin's force would be cut off. It was therefore necessary that Sir Colin should at first deal with this menace before advancing on Lucknow. On the other hand the urgency of relieving the garrison in the Lucknow Residency could also not be denied. The predicament in which Campbell found himself placed in arriving at a solution of this baffling problem is well illustrated by the two diametrically opposite views held by the British historians regarding the decision to advance to the relief of the Lucknow garrison. Colonel Malleson

justifies this decision on the ground that Lucknow was the decisive point for at that place the British had their soldiers, their women and their prestige.[6] On the other hand Sir John Fortescue condemns Sir Colin's decision on the ground that he left Windham in the same perilous situation as Lord Gough at the opening of the First Sikh War. The British guns were outmatched and failed to silence the enemy guns with the result that the latter had to be capured by the infantry at the point of the bayonet entailing heavy casualties.[7] This very divergence of views amongst the British historians regarding Campbell's decision to advance on Lucknow is an admirable tribute to the strategy of Tatya Tope. At a time of serious national crisis, when everything seemed to go wrong, Tatya Tope held the fate of India in his hands. If he succeeded in gaining a decisive victory by seizing Cawnpore and cutting off Sir Colin's force he would rally the whole country to his side and swing the balance in favour of the nationalist cause. The moment was critical. The whole country looked up to Tatya Tope to retrieve the worsening situation. Tatya Tope appeared to be India's man of destiny.

(From author's *Tatya Tope—the Hero of India's First War of Independence, 1857-1859*)

6

A NOTE ON TANTIA TOPI

By

K.D. Bhargava

A BIOGRAPHY of Tantia Topi is still a desideratum. He was undoubtedly the best military leader, with the solitary exception of the heroic Rani of Jhansi, that the Mutiny produced. Yet no systematic attempt has so far been made to bring out clearly the conspicuous part he played from May 1857 to April 1859. The reason is not far to seek. In all that he achieved his modesty and loyalty to his master prevented him from pushing himself into the limelight. His capture of Gwalior from Sindhia, in collaboration with the Rani of Jhansi, was a master stroke of policy, but as usual others got the credit while he remained in the background.

In spite of the large part he played on the stage of Indian politics for two years, Tantia's identity was a subject of wild speculation. In the contemporary official writings of the time, we find enough evidence of this. Mr. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of India, in a letter dated 15 April 1859 to General Napier at Goona conveyed the information that "General Outram has reason to think that Taniia Topee is Bhow Tambekar late Minister of Baroda.....".[1] Some even held the view that he was identical with the celebrated Nana Sahib himself.[2]

Tantia's confession[3] before Major Meade gives us some clue of his real identity. "My name is Tantia Topi. My father's name is Pandurang, inhabitant of Jola-Parganah, Patoda-Zillah, Nagar."

In a letter[4] from Mr. R. R. U. Ellis, the Political Assistant for Bundelkhand addressed to Mr. E. Simson, Under Secretary to the Government of India, Fort William, dated 7 March 1859, valuable information is supplied regarding the parentage and personal appearance of Tantia Topi. The information furnished to the Government by Mr. Ellis was based on the replies to his questionnaire by Kesho Rao[5], Chief of Gursarai, Jalaun, who knew Tantia well. To quote from the manuscript[6]:—

> "The real name is Ramchund; but Tantia is a second name which is known to all. Topay is a family title; and in the Marhatta language, Tantia is called father. Several Denanee Brahmins and Marhattas also bear the name of Tantia. Topay means a Commanding Officer just as a Captain". It is usual for Dakshini Brahmans and Marathas to have such names as Bapu, Nana, Bahu, Tatya, etc., by which they are popularly addressed. Thus Balaji Farnavis is popularly known as Nana Farnavis, Sadashiva Rao as Bhau Saheb. Peshwa Raghunath Rao as Dada Saheb. "Topay" is probably derived from तोप 'artillery' and means one belonging to the artillery, *e.g.*, an artillery officer.

Tantia was by birth a Vashishta Brahman. His age at the time of execution, according to his voluntary deposition before Major Meade on 10 April 1859 at Mushairi was about forty-five years.[7] The manuscript, however, gives 42 years. Thus he was born sometime between 1814 and 1817.

Tantia has been described as "a stout man, of middling stature", with whiskers. "He has got a wheat complexion, and always wears a white chukri-dar Turban." To the question of the supposed identity of Tantia Topi with Nana Sahib, the Chief of Gursarai replied "Tantia Topay and Nana Sahib are two different individuals, *i.e.*, Nana Sahib is Chutpaon and Topay is a Vashishta."

Nor were Nana Sahib and Tantia Topi related in any manner. It was supposed at one time that Tantia's sister was married in the family of Nana Sahib, but this mistake arose out of the fact that Bala Rao, the brother of Nana Sahib, had married a sister of Tantia Godbole and not of Tantia Topi. The manuscript is clear on this point:

> "Tantia Topay's sister is not married with any of the family of Nana Sahib, for no Marriage intercourse is allowable between

the family of Chutpaon, and that of Vashistah; but there is another individual by name Tantia Goorboolay, whose sister has been wedded to Balla Rao, brother of Nana Sahib".

The manuscript also contains useful information concerning Tantia Topi's early life. "Tantia. Topay used to live in Bitoor and to serve Nona Sahib as an Aide-de-Camp during the time of the late Bajee Rao Peshwa. After the death of Bajee Rao; Tantia Topay was employed under Nana Sahib as Darogah or Superintendent of the Kitchen and was also for some time a Commanding Offieer of a Company of Sepoys whom Nana Sahib raised."

(*Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings*, Vol. 24; 1948)

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2. *See* the Memorandum on the question of the identity of the Nana Sahib, Tantia Top, and the Rao Sahib enclosed in a letter from George Plowden, Commissioner of Nagpur dated 28th February 1859, (No. 24) to R. Simoon, Under Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department. (Pol. Cons., 15th April 1859, No. 494).
3. Kaye and Malleson. *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. V, pp. 304—311 (Appendix B).
4. Pol. Cons. 30th Dec. 1859. No. 1361 Supp.
5. For a detailed account of his activities, see *Narrative, of Events regarding the Mutiny in India*, Vol. I, pp. 574—584.
6. Pol. Cons. 30 Dec. 1859, No. 1362.
7. *See* Kaye and Malleson, Vol. V (Appendix B). pp. 304-311.

7

BAHADUR SHAH-II OF DELHI AND THE ADMINISTRATION COURT OF THE MUTINEERS

By

S.K. Banerji

MUHAMMAD Bahadur Shah II was the last Mughal potentate. He was very old and infirm when the Indian Mutiny took place at Delhi in 1857 and he was dragged by the mutineers from his palace to be seated on the throne of his forefathers. He took up his task seriously and made earnest efforts to conduct the administration, *e.g.*, in order to conciliate his Hindu subjects he had issued orders that no sacrifice of a cow, bullock or calf would be permitted on the Baqar-i-id Day.[1] While he had to "look after the civil administration, he had also to defend the city against the British besiegers. He had also to keep a careful watch on his insolvent and lawless sodiery, but here his efforts were mostly futile and infructuous.

Amongst the Mutiny papers is a unique document, 57-539 of the Press list published by the Government of India in 1921, which testifies to Bahadur Shah's anxiety to control his unruly soldiery. A court of ten members was appointed and among its aims and objects was included getting riddance of the terrible mess to be noticed in the several military and civil departments.

The following regulations were made to establish the court and direct its deliberations:—

1. A body named the Administration Court be established for the proper administration of the civil and military affairs of the country.
2. The Court shall consist of ten members of whom six were to be chosen from the military and four from the civil, and of the six military members, two will represent the infantry, two the cavalry and the remaining two the artillery.
3. The President and the Vice-President shall be elected by the members from among themselves and the Court shall resolve itself into five committees to look after the administration of the different departments.
4. At the time of appointments, every member shall declare on oath that he would discharge his duties with integrity and not be subject to greed, malice' or deception, his sole consideration to be to improve the administration and add to the peace and happiness of the ryots. Before the publication of the minutes of the proceedings, no member shall divulge them without permission from the President and the Court.
5. Only those members are to be chosen from the army who have put in approved service and are known to be prudent and likely to be of use to the State. In exceptional cases, one possessing the requisite qualifications but not the length of service may be selected; the other members shall not raise any objection to his choice.
   The same shall apply to the selection of the civil members.
6. A member guilty of partiality or dishonesty shall be forthwith removed by the Court and recourse will be taken to regulation 5 for the selection of his successor.
7. All matters of the government shall be placed before the members and decided by the majority of votes. The decision shall next be placed before the Saheb-i-Alam Bahadur for his. consent and then finally for Huzur-i-Wala's approval, If there be a conflict of opinion between the Court and the Saheb-i-Alam Bahadur, the matter will be placed at the Court meeting for reconsideration. If disagreement still persists the

proceedings in full shall be-placed before the king whose decision shall be final.

8. No one but the members is to have access to the meetings of the Court. The Saheb-i-Alam Bahadur and the king shall have the right to be present whenever they choose.
9. A resolution or amendment proposed by a member shall have the consent of at least one other member.
10. The proposer of a resolution shall speak first on it and without any interruption from the other members; after him an opposer will speak-and then the supporter of the resolution and lastly the other members by turn.

10A. After the passing of a resolution by the Court and its approval by the king, it shall be circulated among the secretaries of the different departments for information and necessary action.

11. The persons chosen from the military sections are also to act as their supervisors. To the two supervisors in each section shall be attached four other members to form a committee, one of whom will act as its Secretary. The resolutions of the committee will be placed by a supervisor before the Court.
12. The Court shall, with the consent of the majority of its members, make alterations in these regulations.

Let us make some observations on these regulations:—

1. A crude attempt was made by Bahadur Shah to introduce a popular element in the administration. But the details of the procedure of selection of the members of the Court are not forthcoming and we surmise that in the midst of stress and storm of war, he was content to nominate them. Since the military members were to control important sections, they must be senior officers.
2. Occasionally additional members of experience were invited if their presence was helpful to the deliberations.
3. No regulation is put down for the selection of the civil members. The civil departments were numerous and the choice of a member must have been restricted to the few important ones.

4. It is not clear how the two members from one military section correlated with each other especially when each acted as the convener of an important committee. Probably the two mutually agreed on the division of their work.
5. The decisions of the Court were not final but subject to the approval of the Saheb-i-Alam Bahadur and the king.
6. The Court dealt with all affairs under the sun. In the then disturbed state its exact military and civil duties are not clear. More than once it helped the authorities by encouraging the mutineers against the English.

The document is undated and bears no official seal and is written on cheap paper.

In the Mutiny papers there were several references to the Administration Court :—

(a) In some of the papers, it is seen acting as an advisory body, *e.g.*, on a few occasions it informs the officers of the army that the king had promised to reward them if they carried the enemy trenches by assault and if they fell, their surviving heirs would be supported.[31] Similarly it advised the king to agree to grant rewards to the soldiers in case of victory.[3] It also supplemented the orders of the military headquarters by issuing instructions to the officers to oppose the approaching English[4] and informing a colonel of the shortage of ammunition in camp.[5] It approved of a Brigade Major's proposal to construct a bridge and strengthen the guard at a particular post.[6] It tried to maintain discipline in the army by forbidding plunder while fighting was going on.[7] We have serious doubts whether all the instructions of the Court were attended to at all.

How disturbed the conditions were at Delhi may be granted from another document[8] where the king directs the Court to stop the soldiers and elephant drivers from destroying the royal and private gardens. If the king felt helpless in the matter how could an advisory body like the "Court be expected to be more effective? We presume that the complaint was made merely for the information of the Court and no prompt measures were expected of it.

There is another document[9] which bears witness to the king's distress. It is addressed to his military officers and (a) expresses his weak state of health, aggravated by their lawlessness; (b) a request is made to them to remove the military guards placed on his *hakims* and to desist from laying hands on the peoples property; (c) a warning is given that the plunderers will be severely dealt with by the Court and they are told that if punishment bc not palatable to the soldiery, he would either retire to the shrine of the Khawaja Sahib[10] or commit suicide by swallowing a diamond and even be ready to be killed by his own lawless men.

The document, written in Urdu for the benefit of his common solders, gives a vivid picture of the king's plight and his unfitness to act as leader at such a stormy period. He weeps over Hakim Ahsanullah Khan's death piteously bewails that now there was none else but God to look after him and pleads for the release of another of his *hakims* so that he might get a regular treatment and be cured of his malady. He goes on to complain of the misdoings of the soldiery and asserts that the spoliation of his subjects' property was nothing less than the spoliation of his own. The last, no doubt, shows his concern for his subjects but to no purpose; for when he threatens to set the Administration Court to punish them, be knew perfectly well how little he could rely on it. Probably, for this reason, he threatens at the close of the *hukmnana*, as it has been termed, of his resignation or putting an end to his life.

We are further enlightened of the king's distress by the document, 60-71, of the Press list, where a protest is lodged against the king's policy of obtaining money by raising loans from the local money-lenders. The petitioners' point out that two such loans had already been raised in the past on promise of their repayment in full, together with an addition of twenty-five per cent, of the loan but the sum thus raised mostly remained with the corrupt middlemen, allowing only a meagre sum to reach the king. They also complained. against the Administration Court, darkly hinting at some member being in secret league with the English and suggesting the substitution of a Council of only four men in its place.

We do not know whether the king approved of the last suggestion, but think it would not have improved matters at all.

In conclusion it may be stated that the whole atmosphere was steeped in suspicion, corruption, intrigue and lawlessness and no one was really interested in the affairs of the state and least of all, the Administration Court, and the king who alone seemed to think of the people, was infirm and powerless to do any lasting good to his suffering subjects.

Such is the gloomy picture of the conditions prevailing at the headquarters of the mutineers at Delhi.

(*Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings*, Vol. 24; 1948)

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3. See papers 426-7, 429, 431-3, 437, 439, 443 all belong to section 57.
4. 57—445,
5. 57—470.
6. 57—449.
7. 57—488-9.
8. 57—56—60
9. 57—573.
10. 135—167—170.
11. 135—167—170.
    Qutbuddin Kaki, Muinddin Chishti's successor. The Khwaja Saheb's tomb lies in the neighbourhood of the Qutab Minar.

8

LAWLESS BRIGANDS AS SOLDIERS OF FREEDOM IN THE GREAT REVOLT OF 1857

By

Nandalal Chatterjee

SOME of the recently discovered Mutiny papers of Fatehpur District in U.P., reveal the interesting fact that during the Mutiny days hundreds and thousands of earstwhile dacoits suddenly abandoned their usual criminal pursuits and turned into patriotic rebels so as. to fight the British Government. This transformation of lawless men is an interesting feature which should compel attention at the present day.

I have recently examined these papers in connexion with my work as Secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Committee, History of Freedom Movement in India. I find that these papers are extremely important and should attract the notice of historians.

In a letter written by Mr. W. G. Probyn, officiating Magistrate of Fatehpur, on October 1, 1857, it is reported for the first time that on the night of twentyninth and thirtieth September a band of about four hundred dacoits attacked and burnt the house of a loyal Qanungo. This is the beginning of a series of incidents in which the dacoits of the Fatehpur District figured as patriotic fighters.

In several subsequent letters of this Magistrate such incidents are narrated. He points out in a letter of October 24, 1857, that the

local Police were absolutely unable to suppress the attacks of the "turbulent men". Because of the hostile activities of these dacoits, the whole of the western part of the district was in a chaotic state and law and order were non-existent. The Magistrate says, "*badmashes*" are increasing in number and impudence and the Police are not strong enough to put them down.

Depredations of these unorganised dacoit-rebels increased from day-to-day and the Magistrate reported towards the end of October, 1857, that the whole district was affected and that the "*badmashes*" were proving too powerful for the Police. "It is a physical impossibility," he confessed with regret, "to bring this district into order without the aid of a few regiments". "The Police are quite unable to cope with the "*badmashes*". At some places there were gatherings of five to ten thousand dacoit insurgents under the leadership of some dacoit leaders. It appears that some of the dacoits were successfully prevailing upon village after village to join them against the British. Mr. Probyn writes on October 8, 1857, that a large number of villages turned hostile "at the Pergunnah Elanka". This was because of the considerable influence wielded by the dacoit leaders.

The records indicate that the most prominent dacoit-rebel was Jodha Singh, who, with some of his close followers, was at last captured by the British troops on April 28, 1858, at Khujooa (letter from Mr. W.G. Probyn, dated May 1, 1858).

Another influential dacoit leader was Maharaj Singh, who is mentioned prominently in the Magistrate's letter of October 27, 1857. The Magistrate relates that on one occasion this brigand chief fought with a large Police force "for some hours" and forced it to retire. These dacoit chiefs had heavy guns in their possession. The records also show that with the help of these guns the dacoits could attack and set fire to the houses of loyal Tehsildars and Thannahdars of villages. The Police guards were throughout helpless against them. There is no doubt that these dacoits were able to set the British Government at defiance for a fairly long time and they were able to create a general disorder in the countryside.

The dacoits were finally crushed when a superior military force surrounded them from different sides and prevented their escape

across the Ganga into Oudh. Adequate information is not available in the official documents with which to reconstruct the story of the patriotic resistance of the dacoits, but, enough details are available which show that, swayed by the comtem-porary outburst of patriotic feeling, even dacoits, who are termed "*badmashes*" by the local Magistrate rose against the British Government and made a futile endeavour to drive it out from the country. In any case, that dacoits could become patriots overnight amply demonstrates the popular character of the Mutiny movement in some parts of the country.

(From author's *India's Freedom Struggle*, 1958)

9

SAPPING THE FOUNDATIONS OF LOYALTY

By

Dharm Pal

THE most remarkable feature of India's War of Independence (1857-59) was that practically the entire Bengal Army, composed mainly of Poorbeah soldiers, went over to the nationalist side. There were powerful forces at work, which sapped the foundations of loyalty and snapped the bonds of discipline. Although at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Poorbeah soldier established his reputation as an excellent fighter there was a noticeable decline in the efficiency of the Pandy regiments later on. The discontent of the Poorbeah soldier was mainly responsible for the inefficiency of the Pandy regiments. It is therefore of considerable interest to find out the various factors which sapped the foundations of loyalty and weakened the efficiency of the Poorbeah soldier.

Degradation of the Indian Officers

The foremost cause, which undermined the efficiency of the Pandy regiments, was the degradation of the Indian Officers. As long as they occupied an honoured place in the Army there was remarkable efficiency due to esprit de corps. In the earlier phases of the expansion of the British power in India there were only three or four British Officers in a regiment with the result that the companies and squadrons were commanded by the Indian officers.

The latter, though working under the direction and supervision of the British officers, enjoyed fairly wide powers and responsibilities and therefore they came to develop the qualities of initiative and enterprise, which are so necessary for leadership. Thus during all the wars of Clive, of Lawrence, of Smith and of Coote the Indian soldiers as well as the Indian officers showed high fighting qualities. In those days the Indian Officers in a regiment exercised real and effective power and they were suitably rewarded if they fought gallantly. A brave man or skilful leader "was honoured for his bravery or skill as much under the folds of a turban as under a round hat."[1] Thus Muhammad Yusuf, one of the most distinguished Indian officers, rose to high position by dint of his talents; and the name of this gallant officer occurs almost as often in the pages of Orme, the English historian of India, as of Lawrence and Clive.

The regulations of 1796, however, brought about a fundamental change in the constitution of the Army. Henceforth it was the British Officers, numbering about twenty-five in a regiment, who monopolised all the power and responsibility, and the Indian officers were relegated to a very subordinate position. Of course a strong case could be made out for the change. In view of the impending struggle with the Mahrattas it was thought advisable to strengthen the British element in the regiment and thus to ensure its efficiency. Moreover the Indian regular army was modelled on that of the European army—dressed, drilled and disciplined alike. It had one advantage. The British Line was a model of efficiency. It had a long glorious tradition stretching from Waterloo to Blenheim and even beyond. Moreover the enemy was not able to distinguish the '*Gora log*' from the Poorbeah soldiers and therefore could not concentrate all his attention on the British troops. These were two very important advantages which resulted from the reorganisation of the army in 1796. But these advantages were considerably offset by the serious defect of the degradation of the Indian officers. This defect was not apparent immediately after the introduction of these reforms. Thus in General Lake's campaigns the Pandy regiments lived up to their reputation of high discipline and courage. Nevertheless this serious defect began to make itself felt like a slow poison and seriously undermined the efficiency of the regiments.

The Indian commissioned officers were promoted from the ranks through the grade of naick or corporal, and havildar or sergeant, to that of Jemadar the lower, and Subadar the higher Indian commissioned grade. To these the rank of Subadar-major was added in 1814. The conditions of service were hardly conducive to efficiency or loyalty. To be promoted as a non-commissioned officer after serving as a sepoy for twenty years and to be appointed as a commissioned officer at the age of approximately fifty-five—such unfavourable terms of service could evoke neither any loyalty nor produce any sense of discipline in the sepoys. Henry Russell, who had served as Resident at Hyderabad for eleven years, in his evidence before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company (1832) laid with unerring skill his hand on the weak spot of the army—the discontent of the Indian commissioned officers. "The chief cause of discontent of native officers is that once they have attained the rank of Subedar they have nothing more to look to; having got all that they can get, they have no further inducement to exert themselves; they become first indolent, and then dissatisfied. There ought to be some higher object kept in their view to which by diligence and fidelity they may still attain. There was a native officer on the Madras establishment of the name of Mohammad Yusuf, who was entrusted, in the early British operations, with a considerable independent command, of which he discharged the duties with judgment and fidelity; and if we raise the natives to higher offices in the civil department, it will be difficult to maintain the exclusion of them in the army."[2] There were indeed some far-sighted British statesmen who were quite alive to the evils of the system. In one of his essays published in 1844 Sir Henry Lawrence had the foresight to strike a note of warning. He clearly foresaw that the system by which the energies of the Indians were 'cabined, cribbed and confined' within narrow limits, was doomed to be a failure. "There are many commandants in the Mahratta and Seikh service who were privates in our army. General Dhokul Singh, now at Lahore, was a Drill Naick in one of our sepoy corps; and Raja Buktawar Singh, one of the richest and the most powerful men in Oude, was a Havildar in our Cavalry. But is it not absurd that the rank of Subedar and Russaldar Major is the highest, that a native can attain in a native army of nearly three hundred thousand men,

in a land too that above all others has been accustomed to see military merit rewarded, and to witness the successive rise of families from the lowest conditions, owing to gallantry in the field?"[3] True statesmanship lay in providing legitimate outlets for military energy and ability in all ranks. "There is always danger in handling edged tools, but justice and liberality forge a stronger chain than suspicious and niggardly policy."[4] It was desirable that no place or office should be absolutely barred to the Indian soldier. "The grandsons of the Gauls, who opposed Caesar, were senators of Rome; and the Jye Singhs and Jeswunt Singhs Jed the Mogul armies; but it cannot be said that it was to any such liberality the empire of either Rome or Delhi owed its fail."[5] When his advice was ignored Sir Henry Lawrence wrote another essay in 1856 in which be reiterated his views. "The minds of Subadars and Rissaldars, Sepoys and Sowars, can no more with safety, be for ever cramped, trammelled, and restricted as at present, than can a twenty foot embankment restrain the Atlantic. It is simply a question of' time. The question is only whether justice is to be gracefully conceded or violently seized. Ten or twenty years *must* settle the point."[6] Prophetic words indeed for within a year the discontent of the Indians found expression in India's First War of Independence (1857-59).

Degradation of the British Officers

Another equally important factor, which undermined the efficiency of the Pandy regiments, was the degradation of the British officers. Again the fault lay with the changes in the constitution of the army carried out in 1796. Out of the large number of British officers (approximately twenty-five) assigned to a regiment the majority (the most energetic or the most influential) left the regiment to do staff work or to undertake civil duties. Thus the regular regiments had to supply officers not only for the irregular corps (which had a cadre of 3 officers instead of 25 officers of the regular regiments) but also for the whole of the extensive army staff, and the military departments—Commissariat, pay, stud, etc., and the drain was still further increased by the formation of the mixed commissions of civil and military officers, for the administration of the different non-regulation provinces, as they fell under British power. Military officers were also employed in large numbers in

diplomatic duties, and as judges and magistrates. Thus the effective strength of the British officers of the regular regiments was considerably reduced and it seriously affected the efficiency of the Pandy regiments. But the paucity of officers was the smallest part of the evil for a. dozen officers under a good system would have been quite sufficient to maintain the efficiency of the regiments. "The mischief lay in the unhealthy feeling of dissatisfaction with which regimental duty came to be regarded, as the last course, only to be undergone by the minority who could get nothing better. A man sacrificed nothing of his regimental position by accepting staff or civil employ. He rejoined his battalion in his proper standing if it were ordered on active service, and in most cases he reverted to it on promotion to field officer, when as a matter of course he took the command, no amount of absence on civil duty being deemed to make him ineligible for that position. Thus regimental duty came to be regarded, either as what must be accepted in default of good luck or qualification, or as a mere stepping-stone to preferment in some other direction."[7] Thus the officers who failed to get any employment elsewhere and remained with the regiment were considerably demoralised and came to be regarded as the dregs of the Indian Army.

This system had its advocates as well as detractors. On the one hand there were men like Sir Henry Lawrence who held that by merely performing the regimental duties the officer did not gain in efficiency and that his faculties had to be sharpened by wider experience gained as a result of holding various responsible jobs. "The Quarter-Master-General's, and Survey Departments, are among the best schools for war, as are many of the duties of the Military Collector and Magistrate. They arc akin to Wellington's hunting parties; they improve the *coup d'oeil*, sharpen the perceptions and give opportunities of display of courage, hardihood and resource. Five to seven years of mixed military duties in early life, would instil into soldierly Civilians, all requisite details. It is not by three times a day seeing soldiers eat their rations, or horses twice a day eat their gram, or is it even by, year after year, driving fusees and port-fires, or by marching round barrack squares, that officers learn to be soldiers, much less to be Generals. Such avocations are rather the necessary drudgeries of the profession ; with hasty spirits they cramp rather than foster eminent attainments."[8] Many examples can be given

of persons who became distinguished soldiers without doing much regimental duty. "Among the highest names in European warfare, are those of men who performed little regimental duty. In the Indian ranks also, the Pollocks, the Notts, the Gilberts and the Cheapes of the present day, did as little battalion drill as did the Malcolms, the Mumos, and the Gives of old.'"[9]

This view was supported by Lord Canning. He held that civil employment, and the prospect of it, gave to officers a much greater interest in and knowledge of the country than they could otherwise acquire. "It places an officer in situations of responsibility and trial, of which he would otherwise have no experience; it sharpens his intelligence and makes him readier, hardier, and more self-reliant, and therefore eventually a better soldier, than he would otherwise be."[10]

The other view was represented by Sir Hugh Rose, who held that the system which drained away the best men from the army to the civil jobs impaired the efficiency of the army. The employment of officers in non-military appointments and their subsequent return, after years of absence to the superior grades, or worse still, to the command of their regiments, was fatal to discipline and efficiency of regiments. "The regiments are the sap and life of the army. They give the tone to its discipline and feeling. If they are sound, so is the army; if they decay, the army decays."[11] But in India, such were the attractions of the civil service, on account of its high pay and the social position which it gave, that the regiments although not (as a great authority termed them) 'a refuge for the destitute', were nevertheless composed of officers who strained every nerve to get out of them into staff or civil offices. The evils of such a system can well be imagined than described. This practice of allowing officers to return to military duty after long periods of absence in civil or political employ impaired the efficiency of the service. Such an officer commanding a regiment was thus satirically described: "for twenty-seven years has old Capiscuri been on civil employ at that out-of-the-way district Jhanumabad, and the blossoms of his early military career, now ripened into fruit, are exemplified by a happy obliviousness of everything connected with the military profession. The movements of a company might possibly be compassed by his attainments, acquired through the instrumentality of 'dummies' on his dining-room table; but of battalion and brigade

manoeuvres, I suspect he knows about as much of them as the Grand Lama."[12]

Although much can be said in favour as well as against the system the fact remains that in actual practice it was a vicious system for it degraded the regimental officers. The regimental officers, who failed to secure better jobs either through lack of energy or lack of patronge, became disgruntled and very much dissatisfied with their lot. There is nothing more demoralizing than the perpetual supersession of the officers. The regimental officers saw their colleagues securing the best jobs and then they had the mortification to see them return to the regiment after a lapse of time and assume its command, thus superseding them. It was most galling and humiliating. Thus the disgruntled British officers, who were left to perform the regimental duties, did not take much interest In the efficiency of the regiment—there was no incentive of reward to egg them on to improve its efficiency. The natural result was that the Poorbeah soldier had the misfortune to be commanded by British, as well as Indian officers, who were discontented with their lot in life and who therefore had not their heart in the business and who treated regimental life as a dull routine without realizing that a regiment is a living organism, whose vitality is impaired by faulty leadership. That indeed was the crux of the matter—faulty leadership.

The bane of promotion by seniority

The problem of seniority versus selection has always taxed the patience as well as the energies of the governments. A system of selection has the merit that some of the best officers may be selected. It has however one very serious defect for it may lead to nepotism and corruption. On the other hand the system of seniority is good since it avoids those heartburnings which are inevitable when a senior officer is superseded by a junior officer under the system of selection. But it is a soulless system since it acts as a drag on efficiency. If promotion is regulated merely on the length of service without due regard to efficiency then it undermines efficiency and reduces the regimental life to a dull routine. This was especially the mistake made by the British authorities in India. The British officers, as well as the Indian officers, were promoted on the length of their service. They clung to the service even though they became old and could

hardly perform their duties. General Vaughan gives us an interesting insight into the character of an old British officer commanding a battalion of infantry (21st Native Infantry) at Moradabad in 1841. "He was indifferent to everything but the monthly transfer to his banking account of a round sum of 1,000 rupees, his few wants being supplied by the difference between that sum and his monthly pay. He troubled himself little about the efficiency of his officers, or the appearance and discipline of the regiment, the command of which he left almost entirely to the Adjutant. His military knowledge was confined to a dozen manoeuvres of our then drill-book, which once or twice a week he put the regiment through, allowing them to be very indifferently performed, and garnishing the performance with a few tasty ejaculations of disapproval. After parade he retired to his bungalow, and was rarely visible again, even to his Adjutant, until the bugle sounded for mess."[13]

On a handsome cross erected by Lord Mayo at Chillianwala are inscribed the names of all the officers, British and Indian, who fell in the battle of Chillianwala. The ages of two subadars are given, one being seventy, and the other sixty-five.[14] At the battle of Ramnagar in 1846, Subadar Major Sher Ali was killed at the age of 78, after sixty years' service.[15] Thus the British, as well as Indian officers, were very old and not very able and vigorous. Such a soulless system contained within itself the seeds of its decay. It is no wonder if the Poorbeah soldier lost his courage and elan in times of crisis under such faulty leadership.

Weakening of the esprit de corps

The regimental tradition—the soul of the regiment—was impaired by the above mentioned factors. There was one more factor which weakened the esprit de corps. In the early phases of the expansion of the British power in India the British officers in a regiment were far too few to form an exclusive society. And consequently the British officers developed those kindly feelings by social intercourse, which enlivened their relations with the Indian soldiers and Indian officers. But when the number of British officers in a regiment was increased to twenty-five, they came to form an exclusive society of their own. Moreover in the earlier stages of the growth of the British power, the British officers did not disdain to have a '*bibighar*',

where the Indian women solaced their leisure. Thus the racial prejudices were softened a good deal. But with the improvement of communications between England and India the European women came to supplant the Indian women in the affections of the British officers. Thus the British officers tended to form an exclusive society of their own and therefore they failed to maintain that intimate social intercourse with the Indian soldiers and officers, which had been largely conducive to the efficiency of the regiments. William Howard Russell, the gifted war correspondent of the Times, who toured India in 1858, could not help contrasting the changed outlook of the British officers. "The good old hookah days are past; cheroots and pipes have now usurped the place of the aristocratic silver bowl, the cut-glass goblets, and the twisted glistening snake with silver or amber mouth piece. It was somewhat expensive, as it had special attendants attached to it. It seems as if the facility of communication with England deorientalizes men—they acquire less of the habits of the country and retain more of those of their own. They spend much less money; for they look forward to enjoying themselves on a lengthened leave to England, or in accumulating comfortable additions to their pensions." The mode of building bungalows had also altered. There were no bibis' houses—a sort of European zenana. "There are now European rivals to the native women at some stations." European equipages had been substituted for palanquins and their numerous attendants. "Instead of inclining to settle in India, the European looks more to home than he did ; and the number of those who fix themselves for the rest of their days in some pleasant 'sunny' angle of Bengal is diminishing."[16] Thus a wide gulf separated the British ruling classes from their subject races. Russell could not help remarking that the Indians were also largely to blame for this. "It may be that the native is more to blame for the gulf between us than we are; for his religion digs it deep. He will walk with us, talk with us; but like Shylock, he will not eat with us, drink with us, or pray with us."[17]

Transformation of a local militia into a regular standing army

By far the most important factor, which alienated the sympathies of the Poorbeah soldiers from their alien masters, was the attempt to change the terms of enlistment. From their terms of enlistment it

was apparent that "the Bengal soldiery rather resembled a local militia than a regular standing army. The sepoy enlisted to serve in India, and in India only. It was no part of his agreement to bear arms in a foreign land."[18] This stipulation that they would not serve outside India was necessary to preserve their caste prejudices. It was felt that they would not get facilities (abroad a ship or in distant lands) for cooking food and for observing meticulously those ceremonies, which are inseparable from the rigidity of the caste system. The Poorbeah soldiers had a genuine horror of the *kala pani i.e.* of the fear of being defiled by a sea voyage. Lord Cornwallis in 1790 had overcome the caste prejudices of the Poorbeah soldiers in regard to service overseas by calling regiments to volunteer, either as whole corps or as individuals. He had experienced no difficulty in raising these volunteer forces for service overseas for he offered attractive terms of service. He offered a bonus of a month's pay, paid in advance, with free rations, the prospect of rapid promotion and the right to revert to their former corps on return to India.[19] But when war broke out with Burma in 1824 and one of the regular regiments (47th Native Infantry) stationed at Barrackpore was ordered to proceed to Burma it mutinied. The Poorbeah soldiers and the Indian officers held that under the terms of their enlistment they were under no obligation to serve outside India. Sir Edward Paget, the Commander-in-Chief, quelled the mutiny by ordering the artillery to open fire on the Poorbeah soldiers (assembled for parade). Many were killed and others dispersed and pursued. The discontcnt was not confined only to the regular regiments. For when war broke out with Burma again in 1851 the volunteer battalions were ordered to proceed to Burma. When one of these volunteer battalions (47th Native Infantry), then stationed at Jhelum, received the order, consternation was writ large on the faces of the scpoys. As one of them remarked, when reminded of his obligation, "*Han, Husur, Bullanteers to hain, lekin ham log nahin jane mankte hain*" ('It's quite true we're Volunteers, but all the same, we are not keen to go."[20]) The fears entertained by the sepoys were not entirely groundless. This regiment marched 400 miles to Meerut and was then transported by a fleet of boats down the Ganges to Calcutta. The insanitary conditions in the boats led to the outbreak of cholera. The sepoys died like flies. Such was the virulence of the epidemic

that, "when the boats were stopped in order that the regimental Pandit might offer prayers to avert the evil, the Pandit, in the midst of the ceremony, himself collapsed and died."[21] The regiment returned to India after staying in Burma for three yars. Its ranks were sadly depleted; only 500 returned out of a total of 1,200 men. Thus the fears and apprehensions of the sepoys of service in distant lands were not entirely unfounded. They had a genuine horror of a voyage across the *kala peni* (*i.e.* sea voyage). To add fuel to the fire an act was passed in 1856 which radically altered the constitution of the army and fundamentally changed the very basis of enlistment to the army. Henceforth there was to be no distinction between the regular and volunteer regiments but every sepoy was ordered to be enlisted for general service, wherever the State might require it. Thus by one stroke of the pen the limitation on the service imposed by enlistment was removed. A strong case could indeed be made out for the change. The basis of the British power in India had undergone a profound change. By 1856 the British power in India had asserted its supremacy. The State needed a regular standing army rather than a local militia. To meet the new requirements of the State it was imperative that the constitution of the army should be changed. Though legally and constitutionally the government was within its rights in passing this law nevertheless it betrayed lack of statesmanship in handling the explosive situation. The relatives of the Poorbeah soldiers, who were eager to take up the hereditary profession of military service were faced with a cruel dilemma—either they had to accept the new conditions of service and thus incur the odium of the loss of purity of caste or they had to forego the military-service altogether. It was indeed a cruel choice which they were called upon to make. No wonder it was this fierce clash of loyalties which sapped the vitality of the State. It was on this vital and fundamental issue that the bonds of discipline snapped.

Bad faith of the Government

There were other factors which helped to undermine the foundations of loyalty. The women of the Poorbeah soldiers did not accompany them but remained at home. Hence as 3ong as the British territories were not wide and far flung and were within easy reach of the homes of the Poorbeah soldiers military service was quite

popular. But with the expansion of the British power in India the Poorbeah soldiers were called upon to serve in distant and unhealthy territories such as Sind, the Derajat and Peshawar on the one side and Rangoon on the other. At first a liberal addition of pay helped to overcome the reluctance of the sepoys to serve in distant and remote territories. But when this allowance was stopped arbitrarily the Pooibeah soldiers were face to face with a grim reality— military service had lost all its charms. The discontent of the soldiery was indeed very great for the loss of the allowance touched their pockets.

Another measure—to prohibit the practice of transferring men to the invalids— helped to increase the discontent of the Poorbeah soldier. This measure hit him hard. Under the old regulations he invalided after fifteen years' service, and retired to his home on a monthly pension of four rupees. "It was matter of surprise to see young and strong men, in the full enjoyment of health and vigour, relinquishing a service which offered to them certain promotion and increased pay, in order to retire upon this scanty pittance. And yet it was so. Men starved themselves for months, and became weak and emaciated, solely to pass for the invalids."[22] In order to check this evil the government adopted certain measures to hold out inducements to longer service. Thus an increase of pay for length of service was granted; the sepoy was allowed the addition of one rupee after fifteen, and two rupees after twenty years' service, his basic salary being rupees seven. Further the sepoys were granted by Lord Hardinge an allowance called hutting money. But these financial inducements to longer service failed to serve their purpose for the love of home proved too strong for the Poorbeah soldier. So to check the evil government adopted a stringent measure. At about the same time that the general service order was issued another order put a stop to the practice of transferring men to the invalids. The new rule laid down "that a sepoy who was declared unfit for foreign service, should no longer be permitted to retire home on invalid pension, but should be retained with the colours, and employed in ordinary cantonment duty."[23] The discontent of the Poorbeah soldiers was great for they felt offended at the bad faith of the Government. There was a growing feeling amongst the Poorbeah soldiers that the government no longer needed their services for the tremendous task of the rounding of the British Empire in India had been accomplished

and therefore government could afford to trample their long cherished rights under its iron heel.

Caste and Religious Prejudices

An essential condition for retaining the goodwill of the Poorbeah soldier was to respect his caste and religious prejudices. Colonel Permington in his evidence before the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company (1832) made some interesting observations. "The Native army of Bengal is essentially Hindu, having only a slight mixture of Muslims among them. The Rajputs, the flower of that army, are born soldiers, and pride themselves on being so considered. Treated justly, you may rely on their fidelity; treated kindly, you may rest assured of their devoted attachment; but you must not interfere in their religion, nor in their prejudices regarding caste. Any wrong done to them on these points cannot be atoned for by apologies or expressions of regret."[24] How strong the caste prejudices were is clear from the fact that every soldier had his own separate cooking pots and *lotas*. The system was certainly inconvenient. Sir Harry Smith related an incident which happened during the Sikh wars. It once happened that he lost his baggage, and the three regiments under his command lost their *lotas* and their cooking pots. He arranged to get plenty of provisions for them in the camp but he found himself in a strange predicament—"they had had nothing for twenty-four hours; they were very hungry; but they would not one of them touch the provisions, because they had not their own cooking pots, and they would not cook in the cooking pots of others." Sir Harry Smith was in a dilemma. So he called the commanding officers of the regiments, and asked them to allow men of similar caste in the other regiments to invite his men to their camp, otherwise they would have had nothing to eat that day.[25] Although the system by which the Poorbeah soldier had to make his own arrangements for cooking his food even in campaigning was inconvenient the caste system did not come in the way of the efficiency of military service. When the tide of prejudices against the Poorbeah soldier was running strong after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny the members of the Commission appointed to carry out the reorganisation of the Indian Army asked persistently the question as to whether the caste system stood in the way of the

military efficiency. Curiously enough while many oi the British officers, who gave the evidence before the Commission, condemned the caste system they were almost unanimous that the Poorbeah soldier, in spite of his caste prejudices, had well performed the military service. The following question asked by Sir Harry Smith and the reply given by Sir George Pollock have an important bearing on this subject:—

> "Is it not the case that if a company or a battalion are cooking, and an order of picket comes on, they will throw away their victuals and will not cook again that day ? They may not cook again that day, but they go to their muskets. I am quite sure of that."[26]

Again the following question asked by the chairman and the reply given by Colonel John Hill throw interesting light on this subject :—

> "You never found caste urged as an objection to the performance of any military duty ? Not the slightest, high caste and low caste stand next to each other in the ranks, sleep next to each other in tents, and do everything just the same as English soldiers, except when they are off duty."[27]

Major-General Low could hardly recollect a military duty which was said to be against caste, with one exception. "I remember that at Java on one occasion the men who had been killed were lying near our bivouac, and an order was given as usual, to have the corpses carried off and buried; but the officer commanding the Bengal pioneers said that his men being of high caste could not touch a dead body; it was put to rights in a moment by the commander-in-chief of the expedition who said to the officer commanding the pioneers, 'If these men are not buried within an hour, I will send you back under arrest to India." The dead bodies were immediately removed.[28]

The following questions asked and the replies given by Lieut.-Colonel Thomas L. Harington are of considerable interest:—

> (Sir Harry Smith)—"If your men were cooking and you wanted them to fail in abruptly, the enemy appearing in the neighbourhood, would they cook again that day? They would throw away that food, but they would mount."

(Marquis of Tweedle)—"Would you consider a man efficient soldier who threw away his meat in that way? That is his own lookout; he is only hungry a little longer. They buy their own food and they cook it themselves; it is only a little flour which they make into chuppatties and bake over a wood fire; a little parched gram will satisfy them for days. After Chillianwallah, for three days, on account of heavy rain, they could not cook. The men of my corps look only parched gram and sweetmeats; I never heard a murmur of discontent."[29]

Sir Hugh Rose was firmly of the opinion "that caste should disappear because it acts very unfavourably on discipline and military operations." "Good discipline and' high military feeling, which is its invariable companion, education, and mixture of races will obliterate the endless and indefinite distinctions of caste, all of which are more or less opposed to the harmony and efficiency of the military service."[30]

Thus there was a difference of opinion amongst the British officers as to whether the caste system stood in the way of military efficiency. There was however not the least doubt that the Poorbeah soldier would rather face starvation than have cooked food not prepared according to the rigid caste rules and regulations. It was for this very reason that the Poorbeah soldier showed repugnance for service overseas or in distant unhealthy territories, where he did not get proper facilities for cooking food. If such was the intensity of feelings at the Poorbeah soldier on the subject of observance of caste rules it was simply inviting trouble to ask him to bite the greased cartridges {of the new rifle) with his teeth, especially when there was: a strong rumour that the grease contained the fat of the cows and the pigs. To ask a Hindu and a Muslim soldier to defile himself by biting these greased cartridges was to put their loyalty to the severest test. More than anything-else it was this affair of the greased cartridges which provoked the crisis. The British historians ascribed the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny largely to the indiscipline of the Bengal Army. Underlying causes are the inflammable material and the immediate causes the spark that ignites this material. Thus though the immediate cause of India's First War of Independence (1857-59) was the introduction of the greased cartridges, the underlying causes were the widespread discontent amongst the masses as well

as the Poorbeah soldiers, which provoked the crisis. The Poorbeah soldiers could not remain deaf to the cry of anguish which rose on every side. The high-handed measures adopted by Lord Dalhousie for sweeping away petty states under the garb of the doctrine of lapse, the extinction of the independent kingdoms by the arbitrament of war and 'the annexation of States on the plea of misrule provoked a storm of protest. Too many vested interests were disturbed and Lord Dalhousie seems to have raised a hornet's nest about him. More than anything else it was the annexation of Oudh which made the British rule in India unpopular. The Nawab of Oudh had been a loyal ally of the East India Company. He had faithfully observed the treaties. He had given no cause of complaint. When his territories were annexed and he was offered a handsome pension he behaved with dignity and expressed his moral resentment by refusing to accept the pension. As a gifted British writer remarked—"But empires never make restitution; they have no consciences. The Chancellor of their Exchequer never has to acknowledge the receipt of conscience-money. Oude is British as long as England holds India."[32] The discontent reached its peak when Oudh was taken over by the East India Company. "The effect of the dissolution of the kingdom of Oudh was the greater as a large proportion of the soldiers in the Bengal Army was from this area. They had served the Company faithfully and had been one of the major factors for extending its sway in different parts of the land. They suddenly realized that the power which the Company had acquired through their service and sacrifice was utilized to liquidate their own king."[33] One is inclined to agree with the views of Maulana Azad that the annexation of Oudh was to a great extent responsible for the outbreak of India's War of Independence (1857-1859). "I have little doubt in my mind that 1856, when Oudh was annexed, marked the beginning of a rebellious mood in the army generally and in the Bengal Army in particular. It was from this time that they began to think that the Company's rule must be brought to an end."[34]

Mortal foes

There was thus a lot of inflammable material. Only a spark was needed to ignite it into a flame. That spark was provided by the affair of the greased cartridges. When India's War of Independence broke

out on the 10th May 1857 there were gifted leaders, who were sworn enemies of the British rule in India. The high-handed measures of the East India Company had turned them into mortal foes. Nana Sahib, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II, was nursing a grievance because the British authorities had disallowed his claim to the pension originally granted to Baji Rao II. Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, was offended because her state had been annexed by the application of the doctrine of lapse. The Begum of Oudh was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to re-establish the authority of her son in Oudh. Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly was eager to seize any opportunity to regain the territories, which the East India Company had taken away from his ancestors. Kunwar Singh, a powerful landlord of Bihar, was offended since he felt that the British authorities had not fairly treated him by giving the decision in a civil suit against him. Thus there were a host of discontented leaders, who were waiting for an opportunity to strike a blow for the independence of the country and at the same time to wreak vengeance on the arrogant Feringhis, who had unjustly despoiled them of their power.

"And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power,
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

—Byron

Besides these mortal foes of the East India Company there was one distinguished leader, who was destined to play an important part in India's War of Independence. He was no other than Bahadur Shah, the Mughal Emperor. He was old and blind and shorn of all his power and glory. He was as a weed,

"Flung from the rock, on the Ocean's foam to sail
Wher'er the surge may sweep, the tempests' breath prevail."

But though buffeted about by misfortune and a mere relic of the past Mughal glory he yet had the potentialities of becoming the rallying point of the discontented masses against the East India Company. Therein lay his strength as well as his weakness. He was the symbol of the past Mughal glory and grandeur and he could

therefore at the time of a national crisis evoke fierce loyalties but he was not strong enough to provide effective leadership.

Confidence shattered

The British historians have expressed the view that the Indian Mutiny was largely caused by the political blunder of increasing disproportionately the numbers of the Indian soldiers, as compared with the British soldiers. There is hardly much truth in this statement for India could not have been held by British bayonets alone. There were some far-sighted British statesmen, who realised the necessity of broadbasing the British power in India on justice and fair play as well as sound administrative system. Brigadier-General John Jacob gave expression to these views emphatically. "It seems to me to be absolutely certain that we cannot hold India by an Army chiefly or in large proportions, composed of English soldiers, and that to attempt to do so must be attended with speedy and utter ruin. And again it is clear to me that if we could command even such a host of Europeans as the Grand Army with which Napoleon invaded Russia, the attempt to coerce India by such forces would only end in more complete and hopeless failure. The mere brute force of hundreds of thousands of men becomes powerless before that of hundreds of millions of such people as the Natives of India. The whole force of the Mogul Empire was never able to subdue even one of these nations—the Rajpoot. Thus I am convinced that this great Empire cannot be controlled by English bone and muscle, by numbers of English bodies, but it can be held in perfect safety and security by English mind, by English moral power—by the influence of a moderate number of cultivated English gentlemen, rather than by a multitude of rude soldiers."[35] Another gifted British statesman, Sir John Malcolm had emphasised the same point earlier in 1832. "That a certain proportion of European troops should always be in India is fully admitted; but there is no error more common than that of considering the latter as a check upon the Native armies. They never have and never will prove such. Long experience has rendered my opinions upon this subject the same as those of Sir Thomas Munro. The necessity of check implies distrust that degrades. It is by complete confidence alone that the Native Army of India can be preserved in efficiency and attached to the Government it serves."[36]

Sir John Malcolm added significantly that this army 'is our safely and our danger' and that every branch of this subject requires the mind of a statesman. Under wise and effective leadership the Indian army had become an instrument for the expansion of the British power in India. But due to lack of statesmanship the Poorbeah soldiers were antagonised. "The General will is the only permanent foundation of government." The Government of the East India Company prospered as long as it retained the goodwill of the Poorbeah soldiers and the masses. But a series of measures helped to sap the foundations of loyalty and to pave the way for that tremendous struggle, which assumed the form of the War of Independence to rid the country of the hated Feringhis.

(From author's *The Poorbeah Soldier : The Hero of India's War of Independence*, 1957)

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10

THE SECOND PHASE
(The Revolution of 1857–1859)

By

Bejoy Banerjee

THE second phase of the Indian War of Independence began with what the British call 'the Sepoy Mutiny.' They advance some convenient causes for this, most of which are silly and some have something to do with the immediate reasons of some sporadic outbreak signifying the revolution. They say, the cartridges which were used in new Enfeld guns in 1857, had been considered by the Sepoys as greased with animal fat, which those religiously fanatical Indians resented very much.

This may be an incidental cause of outbreak in some Sepoy regiment; but the deeper and wider causes were not there. Yet this incident had an ideological aspect. It was rank and file, those who come from the people, showed that fanaticism. Any way, it was a matter of religious sentiment; but the sentiment found political expression through the mutiny. This was a political revolt in one aspect on religious ground. This revolt broke out from among the people. The revolution of 1857 was not organized by Rajas or Nawabs, the titular Moghul Badshah of Delhi did not dream of organizing it. It was a spontaneous uprising. Of course, latterly the leadership was taken mainly by Chiefs and capable men from aristrocacy; but that devolved upon them. And during that time some or other Chiefs who had personal grievances against the British

thought about the matter almost impersonally and they united not to fight for their own rights and interests but to oust the British who were their common enemy. For the first time, the Indian Chiefs began to realize that they were under an exploiting alien rule. Yet the gap between the people and the Chiefs was not bridged. There was no people's programme excepting the fighting British rule which the people, who had the taste of it, disliked. The people did not realize what they fought for excepting that they had to drive out the British.

Yet there was growing sign of patriotism solely inspired by British-hatred; bat national spirit was not at work. They wanted liberation from the British domination but not liberation in its fullest sense. They had no programme.

The trouble began with incendiary fire at Barrackpore near Calcutta which broke out in January, 1857. It was a signal and a pre-arranged thing. At Berhampore in Bengal and at Amballa in the distant Punjab, the first sign of the revolution was expressed through incendiaries in cantonment areas, and this was done almost simultaneously. Refusal of the Sepoys to use the grease was the first stroke of defiance and nothing more than that for those regimental people, as some of them genuinely believed that the purity of their caste was endangered. However crude it looked it was that spiritual protest against one of the four-fold exploitations of the British Raj, which the Congress defined many years after.

It was only incidental affairs confined to a few regiments. The greater part of India was politically prepared for a great revolution, the process of which began many years earlier. People believed in a prophecy that in 1857, which would complete hundred years of British rule in India, would also mean their quitting this country through an impact of a great revolution. The prophecy may be unscientific, but the sepoys particularly liked to believe in it wishfully, for, in their heart they wanted termination of the alien rule.

The sepoys, coming from the people who had direct test of the British masters and who had arms and ammunitions at their disposal, broke out first, civil people supporting them. The decisive out-break occured at Meerut on May 10, 1857. Indian regiments broke out, murdered the British and set off for Delhi.

They made a victorious march to that great city, occupied it, and tendered their allegiance to the titular Moghul Emperor Bahadur Shah.

Now it was definitely an insurgent organization, having the right of belligerency. The mutiny of the sepoys no longer remained a mutiny, it was a revolution now. The civil and the military Indians now actively joined in the fight for the elimination of the British Raj. Every regiment between Allahabad and the Sutlej had mutinied and in most districts of the United Provinces Civil Government ceased to exist.

On June 27, 1857, the British regiments at Cawnpore surrendered to the insurgents headed by Nana Sahib, who was latterly accused of massacreing the European prisoners including their women and children, who were also taken prisoners. This Nana Sahib had never been in the Indian Army of the British Government. He had personal grievance against the British injustice. Lord Dalhousie deprived him of his allowance which he was getting for a long time. Besides he suffered many humiliation at the British hands. He sent his agent Ajimulla to England to plead for his cause with the British authority there. It proved no helpful. Ajimulla who had a good time with the English women, came back with the information that the British as a people were as good and bad as they were. There were nothing extraordinary, they had many vices and weaknesses too and as a political power they were not so big as the Indian thought of them. He also informed Nana Sahib the tragic setback the British lately received in the Crimean War. He came back to India some years before the outbreak of the revolution. With him as adviser," Nana Sahib started on intrigueing how to overthrow the British power in India. Most of the Central and Upper India rulers who suffered at the high-handedness of Dalhousie, joined in private alliance with Nana Sahib, and all of them waited for the chance and occasion. The chance came with the sepoys' outbreak.

Nana Sahib took the chance of Cawnpore revolution. The massacre, which is doubtful if it were due to his order, was a thing of personal grievance. Besides this incident, the insurgents showed an amazing sign of restraint in their dealings with the British women and children. This they did throughout the whole turbulent period.

The inevitable result of the fall of Cawnpore led to the inevitable capture of Lucknow which remained in the rebel hand for many months. The Residency defended by a large number of Europeans and loyal Indians was in a state of siege.

Series of mutinies occurred throughout Upper and Central India and U.P. excepting the Punjab proper. The Gwalior Contingent in Sindhia's service, officered by the British, mutinied on June 14, 1857, the Sindhia however apparently remained loyal.

At Jhansi the Mutineers massacred the British. The revolution was immensely successful in Oudh. Insurrections took place in Behar too. The revolutionary army supported by Sepoys was led by Raja Kanwar Singh of Jagdishpur. His forces occupied Artah for sometime. There were no mutiny in south of Narbada, but people and army in the Nizam's State became rebellious, but not; the Nizam and his. ministers. So they remained in check. In Maharastra proper, 'the soldiery whether sepoys or local levies declared against the British without making any very active movements'. The Sikhs not only remained loyal, but provided numerous levies for the suppression of the revolt and Bengal which showed immense revolting spirit remained comparatively loyal to the British Raj.

The Gwalior insurgents proved themselves very actively aggressive under the leadership of Tantia Topi, the ablest leader the mutineers produced. He crossed the Jamuna river with his army where Nana Sahib's forces joined his, but British were by that time stronger and reinforced. After strenous effort they succeeded to routine the combined rebel forces.

Gradually the stronger British force took the offensive role; they re-occupied Cawnpore, Lucknow and Delhi and marched towards the west, towards the rebel-held positions in Central India. Jhansi was such a position. The young Rani of Jhansi commanded a large army which remained behind the rampart. The British troops sieged that fort. Tantia Topi came forward to raise the sieged from outside with a very small army which he still commanded. Again he was; ousted by the overwhelming British-Indian troops; all his guns were captured. The Rani of Jhansi evacuated the fort by the night of April 3. The fort of Jhansi fell in the British hand.

Yet the rebellion was very active in Oudh at that time. The whole civil population was at war with the British. 'The result was a very prolonged and a very trying period of active guerilla warfare and some heavy fightings.' At length this rebellion in Oudh was also suppressed.

Rani of Jhansi and Tantia Topi did not yet lose heart, though they knew the insurgent power was waning. They wanted to fight to the last.

Both of them appeared before Gwalior in June with a large army. The people and the army received them enthusiastically. Sindhia who sought to resist them found himself deserted by his own forces, and he fled to Agra.

Now, Gwalior was in the hands of the insurgents. The people there supported by Rani of Jhansi and Tantia Topi proclaimed Nana Sahib as the Peshwa. The British followed them there too. Rani of Jhansi fought bravely on horse back on the Gwalior Fort, slipped with her horse from the height of the Fort down to the foot of the hill and was killed. Tantia Topi, the greatest fighting genious of the revolution who was also a Maratha, escaped. After a long pursuit he was captured being betrayed, and was executed 'for his complicity in the Cawnpore Massacre.'

The Great Revolution of 1857 and 1858 thus-ended, last part being the period of 'legal executions' and 'just punishment' awarded by the victorious and vindictive British by such measures as hanging the supposed rebel on tree-tops, forcing him to lick blood, crouch before his august Majesty the individual British of whatever rank and position he might had been. The old Bahadur Shah upon which the leadership was imposed by a section of the revolting sepoys, had been tried, found guilty, and finally banished. This is the story of the Revolution in short.

One of the main reasons of the Indian defeat is that during this phase too the Indian power was not consolidated. The people who joined the revolution were more fanatical than nationally conscious. They had more British-hatred than any clear view of Indian freedom. As a whole the people were not freedom-conscious. They and their leaders had no constructive idea.

The Sikhs who lost their independence only three years before the revolution, did not taste the bitterness of alien rule. Gurkhas, who were mercenaries and independent people did not care to find themselves one with the revolutionary sentiment which so widely spread in the plains of India. Bengal as it appeared being the stronghold of the British Raj did not dare to revolt. For want of communications revolutionary tide could not be carried in many distant places and in many places where sepoys showed restiveness they were kept in control by the Rulers and Chiefs.

Those were the causes to add to others which led to the suppression of the revolution; and the most important cause is, that inspite of immense supports, the insurgents lacked up-to-date arms and equipments which generally decide a war, when both sides are strong.

(From author's *Indian War of Independence*)

11

THE MUTINY OF THE BENGAL ARMY

By

J.C. Powell-Price

LORD Canning arrived in India in February 1856, and was fated to be the last Governor-General under the East India Company.

He found a situation which, on the face of it, appeared to be tranquil enough. The frontiers of India had been extended to the mountains on the north and west, and on the east the Bay of Bengal was entirely surrounded by the territories of the Company. The foreign relations of the Indian states were regulated by the paramount power, and the leading states had subsidiary forces stationed within their territories to maintain the status quo. The annexation of Oudh had taken place without any overt disturbance, and the doctrine of lapse had been applied to Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi without any appearance of perturbation among the other princes. The state of Mysore was progressing under British administration, the Nepalese were allies and Gurkha battalions served in the army; while in the Punjab the labours of a remarkable band of administrators were leading the Sikhs from a war economy to peaceful pursuits and Sikh battalions had been recruited with success. The Pathan tribes had responded with alacrity to similar service in the Punjab Frontier Force, and the raiding propensities of the past were being canalized into legitimate and disciplined channels. In Sind, so lately the home of bandits and robbers, a paternal administration had won the people to a whole-hearted support of the new rulers. In the older provinces

roads, railways and public works were being pushed on, education encouraged, and prosperity as evidenced in the increasing revenue was the result of better methods of land taxation, better police administration, and more understanding government.

This was not the atmosphere in which revolt was likely to occur, and indeed the Mutiny was not a revolt of the people, but a mutiny among the troops, and not all of them. The three armies into which the armed forces of India were organized—the Madras, Bengal and Bombay armies—had shared in the recent wars against the Afghans and Sikhs in varying degrees; the Madras army hardly at all, and the Bombay army only in the initial operations of the first Afghan War and the war in Sind. It was the Bengal army which had borne the brunt of the hard actions in Afghanistan and the Punjab. The terrible retreat from Kabul had left unpleasant memories in the comrades of those who had fallen, and the battering-ram tactics of Gough had shaken the confidence of many of its units in their leaders. Most of all, however, were they affected by the annexation of their main recruiting ground of Oudh. As members of an independent state they had obtained many privileges which were now abolished. The irregular corps which had been maintained by the King of Oudh, and in which many of their relatives had served were disbanded. The forts, however, were not dismantled nor were the arms withdrawn, and this constituted a great temptation to men trained to warfare all their lives. The army had been on a war footing for many years, accustomed to violence and unused to the routine of peace. They believed they were invincible, and they had the example of the Sikh army before them to nurture ideas of their power without remembering its inevitable result. There were, too, other influences which had their effect on these men drawn from the most conservative of all the territories in India. Among the sepoys of the Bengal armies especially the traditions of martial castes were strongest. The new oath for recruits making them in future liable to serve anywhere in India or overseas was unpopular, and the idea of crossing the seas repugnant to their caste scruples, as these men were invariably high-caste Brahmins and Rajputs. They looked with suspicion on the new education, and regarded it as a method of proselytizing. The activities of the missionaries or the 'padres' as they called them, also gave rise to dissatisfaction, while the tendency

to interfere in old customs like *sati*, infanticide of female children, and the passing of the widow remarriage act, and the interference with property in favour of converts shook their confidence, while the proselytizing zeal of many commanding officers confirmed them in their fears. They felt that the soldier caste and its privileges were threatened, and thus were ripe for any sudden wave of disaffection. Discipline had been poor for some time. The best officers of the Bengal army had been drawn away into the administration of the non-regulation provinces, like the Punjab and elsewhere, and those who were left were many of them too old, owing to the system of promotion, to heed warnings, or too young to appreciate the dangers. By the Muslim sepoys the new education was distrusted, and fanatical theologians preyed upon this unease, while the dethronement of a Shia ruler, the King of Oudh, had its effect on the more fanatical sect among them. The knowledge that the death of the last Mughul would the end of the dynasty may also have had some effect.

These were not, however, predisposing causes, but only culminating effects. Had the initial outbreak at Meerut been dealt with immediately there would probably have been no Mutiny at all There had been other mutinies before which had not spread, but undoubtedly there was now inflammable material owing to the impact of western influences on eastern conservatism which had not existed before. Initial success and pockets of discontent here and there, and the delay in meeting the outbreak, were the causes of its spread. It failed because it was only an army mutiny, and only part of the whole army proved disloyal; the Madras and Bombay armies stood firm, while the Sikhs and the Punjab generally stood by the British, and the Nepalese helped. The people as a whole except the robber tribes, like Gujars round Meerut and Delhi, and the disbanded sepoys of Oudh, stood apart, except where local grievances, as in Jhansi and a few other places, caused them to join hands with the mutineers, or where fanatical Muslim leaders raised the cry of 'Islam in danger,' as in Rohilkand, or the royal family in Delhi saw an opportunity of evading their approaching dissolution. In Gwalior and Indore it was the Oudh sepoys of the Gwalior and Indore contingents who revolted, not the Mahrattas, while the Nana Sahib's effort at Cawnpore was due to a private grudge, though he was in correspondence with some of the discontented among the Mahrattas.

Oudh produced its own problems, and the chief centres of the Mutiny were Oudh, where Canning's determination to introduce a system of village revenue settlements had unsettled the talukdars, already accustomed to resist by arms the government demand for land revenue, and Delhi, where the presence of the last Mughul was a magnet for revolted battalions.

Canning himself undoubtedly procrastinated in his measures, hoping that the trouble would not spread or would pass over, and it was John Lawrence in the Punjab who by his firmness was the first to stop the rot and organize the attack on Delhi, the crucial point. Most British battalions were on the frontier, and Allahabad, a focal point in the communications, had none, Lucknow only one, and Delhi none at all. Several British regiments had been sent to the Crimea and never replaced, so the British troops were fewer than ever before. The Bengal army numbered seventy-four Indian battalions, ten regiments of cavalry, and twelve irregular cavalry regiments, with seventeen batteries of artillery. In addition the Oudh irregular force consisted of four batteries, three cavalry regiments and ten battalions. The Gwalior contingent numbered four batteries, two regiments of cavalry and seven infantry battalions. The Madras army was smaller, fifty-two battalions and eight cavalry regiments, while the Bombay army was twenty-four battalions and six cavalry regiments, with the usual proportion of guns.

The British troops consisted of the Company's European battalions and artillery, and the Queen's battalions and regiments and gunners; but these had been reduced, and instead of one to three there was now one British soldier to six sepoys. Of the Bengal army only ten original battalions are to be found in the latest army list, six being Rajput battalions, represented later by the 7th Rajput Regiment, which did not mutiny.

The incident which started the mutiny was the introduction of a new rifle, the Enfield, which required that the rounds should be greased before being inserted in the barrel. The grease used was mutton fat or non-animal grease, but the story was spread by interested persons that it was the fat of cows, and later, to reach the Muslim troops, pigs' fat. This was quite untrue, but it served its purpose. The mysterious *chappatis* of small mud cakes passed from

village watchman to village watchman, of which much has been made, had apparently no connection with any mutiny preparations, and there is no evidence that they were at the time connected with the outbreak. Similar exchanges were used to transfer disease away from a locality.

Meerut

The first mutiny in connection with the cartridges occurred early in January 1857 at Dum Dum arsenal at Barrackpore, and a British officer was assassinated. Rapid punishment followed, but on 23rd April of the same year at Meerut ninety of the 3rd Light Cavalry refused to use the cartridges. They were court-martialled and sentenced to imprisonment, and the whole garrison was paraded to witness their degradation on 9th May. On the 10th, while the British troops, consisting of the Carbineers, R.H.A., and the 60th Rifles, were parading for evening church men of the 3rd Cavalry rode up to the Indian infantry lines and said the troops were coming to disarm them. The 20th Native Infantry then shot the officers who tried to restrain them, and the 3rd Cavalry rode through the cantonments of the Indian troops cutting down every European they met. They released the prisoners in the jail, and were joined by the cut-throats of the city, and the European bungalows were burnt and women and children relentlessly killed. Meanwhile the General kept the British troops under arms, but did nothing to protect the cantonment of the Indian troops or the civil lines which were at some distance from the European cantonment. He expected that the Gujars and other *badmdshes* of the surrounding country would flock in, and determined to keep his force concentrated. So for some hours the work of devilry went on until the mutineers made off to Delhi in small parties. Immediate and resolute action would have enabled the authorities to deal with them and prevented them from reaching Delhi, also it would have saved some of the unfortunate women and children who were murdered, and the mutiny would have been scotched on the spot; but this was not to be.

The 3rd Cavalry rode into Delhi the next day, followed by the 11th and 20th Native Infantry. The Commissioner Fraser had had a letter late at night describing events at Meerut, but he was tired and did not open it. The sepoys of the Delhi garrison—there were no

British troops—joined the Meerut mutineers and released the prisoners in the jail, and attacked the arsenal. The small ammunition dump in the city was blown up by Lt. Willoughby and other brave men, but the main arsenal with its stores of munitions passed into the hands of the mutineers. Bahadur Shah, who had welcomed the mutineers, was recognized as emperor, and his sons tried to take command. The British in the city and cantonments were murdered, though some were taken into the Fort, where the followers of the last Mughul put them to death. On 13th May Lord Canning got news of the mutiny. It had been telegraphed to Lahore by two brave Eurasian telegraphists from Delhi before they made their escape. John Lawrence at Lahore was at once empowered to take what steps he could, and Henry Lawrence was to deal with Oudh.

But there was much delay. Certain regiments in the Punjab had to be disarmed, for now no risks could be taken. Finally a force to take Delhi was concentrated at Karnal, but the death of the Commander-in-Chief delayed it, and it was not till 8th June that the force reached the ridge before Delhi. Among them was the famous Guides under Captain Daly, who had marched 567 miles in three weeks, or twenty-seven miles a day, the Sirmoor Gurkhas, now the 1st Gurkhas, and the 60th Rifles from Meerut. The emperor at Delhi issued a proclamation ordering the rebels to advance and destroy his enemies. The princes tried to take command, but they proved incapable, and finally control was assumed by the rebel officers themselves, and the Fort was invaded by sepoys demanding pay. There was also Hindu-Muslim dissension when the Muslims hoisted the green standard over the Jami Masjid and the Hindus objected. An attack at once might have been successful, but the Punjab forces were weary, and the Bareilly brigade which had mutined now joined the rebels. The siege of Delhi went on for three months, and the delay in taking it and breaking up the chief place where the mutinous troops had some semblance of national objectives to sustain them, had its influence on the progress of the Mutiny elsewhere. Aligarh, Agra, Nasirabad and Bareilly were scenes of mutiny among the troops. This was followed by Lucknow and Jhansi, and attempts at Allahabad and Benares, while the contingents at Gwalior and Indore followed the dangerous example encouraged by the seeming lack of counter offensive. The Bengal native army was in the process of breaking

up. There were exceptions—the 47th at Mirzapur remained loyal, and there were parts of many battalions and regiments which remained firm. The 13th Native Infantry at Lucknow mainly kept faith, and from them and other remnants who held the Baillie Guard in the Residency was raised that distinguished Rajput battalion, the Lucknow Regiment, still addressed on parade as Baillie Guard.

The Madras and Bombay armies were practically unaffected, nor would the Bengal army have gone if steps had been taken quickly. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, John Colvin, betrayed indecision, and as a result the mutiny of the Bareilly brigade occurred, which caused much trouble and nearly precipitated a crisis at Agra.

The Punjab

Here measures were taken in time. Doubtful battalions were disarmed as a precaution by Robert Montgomery at Lahore and Edwardes at Peshawar with John Nicholson's help. Punjabi troops took part in disarming sepoy battalions. The Sikh chiefs, especially Patiala, raised levies, and soon thirteen battalions and four cavalry regiments with 8,000 levies were on the way to join the force on the Ridge at Delhi. This reached Delhi under Nicholson at the beginning of September, and on the 14th the attack began with the famous mining of the Kashmir Gate. It took five days and the loss of the gallant Nicholson to clear the streets. The Fort was captured, and the cmperor and his sons escaped to Humayan's tomb, where they were captured, and the sons, trying to escape, or suspected of doing so, shot down by Hodson, the famous commander of Hodson's Horse, later to die at the final relief of Lucknow. The capture of Delhi really broke the Mutiny.

Lucknow

Here Henry Lawrence had moved the women and children into the Residency on 25th May. The Fort would have been more easily defendable, but he had collected grain in the cellars of the houses round the Residency, which in itself was not very, suitable for defence as it was surrounded except on the river side by houses. The troops in the cantonments over the river on the Sitapur road mutinied, except the loyal 500, on the 30th, and there was rioting in the city. The

only British regiment was the 32nd Foot (the present Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry). This was the signal for the Oudh troops to mutiny at Sitapur, Gonda, Partabgarh, Bahraich, Sultanpur, Fyzabad, Secrora, all over Oudh, though Lucknow itself was not immediately affected; but an injudicious attempt to break up the sepoys mustering at Chinhat outside Lucknow was repulsed on 30th June, and from that day the siege of the Residency commenced. Two days later Lawrence was wounded by a shell, and died after two days more. As the inscription on his grave in the Residency cemetery still reads, 'He tried to do his duty.'

The siege of the Residency is a measure of the chances of the mutineers to have any hope of success, and an example of their futility. Ten thousand sepoys with numerous guns besieged, in an exposed position unsuitable for defence, a small force of one British battalion and civilian volunteers, among whom were the boys of La Martiniere School, amounting to a thousand at most, and seven hundred sepoys, who held out for three months alone, and then were strengthened by Havelock and Outram's relief, and finally freed by Sir Colin Campbell in the middle of November, though Lucknow was not cleared of the enemy until February 1858.

Suppression of the Mutiny

In order to defeat the revolted sepoys it was considered necessary to proceed with care and collect a large force. Men on the spot have recorded that more rapid action with the forces available would have restored order much more quickly, and the ease with which civil government was restored in places like the Meerut area and around Benares and Allahabad and all along the route to Cawnpore seems to confirm this.

At Cawnpore the general, Sir Hugh Wheeler, on receipt of the news from Meerut was in a difficult position. He only had four hundred British troops, some invalids, and there were four doubtful sepoy units. The magazine was the obvious place for defence, but he feared to provoke a mutiny by changing the sepoy guard, and threw up some feeble entrenchments near where the church now stands. On 4th and 5th June the 2nd Light Cavalry Regiment mutinied, and was followed by the 1st and 53rd Native Infantry, and

the other battalion followed when Wheeler opened with his guns. Still a few remained faithful and joined the Europeans in the entrenchment. The position was hopeless, and the Nana Sahib had now joined the mutineers, with whom he had been in communication. On 26th June Wheeler surrendered on a promise of safe conduct down the river to Allahabad. The safe conduct was not carried out—the survivors, men, women and children were fired on in the boats, and the men were killed, while the women and children were imprisoned by the Nana Sahib. There is little doubt that he was responsible for the massacre, as a diary of the time* states before the surrender that treachery was intended the whole time. The losses incurred in the attack on the entrenchment had determined the Nana Sahib to engineer a surrender, and then massacre the survivors when they had given up their arms. Only two officers escaped and made their way down river to Allahabad. The men survivors who had been imprisoned were killed shortly after, and the women and children imprisoned in a small house called the Bibigarh. On 15th July, after days of misery and ill-treatment, they too were massacred by the Nana Sahib's orders, as were those who had been brought in from Farrukhabad. This, as well as the killing of women and children at Meerut and Delhi, was the chief cause which led to the severity with which the mutineers and others who had joined them were treated. Naturally some innocent men were included in the reprisals, and some incidents can admit of no excuse. There were, on the other hand, many who remained loyal, and not all the sepoys had joined in the mutiny, some having gone into the entrenchment with the troops. The name Cawnpore has had an evil effect on relations between Indians and Europeans, and left behind it feelings which did not soon die down. The reason for the massacre has been said to have been the approach of the relieving column under Havelock, and the fear that the women would inform on the perpetrators of atrocities. But it appears that the Nana Sahib believed he would win, and it was apparently natural ferocity or his inability to control the assorted crowd of mutineers, followers and desperadoes from the city and surrounding country who had swarmed in that caused the massacre.

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* Diary of the Mutiny at Cawnpur, U.P. Hist. J., 1926, Vol. 3, Pt. II.

Relief of Lucknow

General Neill from Madras had arrived in Calcutta with the Madras Fusiliers, and proceeded to make good the route up river. The unreliable regiments at Barrackpore were disarmed, and by 3rd June he readied Benares, where the disarming of the doubtful Sikh battalion was bungled and some fighting occurred before the mutineers were cut down or scattered. With Benares secure Allahabad was the next stage. He arrived there on 7th July, and news of his approach caused a mutiny of the sepoy battalions and a murder of officers. The Fort, however, was held by a few British invalids and Captain Brasyer with a company of the Ludhiana regiment of Sikhs, other companies of which had mutinied under bad handling at Benares. Neill's measures to put down the mutiny at Allahabad were stern and ruthless, but he was consumed by an overriding anxiety as to the fate of Cawnpore, and felt he had no time for discrimination—at any rate many innocent persons suffered, as they always do suffer in similar situations. Major Renaud was sent on in advance to Cawnpore on 30th June, and on 7th July General Havelock, who had now arrived with reinforcements, set put to catch him up.

He joined up with Renaud on the 12th and entered Cawnpore on the 17th, after defeating the Nana Sahib and a much larger force. Neill, who had now arrived, showed similar sternness in taking reprisals for the massacre of the women and children. In the circumstances it can be understood, though not approved. But this was only a stage on the way to Lucknow, and now began Havelock's attempts to advance on Lucknow. He had few troops, and had to leave some to hold Cawnpore, where the Nana Sahib was still in the vicinity. He made two attempts to advance to Lucknow, but he had too few troops, and though he defeated the opposing mutineers, sickness and lack of reserves compelled him to return to Cawnpore. Seeing this the Oudh talukdars, who had not actively supported the mutineers, now began to assist them with men and supplies, and also delivered over to them, with the inevitable result, the European refugees whom some of them had taken in from the stations throughout Oudh where mutinies had occurred. Outram was now appointed Chief Commissioner of Oudh, and given reinforcements and the chief command. Wisely, however, Outram refused to take over the command from the more experienced general, and remained

under his command during the advance on Lucknow, though he could not refrain from interfering occasionally, generally to the disadvantage of operations. Delhi had now fallen, and on 21st September the final bid for Lucknow was made with 3,000 men. They reached the Alambagh outside the city, and on the 25th made the final effort to break through to the Residency. The relief, however, was rather the strengthening of the garrison than its relief, and Havelock and Outram were now in their turn besieged and had to await relief themselves. The fall of Delhi had caused those who escaped to come to Lucknow, and the talukdars' retainers also swelled the besiegers. It was necessary to await the assembling of the reinforcements from England and from the troops who had been intended for China.

Central India

It will be remembered that the Gwalior contingent had mutinied in June, though Sindhia held firm. At the beginning of July the Indore contingent also mutinied. Sir Hugh Rose was given command of a Bombay column and set to work to restore order. He put down the mutiny at Mhow, and then marched on Jhansi, where the wife of the late raja had seized the opportunity to recover the estate lapsed under Dalhousie's system. Before this Sir Colin Campbell with the reinforcements had reached Cawnpore early in November.

He found the place threatened by the Gwalior contingent now under Tantia Topi, one of the Nana Sahib's lieutenants who had been active in the operations against General Wheeler in Cawnpore, and bore his share of the responsibility for the massacre. Leaving a small force to hold him off, Sir Colin Campbell pushed on to Lucknow, and on 17th November occupied the Residency quarter after heavy fighting. At last thewomen and children could be evacuated, and Outram with 4,500 men was left in the Alambagh to hold the mutineers, while Sir Colin made a hurried return to Cawnpore to deal with Tantia Topi. On 6th December he drove him off, but failed to defeat him sufficiently to prevent his marching to Jhansi, where the rani was now besieged by Sir Hugh Rose. Jhansi, however, was captured on 3rd April 1858, and Sir Hugh Rose now turned his attention to Tantia Topi and the Gwalior contingent and defeated them in two engagements. The campaign seemed over when Tantia Topi and the rani, who had escaped from Jhansi, marched to Gwalior

and were joined by Sindhia's army, which had been so far kept uneasily quiet by the efforts of his minister, Dinkar Rao. On 1st June they proclaimed the Nana Sahib Peshwa. But this was too late. Rose marched to Gwalior and defeated Tantia Topi without difficulty. In the action the rani, who fought as a man, was killed and Tantia Topi fled. He was pursued but was able to evade capture until early in the following year, when he was at last captured and paid the penalty for rebellion and murder. The Nana Sahib fled to the jungles of Nepal and was never apprehended.

Meanwhile Sir Colin Campbell had begun a slow but methodical clearing of the Doab. This done, at the end of February 1858 he undertook the settlement of Oudh, where Outram was besieged in the Alambagh by no less than 120,000 men. This proved to require some stiff fighting, and 30,000 managed to escape and continued their resistance after Lucknow was cleared on 21st March. The subjugation of Oudh, being in the nature of a guerrilla operation, took some time. The talukdars had been confirmed in their resistance by the Governor-General's proclamation that the lands of those who had assisted the mutineers would be confiscated. Most of the talukdars had done this, and it was not until Outram had prevailed on Canning to announce that immediate submission would mean better terms that they showed any tendency to submit. However, by the end of the year Oudh was free of rebels, and the work of pacification could go on.

There had been during the suppression of the Mutiny many cases of wholesale punishments, in which there is no doubt innocent men perished. The minds of the relieving forces were inflamed by the atrocities committed on helpless women and children. Reprisals, however, generally lead to worse excesses and feelings of desperation. The policy of Canning which had at first hindered the rapid suppression of the Mutiny when he deferred stern measures with suspected regiments, was in the long run an advantage for it led to a clemency in the treatment of the less involved which restored confidence. Some villagers had welcomed the opportunity of anarchy to kill moneylenders and others who had oppressed them, but they soon came back to peaceful ways once civil government was re-established.

The great princes had not joined in, and had supported, some hesitatingly it is true, the forces of law and order. Some smaller zemindars and many of the talukdars of Oudh had, when Delhi still held out and the Residency in Lucknow remained besieged, consulted their own interests by joining the mutineers, while the tribes like the Gujars and others accustomed to robbery and violence welcomed the opportunity for loot. But it was the sepoy army which was the core of the revolt, and not the people, and there was no central direction or national idea behind it. Without their officers the sepoy battalions fought bravely but lacked initiative, and had no real objective. Indeed, the early success was only due to the unexpected nature of the revolt and the lack of troops to suppress it, or the lack of resolution to take immediate action. It never at any time had the slightest chance of success. The pity is that it was ever allowed to materialize. This was the reason that led to the abolition of the East India Company, which was saddled with the blame which belonged to all.

The Mutiny is a landmark in the history of the British connection with India. It was also a step in the road of development. It underlined the dangers of a mercenary army when there was no longer any scope for the employment of that army, as the action of the Sikh army in disregarding its government and attacking the Company's forces had once before underlined it. Malcolm and later Munro had recognized this danger. But the armies of the time were all mercenaries in the ultimate sense, and it was only one of the three Indian armies which mutinied. Thus while the Mutiny was a stage in Indian history it was largely fortuitous. There was at the time no idea of an Indian nation—and it was not a revolt against a foreign occupying power. The sepoys rose as Thomas Munro had prophesied, 'not for the sake of asserting the liberty of their country, but of obtaining power and plunder.' The idea of a revolt for liberty was not within their mental horizon except for their own liberty to do what they liked. The idea of liberty was not then even remotely glimpsed at in any mind in India, but the whole character of British administration after the Mutiny was directed to two things—the creation of an Indian nation, and the leading of it towards eventual independence. This may have been accelerated by the Mutiny, but it was not a conscious result of it.

(From author's *A History of India : From the Earliest Times to 1939*)

12

THE SEPOY MUTINY IN BENGAL, 1857

By

E. De Valbezen

THE most terrible crisis which has ever threatened the fortunes of England began on Sunday, May 10, 1857, at the station of Mirut, at the foot of the Himalaya. When Philip II's Armada set sail from Cadiz, when Napoleon I was organising his legions on the coast of Boulogue, when on the evening of June 18,1815, the remnant of the Guards was awaiting the arrival of the Prussians on the heights of La Ilaye Sainte, the future of England was not darker than on the day when the sepoys of Mirut raised the staudard of revolt, and gave the signal for a conflagration which spread in a few Jays from the North-West Provinces to the furthest district of Central India. It is the fashion nowadays in England, amongst a certain political party, to speak lightly of India, and of the important part played by this magnificent dependence of the British Empire. Brilliant paradoxes cannot, however, triumph over the logic of facts. British India certainly does not furnish the mother-country with a yearly tribute of ready money such as Java furnishes to Holland or Cuba to Spain; but the resources of its budget permit England to keep up sufficient military forces to cause the weight of her sword to he felt in the balance in all the great European questions. We may court by thousands the number of English families who find an honourable means of existence in official positions, or in business in India; British

capital is spread by thousands of millions over the three Presidencies in indigo and tea plantations, in railways, banks, and houses of business. For England, the preservation of the vast domains of the Honourable East, India Company is a question of to be or not to be. India once lost, Great Britain, with disorder in her finances, in conflict with the political troubles caused by the ruin of her middle class, would no doubt fall in a few years to the rank of Holland or Denmark. The skill of; her statesmen and the courage of her army were to preserve her from these terrible contingencies. Almost everywhere, without exception, the men in authority in India showed themselves equal to the occasion in the hour of danger. Before a single soldier sent from England had disembarked on the shores of the Hooghly, the mutiny had been put down, and there was nothing left to do for the new comers but to complete the work of the victors of Delhi and Lucknow.

In this supreme struggle, where each man did his duty, English history became richer by many new and heroic personages, forming a constellation of illustrious soldiers, in which stasnd out the names of Henry Lawrence, Havelock, Nicholson, Neil, and Hodson. These all fell on the field of honour, in defence of the cause of civilisation and true progress. Let us, children of modern and liberal Europe, bow with respect and without reservation before their tombs !

The great men who raised the splendid edifice of British power in India had understood, most of them, that unlimited aggrandisement would be far from adding to its solidity, and that the company's task would be all the more difficult the more extensive its dominions became. These previsions of human wisdom were completely realised in the month of May, 1857. More than half a century had passed since the day when the Marquess of Wellesley extended the inodest conquests of Clive and Hastings from the kingdom of Mysore to the North-West Provinces. The formidable Sick (Sikh) army had melted away some years before on the battle-fields of Sobraon and Goujerate.[1] An extensive system of alliances with the native princes gave the country the aspect of a vast confederation under the suzerainty of England—a marvellous empire whose basis was but clay.[2] In this immense country live millions of Asiatics, unchanging in their habits and their beliefs, who are retained by apathy, timidity, and fear, much more than by loyal gratitude, under the yoke of England.[3]

For a hundred years already, under a Government advancing in progress, India has seen order and the supremacy of the law succeed to disturbance and anarchy. But these benefits of the conquest have passed by without making any impression on the Hindoo race; the action of their European masters has not penetrated the rock of native society even by the smallest fissure. However extraordinary this phenomenon may be, it is not a. new one in India. Before the East. India Company was founded, a foreign government had for centuries ruled uncontrolled from Cape Comorin to the fool of the Himalaya. Regardless of those principles of humanity and religious toleration, which are the honour and strength of Europe of: our nineteenth century, the Mussulman Emperors never recoiled from any means, however violent, in order to extirpate the Brahmin religion from the soil of India., Their power, their fanaticism, their cruelties did not succeed in shaking the Indian institutions. For 800 years, the sacred races bore the yoke of the impure conquerors; and when the throne of the Moguls fell to pieces, the only traces that remained were tombs and mosques, a few thousand Mussulman converts, lost amongst millions of Hindoos, and annuls, wherein the different phases of a history (which may he comprised in two words—greatness and decay) are uniformly written in letters of blood.

To explain this crystallisation of the races of India, it is necessary to go back to the distinctive features of the tribes who invaded the country in the early days of history, and who brought with them civil and religious institutions which assumed this indelible character—a religion fantastic in its dogmas, degrading in its customs; a sacred language so inimitable that it forms the basis of all human languages; society divided into four principal classes—priests, soldiers, farmers, labourers (brahmin, kehatrija, vaissa, soudra), and village communities united by the double link of blood and property in common, where a local administration supplies all the needs of a simple race.[4] in short, all those motives incomprehensible to other men, which guide the Indian in his habits and his actions, and which render his interior life inaccessible to the exterior circumstances of politics. The faithful inheritors of the traditions of the first ages met on the Indus the warriors of Alexander the Great; and, overcome in the struggle, passed under the yoke of the Macedonian chiefs. Other generations, no less faithful, supported for

eight hundred years the iron yoke of the Emperor of Delhi. For the last century their children have accepted the laws of the East India Company. Everything has changed around him—the Hindoo alone has remained unchanged, In vain England has absorbed all political influence—all internal rivalries; in vain she has crushed all obstacles which opposed her victorious march; in vain do all the conquests of Rome pale before her Asiatic Empire. Seven hundred and fifty English magistrates or administrators, 25,000 soldiers of the royal army, a few thousand European soldiers in the immediate service of the Company, a native army, commanded by 4,000 English officers, it is true, sufficed to maintain under the sceptre of Great Britain a territory of 1,400,000 square miles, and a population of 150,000,000. But this power, surrounded by all the pomp of the East, protected by the living forces of civilisation, stopped short before barriers which neither brute force nor intellect can surmount. The highest representative of European might could not induce a beggar of the lowest caste, expiring on his pallet in the agony of hunger, to accept from his hand a mouthful of rice ! A hundred years of Christian and liberal government have scarcely touched the surface of the constitution of Indian society;[5] and we advance nothing beyond the truth when we affirm that the uncontested power of England in India has not, and never will have any other solid basis but that of European bayonets. The very title of these sketches makes it needless to add that the East India Company was to find its most formidable enemies in the native soldiers of the Bengal army.

Before going further, it is indispensable to say a few words of the history and organisation of the Anglo-Indian army. The formation of native troops in the Company's service goes back to the middle of the last century. In 1748 a corps of sepoys was first organised in the Presidency of Madras, where the authorities, by the way, only followed the example given by the French at Ponidicherry. A detachment composed of European sailors, taken from ships, by fair means or foul, was added to the native contingent. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which put an end to hostilities between the English and the French in India, did not bring about the dissolution of the little Madras army. Politics were beginning to play a great part in the affairs of the Company, which was mixing itself up more and more in the quarrels of the native rulers. Up to this time, however,

the establishment of the English in Bengal had preserved its exclusively commercial character. It was the native troops of Madras and the 39th Regiment of the Royal army, a regiment whose colours have since borne the motto, '*Primus in Indis*,' that defeated, under the illustrious Clive, the Nabob of Bengal at the battle of Plassey, June 17, 1757. The remembrance of this day, so great in its results—as it opened the series of victories which gave a hundred and fifty million subjects to England—is not yet forgotten in India. We shall have occasion to class among the indirect causes of the sepoy mutiny a popular prophecy which announced that the hundredth year of England's domination should also be the last.

After this victory Clive organised at Calcutta a sepoy contingent, on the system adopted at Madras.[6] The political complications which followed the Company's quarrels with the princes it had extemporised, the efforts of the Emperor of Delhi to recover his supremacy over the provinces he had ceded to the English, led to a rapid increase of the Anglo-Indian forces. This increase enabled us to finish the war successfully in 1765 by the conquest of Bihar, and by the diminution of the power of the Emperor of Delhi and of the Nabob, the Vizier of Oude. The political conditions and interests of the Company were modified; the friend of yesterday became the foe of to-morrow. In order to defend the Emperor of Delhi against the attacks of the Mahrattas, if was necessary to occupy Allahabad, Cawnpore, Fattygarh; and the occupation of these distant points necessitated a great increase in the military forces of Bengal, in 1786, when Lord Cornwallis arrived for the first time at Calcutta as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the three Presidencies, the Bengal army was composed of thirty-six sepoy and six European battalions, a little more than 40,000 men. But these forces were only formidable on paper. The Company's army, badly organised and badly paid, disgraced itself by continual mutinies, and the white troops had constantly to be employed in keeping the native ones to their duty, or reciprocally; for the European regiments, hitherto exclusively composed of sailors and deserters, only remained faithful from the hope of pay, often uncertain, and always insufficient. The new governor-general had the honour and merit of coordinating all these impure elements. Both soldiers and officers were paid with regularity, and discipline and military

instruction were strictly insisted upon. Lord Cornwallis can be said to have prepared the victories of his successors by leaving behind him a well-organised army.

The days of the native powers were numbered. The Marquess of Wellesley had left Europe, as be proudly announced, to govern India from a throne with the sceptre of a statesman, and not from behind a counter with the yard-measure of a shopkeeper. From the very beginning he applied himself to establish in the most incontestable manner the superiority of the Government which he representod over that of the native princes ; the English cantonments were pushed forward in the Deccan to the north of Delhi. The policy of conquest required great military means: the Bengal army was increased to fifty-six battalions, and a corresponding increase took place in those of the Madras and Bombay presidencies. Territorial extension continued under the successors of the illustrious brother of the Duke of Wellington; and the first half of the century witnessed successively the conquest of Delhi, the dethronement of the Peisehwah, the ruin of the Mahrattas, the Burmah war, the Cabul expedition, and the two Punjab wars. To meet these incessant military needs. to provide for the security of their now conquests, the Company's forces received considerable additions; and in 1857, at the moment of the mutiny, they were divided as follows[7]:—

At the beginning of the mutiny the majority of the corps[8] did not possess their full complement of 1,000 men, which was the normal strength of the battalions of the royal army; the sepoy battalions numbered 1,100 men in Bengal, and from 800 to 900 in Madras and Bombay. The effective force of the regular cavalry regiments amounted to 600 sabres, both in the royal and in the native army. The artillery, which was entirely in the Company's service, was composed chiefly of Europeans, and only a few batteries were manned by natives. In round numbers, the total of the regular forces of the three presidencies can be estimated at 220,000 men of native troops, and 45,000 men of European.

We must remark on finishing this enumeration, in order to avoid all confusion in the mind of the reader, that in the following pages we shall principally occupy ourselves with the Bengal army, which bore alone the whole burden of the Mutiny of 1857.

The preceding table shows that the effective force of cavalry was very feeble, especially for a country so favourable to its use as the great plains in the North of India. But besides this, eighteen regiments of irregular cavalry were attached to the Bengal army. This force only differed from the regular cavalry by the number of European officers, and by certain modifications in the conditions of enlistment and pay; most of the troopers were drawn from the middle class of the people. The staff of the so-called irregular regiments only comprised five Europeans—an officer in command, a second under him, an adjutant, a doctor, and a sergeant-major. Notwithstanding the length of this nomenclature, we must still say a few words about certain other corps created according to necessity, and on a different base. The Company's representatives had not closed their eyes to the dangers which might result from the immense development given to the Bengal army. In the recently annexed countries, regiments of local irregular infantry had been organised to preserve at one and the same time the security of the frontiers and internal peace; for example, the regiments of Arracan and Assam, four of Goorkhas, and ten of Sikhs; the latter, recruited from among the Punjaubis and the tribes of Afghanistan, co-operated with the English in the most active and devoted manner during the terrible campaign of 1857. We have still to speak of the contingents furnished by the native princes in order to complete this summary of the military forces of the Bengal Government. All the Indian sovereigns who had preserved any sort of independence were bound, without exception, to the English rule by treaties under which the contracting parties guaranteed one another help and protection in case of need. But the English, fully conscious of the spirit of disorder which presided over military expenditure in the native states, had taken care to specify the forces on which they could count, and to cause the revenue of certain districts to be assigned for ever to the maintenance of those troops, and of their regimental staffs, composed of officers detached from the Company's service. The oldest of these contingents, that of the Nizam of Hyderabad, had been organised at the end of the last century; those of Gwalior and of Oude were of more recent origin. These contingents were not directly under the control of the commander-in-chief of the Company's army and, to save appearances, his orders and instructions reached the diplomatic

residents accredited at the native courts, by the intermediary of the Foreign Affairs department. At the beginning of their military establishment, the Company had followed by economy the irregular system; a captain commanded each battalion and a subaltern each company. Advancement was by seniority on the general list of all the officers;[9] from whence resulted great slowness in promotion, and the choice of officers quite unfit for service through age or infirmities. There has already been occasion to remark that in the first days the greatest disorder reigned in all matters of pay, equipment, accounts, and administration; and that the regiments, both European and native, were not less wanting in military instruction than in discipline. Besides this, the social and hierarchical position of the officers was ill-defined. Each lieutenant-colonel of the royal army on his arrival in India received a local brevet, in virtue of which he assumed a superior rank to that of the officers in the Company's service, whose authority was often contested even by officers of the royal army inferior to them in rank.

Lord Cornwallis put an cud to this state of things in 1788, abolished local brevets for superior officers of the royal army; and as commander-in-chief granted to officers of the Anglo-Indian service brevets corresponding to the grades they held from the Court of Directors. Equality was henceforth established between the officers of both services. A few years later, in 1796, these reforms were completed by the entire transformation of the Anglo-Indian staff. Regimental promotion up to the rank of major took the place of promotion by seniority on a general list of each presidency, but for superior officers promotion still remained by seniority, in each branch of the service, on a general list. From this time forth, the highest honours of the military hierarchy were open to Anglo-Indian officers, who, under the previous *regime*, had never got beyond the rank of lieutenant-colonel, unless by exception, as in the case of Olive. At the same time, the number of general officers of the royal army who might be called to high military commands in India was fixed at two for Bengal, one for Madras, and one for Bombay. As to the regimental staff of the corps composing the regular native infantry, it was definitively settled thus: 1 colonel (a general in active service or on half pay, but always absent from the corps, as in the royal army), 2 lieutenant-colonels, 2 majors, 8 captains, 22 lieutenants, and 11

ensigns. This organisation stood the test of time without essential modification, and at the beginning of the mutiny the staff of a native regiment included 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 7 captains, 11 lieutenants, and 7 ensigns.[10]

This 'cadre' would have been more than sufficient for the regiment's instruction and discipline, but in most of the corps it was fur from being complete. At the Company's outset, in the character of a political power, it was customary to confide to Anglo-Indian officers all the functions of the military administration of the Commissariat, of the stud, and of other civil or diplomatic employments, accorded to the capacity of the individual and the necessity of the moment; These exceptional cases soon became general. The difficulty of finding men worthy of trust; and familiar with the language and habits of the natives, necessitated the employment of officers in the Indian service as judges, collectors, and magistrates in the newly-acquired territory. They, however, retained their right to promotion on the regimental list. These appointments were much desired by everyone as being bettor paid, and giving a better position find a more comfortable existence. We have seen how, through a spirit of economy, and in order to avoid increasing immoderately the Bengal army, the Court of Directors had provided auxiliary forces under the name of irregular local, provincial, and police regiments, forming the contingents of the native princes, whose staffs were exclusively furnished by the officers of the Indian service.

This constant resort to cadre of the army pushed to an extreme extent reduced the staff of the regular army to its lowest point, and in many cases regiments were commanded for months together by captains or even by lieutenants. The regular and irregular cavalry of the Bengal army was almost exclusively composed of Mussnlmen belonging to Rohilkande and to the Doab of the Ganges. The seventy-four regiments of regular infantry, with the exception of a few companies of Sikhs, belonged to the kingdom of Oude and to the North-West Provinces. The pay and the retiring pensions were relatively liberal, and were always regularly paid; volunteers vied with one another in flocking to the Company's standard. The difficulty of choice amongst so many candidates was so great for a long time that only men of the highest castes, such as Brahmins and Rajpoots,

were admitted into the ranks, in whom physical beauty and warlike qualities were to be found in the highest degree. Former wise rules, which prescribed the systematic mixture of religious nationalities and castes in the infantry corps, had almost fallen into disuse. On the eve of the mutiny, there was little fault to be found with the Bengal army from the point of view of instruction, discipline, and the physique of the men. The average height of the sepoys was superior to that of all European armies, with the exception, perhaps, of the Russian Guard.[11]

These fine soldiers—who were scrupulously clean, docile, smooth-tongued, and absolute strangers to the vice of drunkenness, that perfidious source of nearly all acts of insubordination in European armies—observed instinctively the strictest discipline; and in many regiments the punishment list remained blank for years. The native Bengal army had taken an active and honourable part in the dangers of the last wars. Its annals were enriched with acts of heroic valour, and certain corps were united to the most renowned regiments of the royal army by the powerful bonds of military confraternity. Services such as these did not remain unrewarded, and the officers, as well as the Court of Directors, treated the sepoys like favoured children, and were proud of commanding men of ancient races whose well-authenticated genealogies showed a long list of ancestors and whose military qualifies and successes were patent to the whole world. The Bengal army, in a word, constituted a sort of aristocracy among the military forces of the Indian service.[12] We must remark that the marvellous progress which, thanks to steam, had taken place in the communication between Europe and Asia, soon modified considerably the original relations between the sepoy and his superiors. At the beginning of the conquest, and during the first thirty years of the century, Anglo-Indian officers—separated from their countries by a six months' voyage at least, exiled for life to India, bachelors for the most part, or united by temporary ties to native women—found a sort of adoptive family in their regiment. An officer of sepoys added a sort of paternal authority to that derived from his rank, and in consequence customs of a Homeric and patriarchal character, which are altogether out of date, were introduced in the interior life of the regiment.[13] Under the influence of rail-roads and steamboats, Anglo-Indian existence acquired new interests. An

invasion of accomplished young ladies, of enterprising widows, peopled the solitudes of India, and gave to officers of sepoys the hitherto unknown joys and anxieties of domestic life. They now turned their eyes to Europe, and only considering India as anything but a land of exile where they had come to seek means of bringing up a family. They no longer expected their regiments to fill up a void in their lives, having interests elsewhere; the familiar intimacy of early days ceased between the men and their officers, or at least considerably diminished.[14]

It must be said, moreover, that diverse measures of military red-tapeism had done a great deal towards diminishing the authority and prestige of European officers. For many years the spirit of exaggerated centralisation, that bane of civilised Europe, had assumed exorbitant proportions, and had pushed its pernicious doctrines to the utmost extent under the influence of the superior officer—the commander-in-chief; and, following his example, those of the Bombay and Madras armies absorbed the whole power of rewarding or punishing, and even allowed the sepoys to appeal to head-quarters from the decisions of their immediate chiefs. This supervision over the regimental hierarchy bore its fruits, and very bitter ones. The officers, always afraid of being reprimanded or disapproved, only exercised timidly the right of command, and considered that they had fulfilled their task when they were able to maintain, at least in appearance, order and tranquillity in the corps confided to them. In order to do this they relied on the sepoys, whose birth or intelligence gave them a sort of supremacy amongst their comrades. The latter profited by the trust reposed in them to introduce their relations and friends into the corps. Regiments recruited in this way became large families, united by the ties of blood and interest, where all sorts of intrigues and dangerous associations could develop themselves. So that we can understand the obstinate confidence of the Anglo-Indian officers, who, to the last, rejecting- all evidence, persisted in believing in the devotion and faithfulness of their soldiers, especially if we take into account the habits of dissimulation and mendacity so common among the natives. How much blood, and how many disasters this infatuation, honourable to them, no doubt—for the officers were among the first victims—was to cost England! It is credible, although the thing does not rest on unimpeachable proof, that other causes

contributed to encourage bad passions and wild hopes in the ranks of the Bengal army. Those among the native princes who were either dispossessed or held in tutelage had for years cherished the dream of a mutiny in the native army; the troops, too, had without doubt always numbered in their ranks ambitious, active, and intelligent soldiers, who formerly could have risen to the first rank in the service of their natural rulers. These men of energy, finding themselves powerless to break down the prejudices of that most exclusive caste of all—the English — and having no other prospect after a life of faithful and loyal service than the position of subahdar-major,[15] must often have longed for the day when, at the head of their comrades, they should drive out their European masters; and, as in the good old days of Scindiah and Holkar, carve out for themselves a large share in Indian dignities—a pair of epaulettes or a crown ! The extraordinary good luck which for nearly a century attended the English undertakings in India, discouraged the most adventurous spirits. But in 1842 the charm was broken by the disasters of the retreat from Cabul.[16] The Hindoo and Mussulman sepoys no longer thought their masters invincible, and a spirit of discontent and disaffection crept in amongst them. The tribes of the Indian Caucasus, supported by the mutiny of the Afghan regiments in the pay of England, had forced the Europeans to evacuate their 'conquests beyond the Indus after immense reverses. This was a threatening example, and was calculated to impress the native army and population. Why should that which had proved successful beyond the Khyber Pass not prove equally so on the banks of the Ganges and of the Jumna? Could a handful of foreign soldiers resist the efforts of millions of Indians, backed by the native forces of the Bengal army? For fifteen years this problem agitated many minds amongst the mercenaries of the Company. Ambition, the thirst for riches, the hatred of a foreign domination are instinctive sentiments in the heart of man, and they exist just as much under a dark as under a white skin.

The exaggerated accounts of the English misfortunes in the Crimea could not fail to increase the general uneasiness, and to inflame the passions, the hatred, and the hopes of the dispossessed dynasties.[17] The archives of the palace at Delhi attest that during the siege of Sebastopol, King Mohammed Shah Bahadour sent a secret

mission to the Shah of Persia, asking for help against the English. Was it likely, then, that the heir presumptive would remain unmoved by the events of the battle-fields of Inkermann and Balaclava, when he knew fall well that on the death, of the reigning emperor sovereign honours, the right of residence in the palace of his ancestors, and the pension of twelve lakhs of rupees enjoyed by his father, would be withdrawn from him?

In the first days of 1857, Nabob Daudou Pan, better known under the name of Nana Sahib, the same who played such an important and odious part in the mutiny, left his residence of Bet-hour, near Cawnpore, in order to take a journey to Delhi, and soon after another to Lucknow. Most probably polities had something to do with his movements, which were totally at variance with the stay-at-home habits of the native princes. Perhaps, without conspiring in the full meaning of the word, the dispossessed masters of the soil, well aware, as they were, of the elements of discord fermenting in the native army, deemed it necessary to come to some mutual understanding, in order to be ready for any eventuality. It may be admitted, then, though subsequent investigations almost completely failed to discover any proof of it, that in the early part of 1857 the native princes and their agents were not idle, and that they neglected no means of exciting disaffection in the native army, especially amongst the troops stationed round the great centres, such as Delhi, Cawnpore, and Lucknow.

In the midst of all these elements of. disintegration, the fatal innovation of greased cartridges for the Enfield rifle, with which the European and native troops had recently been armed, made its appearance. Those of the men who were dissatisfied naturally affirmed that the object of introducing new ammunition into the service was only to deprive all the sepoys of their caste, and to oblige them to embrace Christianity. Hindoos and Mussulmen were equally threatened; for the cartridges served out to the former were said to be encased with cow's fat, and those intended for the latter with pig's fat. These foolish rumours excited almost to madness minds nourished in the impure superstitions and exterior practices of the Brahmin religion. The following anecdote, borrowed from the Memoirs of Colonel Skinner, an officer whose name is gloriously connected with the campaigns of the beginning of the century, gives

a very just idea of the all-powerfulness of the spirit of caste. He was wounded in an encounter with the troops of the Rajah of Oomeara, January 31, 1800, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and only came to his senses the next morning at dawn. His trowsers alone had been left him by the marauders, so that, to escape the burning rays of the sun, he crawled towards some neighbouring bushes. Two wounded men belonging to his regiment joined him there. One, a subahdar (native captain) had his leg shattered above the knee, the other, a jemidar (native lieutenant), had received a lance-thrust in the body. The three wretched beings were devoured by thirst, but not a living creature could be descried; and they spent the day longing for death. Their prayers were not heard, and night approached. The sky was clear, the moon was bright, the cold was intense. Silence was only broken by the cries of the wounded calling for water with a dying voice, and by the gnashing of the teeth of the animals devouring the dead bodies. Several times jackals advanced towards the colonel and his companions, who were obliged to make a noise and throw stones to drive them away. At last day broke; and in the dim light the wounded men saw a man and an old woman going over the battlefield, and giving each person a bit of bread and some water. Colonel Skinner received this unexpected succour with thankfulness, but the subahdar was a Rajpoot of high caste, and the charitable woman a 'choumar,' one of the lowest, so that he refused to accept either bread or water. In vain the Englishman tried to shake his companion's resolution, and entreated him to save his life. The subahdar answered stoically that in his condition, with merely a few hours' agony in prospect, the intensity of his sufferings was a matter of little importance. Could he deny his faith and die in a state of impurity in order to avoid pain? This instance shows that all the Influences which act on a man, such as habit, public opinion, etc, are concentrated in the case of the Indian in the spirit of caste.[18]

Native society considers a man deprived of caste as a culprit guilty of some great crime, and the hatred and contempt of his equals pursue him everywhere. His family even cannot escape public persecution. For the pariah, for his wife and his children, there exist in this world neither relations, friends, temples, nor burial, and in the next a thousand frightful torments await them for thousands and thousands of years! A Brahmin, who loses caste, can only be

compared to a great man in Europe who fails from high social rank to the lowest depths of a convict establishment. The above explanation affords grounds for affirming, however incredible it may appear to the reader, that, with regard to the sepoy mutiny, the introduction of greased cartridges was the last straw which broke the camel's back.

Here we must remark that, all-powerful as were caste prejudices where Europeans were concerned, they had ceased to exist among native soldiers through their daily contact with one another. Hindoos and Mussulmen alike, forgetting their past hatred and their religious differences, drew nearer together; and a sort of vast military freemasonry, cemented by real or imaginary interests, was formed in process of time in the Bengal army. The news of the day, or the opinions prevailing amongst the native masses, spread with extraordinary rapidity from the towns and palaces to the remotest garrisons. Must we conclude from these indications, as others have done, that organised bands kept up a secret correspondence with all the regiments, and that the conspirators intended the mutiny to break out at once in all the Indian stations on Sunday, May 10? The plan of the ringleaders is supposed to have been as follows:—To assassinate officials and officers as they came out of church, to seize immediately on the treasure, the arsenals, and the public magazines, to open the gates of the prisons; and having done this to proclaim old Mohammed Shah, Emperor of India. The outbreaks at Barrackpore and at Mirut, which could not be suppressed by the leaders, hurried on events, and prevented, so it is said, the Indian Vespers from filling with bloodshed, on the selfsame day and at the selfsame hour, all the stations of Bengal, of the north-west provinces of the kingdom of Oude, of Central India, and of the Punjab. We must hasten to add that no trustworthy discovery, either during or after the mutiny, served to confirm the existence of plots as subtly constructed as these, worthy indeed of veteran European revolutionists, but too deep for the primitive conspirators of Asia. Still, attentive observers were aware of certain premonitory signs of the coming storm.

In the first days of March, the 'ehoupangis' (Anglo-Indian police agents) carried about from village to village and town to town 'chippatis' (a sort of cake), which they pretended to have received

from unknown persons, and the origin of which the Administration with all its efforts could not discover. A strange thing, which proves the mystery surrounding the lower strata of Indian society, is that even nowadays, when the connection between the fact and the events of the morrow is clearly understood, the most competent judges cannot agree upon its signification.[19] Some see in it a sign borrowed from former customs, warning the native communities to put themselves on their guard against some great danger near at hand. Others affirm that the chiefs of the conspiracy forwarded these cakes throughout India, and that by the very hands of the agents of English authority, in order to alarm the population and make them believe that they would soon be forced by Government to adopt one and the same sort of food; in a word, to abjure their religious and caste prejudices.

In the midst of all these plottings, the most perfect discipline prevailed in the native army; for the sepoys, though they imparted to their superiors their imaginary fears, aroused by no less imaginary projects of religious propaganda, rejected with apparent horror all idea of mutiny. These protestations found too easy credence among the Anglo-Indian officers, who, if they were struck by any signs of disaffection, perceived them in other regiments, but not in their own. It was admitted that bad tendencies, fomented by the native press, and a spirit of uneasiness, existed in the ranks; but the official staff reports went no further.

Even the greatest alarmists declared that no mutiny could be more than partial, and that the Hindoo element would always be ready to fight the Mussulman, and *vice versa*. Besides this, all the men who had grown grey in the Company's service refused obstinately to believe that under the rod coat of the sepoy lay dormant the wildest terror, the most ferocious passions;—the natives themselves pierced with a surer glance the gloom of the political horizon. From the early months of 1857 business became slack; and, as in the bad days of yore, bankers, merchants, and rich men buried their diamonds and treasures.

Musketry schools had been established at the stations of Dum-Dum, Mirut, and Sialkote, to which were sent detachments from the different sepoy regiments, in order to teach the men the use of

the Enfield rifle. But the new ammunition was only distributed to a Goorkha, regiment, which had asked for it to make a show of discipline and goodwill. The agitation excited in the army by the question of greased cartridges was made known to the public by a slight fact, which exhibits so curiously the Indian customs and superstitions, that we shall mention it in some detail. A grenadier of the second native infantry regiment attached to the Dum-Dum depot[20] was going along the road to the cantonments, when a low-caste workman of the arsenal asked to drink out of the copper cup he had in his hand. The soldier, rather astonished at such a familiarity, answered that he could not allow any one to drink out of his cup, without knowing what caste he belonged to. 'You talk of caste,' the man replied, 'don't you know it will no longer exist the day that you have bitten a greased cartridge.' These words, reported by the soldier to his comrades, created such agitation in the depot, that the commanding officer made an instantaneous report to the war secretary, who, being an old officer, accustomed to respect and give way to the sepoy's religious prejudice, at once understood the gravity of the situation. Directions were sent to explain the composition of the cartridges to the sepoys, and as a final measure the question was settled by modifying the drill, so that the soldiers had not to bite the cartridge. This extreme concession did not quiet matters, and the agitators even made use of it to assert with greater violence than ever that cow's fat most certainly and really entered into the composition of the new cartridges, notwithstanding all the Government denials. They argued, with some show of reason, that if it had not been so, why should the soldiers' drill have been suddenly changed? In the meantime, a detachment of the 34th was sent from Serampore to Barrackpore.[21] The men stationed there had followed with, anxiety the different phases of the cartridge question, and had shared the fears and anger of their brothers in arms at Dum-Dum, which was near their own cantonments. The agitation created in the ranks of the sepoys of the 34th communicated itself with the rapidity of lightning to the regiments stationed at Serampore. The 24th of February—there are really ill-omened days in the history of man—the soldiers of the 19th Regiment refused, when on parade, to receive their cartridges, though they came out of the same chests as those' they had used the day before. The brigadier commanding at

Serampore, who had not a single European soldier with him, countermanded the distribution; and as the sepoys consented to return to barracks, no further repressive measures were taken. The Government was made acquainted with these facts, and sent steamers to Burmah to fetch the 84th Regiment of the Royal army, so as to reinforce the feeble garrison at Fort William ; but before their return blood had already flowed at the very station of Barrackpore, where, thirty years before, the insubordination of a native regiment had been repressed with such merciless energy.

Towards the middle of March, a sepoy of the 34th, called Mangal Pandy (which name was given later on to the rebels), went through the lines exciting his comrades to mutiny, and. cut down his adjutant, whilst the native soldiers and officers on guard close by remained deaf to the cries and orders of the victim. Mangal Pandy and the native officers were brought before a court-martial, condemned to death, and executed. Unfortunately, repressive measures did not stop here, and with the most imprudent severity the authorities disbanded the 34th; they forgot that once, in their homes, the sepoys would disseminate everywhere the mendacious report of the strange projects against native religion ascribed to Government by fanaticism or superstition. The murder at Barraekpore had searcely opened the eyes of the military authorities to the spirit of disaffection in the native army,[22] when the haphazard of human passions gave birth to the crisis in the station, which, by reason of its very considerable European garrison, seemed the least exposed to a mutiny among the native troops. In the month of May the new ammunition was served out during morning drill, on the esplanade at Mirut to ninety men of the 3rd regiment of regular cavalry selected from the different squadrons. As only five accepted it, the eighty-five others were brought before a court-martial, and condemned to five years' imprisonment. Any act of mercy would have been out of place, and would have authorised mutiny in the Bengal army. The commander-in-chief decided, justly enough, to execute the sentence in all its rigour. On May 9, the condemned men were stripped of their uniforms before all the assembled troops of the station, chains were riveted on their legs, and they wore then led back to prison. A mournful silence prevailed in the native regiments present on this occasion. Not a word was said, not a gesture of insubordination was

made. The dangerous moment seemed safely over, and the brigadier in command could write in his official report, with some show of truth, that he had successfully solved the greased cartridge question. The events of the following day gave the lie to this assertion. On Sunday, May 10, just as the European population of Mirut was about going to church, a great tumult broke out in the native ranks, the 3rd cavalry regiment showing itself more violent than the others. The officers who hastened to the spot to endeavour to restore discipline, were attacked furiously. Some of them fell under the blows of their soldiers, and the whole regiment moved on to the prison. By an inconceivable error of judgment of the authorities—an error which, by-the-bye, often meets us again in the scenes of the mutiny—the guard on duty, which did not even attempt resistance, was composed of sepoys. The gates were thrown open, and the military prisoners and a crowd of wretches of the worst kind poured forth. From one outset the 20th infantry raised the standard of revolt, but the 11th was still undecided, and listened, at least, to the orders of its officers, if it did not obey them. In the midst of the excitement, the mutineers of the 20th rushed into the lines of the 11th, which was still hesitating, and fired upon the staff, killing the colonel. This murder turned the scale, and for several hours the sepoys, the scum of the bazars, and the escaped convicts pillaged, burned, and murdered to their heart's content.

During this time the vacillation of an. old general, weighed down with infirmities, sufficed to paralyse all action on the part of the largest number of European troops in any Anglo-Indian station. The surprise had been complete; yet we must add that the great extent of the station at Mirut, which covered a space of more than five miles, the entire separation of the European troops from the native ones, explain, to a certain point, how it was that the news of what was passing in the sepoys' lines was some time in reaching head-quarters. The day was drawing to a close before the royal troops could be assembled under General Hewett on the parade ground. Having secured the regimental chests and the barracks, they marched towards the native lines, but. the rebel sepoys had already left them, and were hastening to Delhi. There only remained some small bands of stragglers, on whom the artillery fired a few harmless rounds. The station was enveloped in darkness; and the general, without

troubling himself to pursue the rebels, ordered his indignant men to withdraw to their cantonments for the night. All the help given was to acquaint the Delhi authorities by telegraph with the events wliich had occurred since the morning. At dawn the next day, patrols were at last sent round the station to look for any families who might have escaped being massacred through the fidelity of their servants, or favoured by the darkness. The many smiling villas of Mirut were a heap of smoking ruins, from which were extracted thirty-one horribly mutilated European corpses. On May 11, at sunrise, the cavalry which composed the rebel van-guard took possession of the bridge of boats over the Jumna. No other town offered the mutineers sucn a safe aslyum against English vengeance as Delhi; for in its walls lived the descendant of Timour, the natural chief of the insurrection, surrounded by a crowd of ruined nobles, adventurers, and discontented persons of all kind, whose most ardent wish was for the downfall of the English dominion and the restoration of the fallen dynasties. As far back as April, a proclamation in Persian, posted clandestinely on the walls of the grand mosque, had announced that the time had come to drive the European conquerors out of India. The cantonments round Delhi, though occupied by a considerable Anglo-Indian force, did not contain a single European soldier; and this, notwithstanding that the arsenal inside the town was one of the best supplied in the Empire. It is only just to remark that the onus of this inexcusable fault must be laid on the Court of Directors, as the danger of its isolated position had been several times pointed out by the different commanders-in-chief, amongst others by Sir C. Napier.[23] The commissioner of the district, Major Fraser, was aroused by the news of the arrival of the regiments from Mirut, and he went forward to meet the rebels, accompanied by his officers and a few police. Abandoned by his escort and fired on by the sepoys, he fled to the palace to ask help of old Mohammed Shah, but it is needless to say that he received no answer to his entreaties. The rabble soldiers, who had also entered the palace, pursued the unfortunate magistrate and his companions, and massacred them all in the apartments of the European commander of the imperial residence. These murders once accomplished, the rebels, the emperor's guard, and the dregs of the populace fell upon the European quarter, wliich for some hours was the scene of the most hideous excesses. All

the efforts of the mutineers soon centred on the arsenal, the defence of which had been promptly and energetically organised by the staff of nine European commissioned and non-commissioned officers, as soon as they were aware of what was going on. Arms were served out to the workmen, loaded guns pointed at the entrance, and, as a last resource, a train of powder was laid to the chief magazine, to prevent its falling into the hands of the rebels. Scarcely were these preparations finished, when a messenger presented himself to demand the cession of the arsenal in the Emperor's name, and on refusal, the attack began immediately. By means of ladders applied to the walls, the besiegers entered the exterior courts, and in a. few minutes a heavy fire from the neighbouring roofs, which were crowded with the enemy, disabled several of the Europeans. The workmen, to whom arms had been given, far from helping their masters, joined the attack in great numbers; and even those who remained faithful threw away their rifles and wandered about the enclosure, a prey to the wildest terror.

All hope of resisting successfully was soon lost. Lieutenant Willoughby, of the Artillery, ordered Sergeant Scully—these two names should be jealously preserved by history—to apply a match to the train. Some magazines and buildings blew up with a terrible noise, burying many of the besiegers under their ruins, but the destruction produced was only partial, and the greater part of the stores and provisions remained intact. Non-commissioned officer Scully, who was wounded in the explosion, was dispatched by the victors. Lieutenant Willoughby succeeded in leaving the town, but was massacred a few days after in a village. Three of the other European defenders of the arsenal escaped safe and sound, and managed to reach Mirut.

While the revolt was triumphing in Delhi itself, the position of the military authorities in the cantonments, two miles to the north of the Cashmere Gate, was becoming more and more critical. Successively apprised of the events of the preceding night at Mirut, of the entrance into Delhi of the rebel sepoys, of the sack of the European quarter, Brigadier Greaves hastily took some measures of defence. A circular warned English residents to meet without delay at the signalling tower on the Amballah road. Infantry and artillery reinforcements were dispatched to the town, but the troops round

Delhi were infected with the spirit of revolt, and nearly all the detachments sent from the camp went over at once to the rebels.

The 54th allowed its officers to be massacred in their midst by the Mirut troopers, without offering any resistance; and even the men who preserved the most semblance of discipline and loyalty returned to their quarters only to inflame their comrades by an account of the success of the revolted regiments. The officers had lost all authority, and tumult and confusion in the camp were at their height. The 34th alone still retained some appearance of discipline; but towards the evening a few devoted soldiers came to the colonel and adjutant, and advised them to fly. They said that the troops considered themselves released from their oath of fidelity, and that notwithstanding their own goodwill, they were powerless to protect their officers against the madmen, who were little by little gaining the upper hand.' All hope of resistance was gone from that time. The officers find the European families took to flight, and Brigadier Greaves, like the captain of a smoking vessel, was the last to leave. That night the victory of the sepoys was celebrated in the cantonments by fire, pillage, and assassination. The unfortunate fugitives met with the most varied fate. Some of them fell into the hands of the mutineers, and were massacred. Others were killed in Mussulman, villages, where they had taken refuge. As a rule, the English were kindly treated in the Hindoo communities, and for weeks together whole families found shelter in miserable huts, to the great honour, be it said, of the ryots, and to their equally great peril; for their generous hospitality exposed them to the fiercest wrath of the rebels.

The latest and most marvellous conquest of science contributed to the safety of England in the midst of all these disasters. The telegraph clerk, who was shut up in his office at the far end of the camp, was one of the last victims on that day. As evening drew near, he was sitting before his instrument when the murderers, mad with carnage, burst into the room, and in an instant tore him to pieces. But the dispatch, which was to avenge his death, was already passing along the wires with the rapidity of lightning. The Punjab authorities knew the full extent of the disasters at Delhi before his limbs had ceased to quiver; and, meeting in council, they began preparations for future victory. The fatal news had also been conveyed by telegraph

to Calcutta, and to military headquarters. General Anson, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, had for several preceding weeks taken refuge from the terrible heat of the summer at Simla. A younger brother of Lord Lichfield, a distinguished member of the Lower House, a man of fashion, renowned in the highest London society for his elegant manners, his race-horses, his first-rate talent, for which General Anson owed his position, to his family connection and to the Queen's protection; for Her Majesty still showed to the beautiful Mrs. Anson the same affection with which she had honoured the Hon. Miss Forester, the chief ornament of her court in the early days of her reign. General Anson had been scarcely two years at Calcutta, and had acquired a very slight experience of men and things in India. Besides this, his former military service was not sufficient to give him any great authority, as he had been present at no other campaigns than that of Waterloo, where, however, ho did his duty bravely as an ensign in the Guards. Let us hold, to do him justice, that even if he had taken part in every battle since the beginning of the century, even if he had been gifted with the highest military genius, he could hardly have escaped the infatuation which hid from the most competent officers the hostile spirit of the native troops.

As before mentioned, nearly all those in command, in their private or official correspondence, speak of the discipline and loyalty of their soldiers with a confidence full of delusions. It is true that the mote, which none of them perceived if their own eyes, assumed the proportion of a beam in those of their neighbours; the state of the army was said to be serious, the question of greased cartridges full of danger, and certain regiments showed, unequivocal symptoms of disaffection. But such contradictory reports had not led to the conclusion that the spirit of sedition had so completely permeated an army which for one hundred years bad been faithful to the British flag. At any rate, no one could suppose that a mutiny would not be immediately suppressed at Mirut, where a numerically superior European force could be opposed to the native soldiery. To doubt the success of repressive measures was to refuse to see the sun at mid-day ! The correctness of this estimation is settled to-day by the facts themselves. If that same evening, the brigadier if command at Mirut, recovering from his first surprise, had sent his two cavalry regiments and a rifle battalion in pursuit of the mutineers, the latter

would have entered Delhi as fugitives, and in no case could have maintained themselves there. It has been seen, too, that the mutiny did not break out spontaneously in the cantonments at Delhi. The regiments hesitated before listening to appeals from the rebels, and one even remained faithful to its duty till the evening. The immediate arrival of European troops would no doubt have prevented or repressed all attempt at revolt. Both at Mirut and Cabul, of fatal memory, the incapacity of - an old general ruined everything. How much blood and treasure the systematic predilection of the Court of Directors for invalid officers was to cost England ! General Anson's first measures attest a judicious character full of decision, and able to look danger in the face without trembling. Three European regiments, stationed in the sanitariums of the Himalaya, received orders to descend at once to the plains, and a Goorkha regiment was dispatched to Philour to serve as escort to a siege train. The next day, the commander-in-chief left Simla for the scene of action. For European troops, the abrupt change from the healthy climate of the Himalaya to the burning plains of India, and the necessity of forced marches in May—the hottest month of the year—was a severe trial. They easily endured the fatigues of the first marches, but cholera broke out at Amballali, their first rallying point, and raged with extreme violence. This terrible plague was only an additional motive for pressing on to Delhi; but how to bring together in a few days the food and the immense apparatus, indispensable for enabling a European army to take the field at this season.

The co-operation of the Rajah of Pattgalah[24] was of immense help to the English commissariat in its difficulties. This prince, belonging to an old and illustrious Sikh family, and the chief of the most important amongst the states allied to England in the neighbourhood of Amballah, exercised a most powerful influence on the conduct of other independent native rulers. The help he afforded to the English in money, camels, elephants and carts, allowed the vanguard to leave Amballah on May 19. The head columns arrived at the second rallying point, Kumaon, on the 19th. Scarcely were all the forces united, when General Anson succumbed to an attack of cholera. But his plan of campaign survived him. If the exclusive merit of carrying the war under the walls of Delhi[25] does not belong to him, lie had at least that of accepting the advice of persons who,

better acquainted than he with the native character and capabilities, represented the absolute necessity of a vigorous line of action. Did not history itself demonstrate that success had always attended the English in wars where they had gone forward with blind audacity, without calculating the number or the resources of the enemy? Major-General Sir H. Barnard succeeded Anson by right of seniority, and assumed the command in chief of the troops, which, were composed of two horse batteries, of the 9th Lancers of the Royal army, of three regiments of European infantry, and of three native ones, on which little dependence could be placed. We must add to these several forces, the Mirut brigade, already on its way to Alipore, which had been chosen beforehand as a rallying point. These troops had the good luck to be the first to meet the enemy, and to avenge their military honour, which had been tarnished by involuntary inaction at Mirat. The Delhi sepoys, in order to prevent the junction of the Mirut brigade, and of the principal body of the army, occupied the approaches of a suspension bridge over the Hindum some distance from the Village of Ghajioudounagahr. The rebels made but a feeble resistance, and took to flight almost without striking a blow, and abandoned seven guns.

The result of the fight was already certain, when the English general was informed that some sepoys had taken refuge in huts in the rear of his lines, He ordered the village to be cleared, but the sepoys were so convinced of their safety that they were surrounded before they thought of flying. They defended themselves with admirable courage, repulsed the attack of a Sikh regiment, and when they finally succumbed to the bayonets of the 61st, the victory proved dearly bought. An incident had already shown that men of determination were to be found in the native ranks. Just as some skirmishers were about to take possession of a gun, a sepoy of the 11th set fire to the ammunition, and with his last glance saw an English officer and several men blown to pieces by the explosion. The attack, which the rebels began on the following day, was easily repulsed, with very little loss to the English, amongst whom fatigue, privation, and the heat of the sun made quite as many victims as the fire of the enemy. On June 7 the Mirut brigade reached head-quarters at Alipore. The arrival of this reinforcement was most opportune, as the staff reports certified that the enemy was in force in the

neighbourhood. The sepoys, in fact, had determined to await an attack in the open, and occupied before Delhi a position the natural advantages of which they utilised with a skill constantly exhibited by them during the whole contest. A considerable force of native infantry was stationed to the right of the Great Trunk Road,[26] in a vast serai,[27] whose walls were pierced with loopholes, and in front of which, on a slight elevation, was a battery and a howitzer, defended by epaulements, covered by fascines and gabions. At a little distance the village of Badd-li-Serai offered excellent cover for infantry in its houses and gardens. The defence of this position was confided to seven infantry regiments, two cavalry, and an artillery battalion, all of which bad belonged to the Bengal army. Besides these regular forces, the sepoys numbered in their ranks the artillerymen of the palace of Delhi and volunteers of all kinds, drawn to the scene of action by hatred of the foreigner, by religious excitement, and the thirst for blood and pillage. On June 8, at midnight, Sir H. Barnard had taken his last measure, and Brigadier Hope Grant left the camp at the head of three cavalry squadrons and two pieces of artillery, in order to turn the sepoys' left wing. Difficulties on the road impeded the march of this column, and the battle was nearly decided before it came into action. The division "which had been selected for the principal attack, under the orders of the Commander-in-chief left the camp at two in the morning, and arrived about sunrise at some distance from the village of Badd-li-Serai. Its defenders at once opened fire. The British artillery took up a position, and the infantry, composed of the 75th of the Royal army, and the lst of the Company's, deployed on the high road. It was soon evident that the British artillery was unable to silence the fire of the fortified battery to which it was opposed. Two, regiments and the staff met with considerable loss. Sir H. Barnard felt that the matter could only be settled by a bayonet charge. He ordered the 75th to capture the guns, whilst the Fusiliers marched against the battle-mented walls of the village. In the very moment when orders from head-quarters were about to be given, the 75th thought they were going to be charged by cavalry, and the men formed square without waiting for the word of command. The mistake was immediately recognised, but it was too late to remedy it, and they advanced on the battery over ground impassable through the depth of mud under a galling fire. In a few

minutes seventy men were disabled, but the battery was taken and its defenders put to flight, or were slain at their guns. The Fusiliers were equally successful, and they occupied the village of Badd-li-Serai without severe loss. The two regiments united inarched on the serai, where they battered in the gates and bayoneted all to the last man. This was the first example of those bloody reprisals which we shall have occasion more than once to make mention of. The reserves had arrived on the ground during these operations, and Brigadier Grant with his cavalry turned the sepoys' left. The Lancers immediately drove back the troops opposed to them, and took possession of two guns, on which the rout became general, and the sepoys only rallied in the suburbs of Delhi, where the pursuit ceased. Towards the afternoon the English entered their cantonments as victors. Not a month had passed since the day when they had been occupied by perjured soldiers, who had tarnished their military honours by shedding the blood of their officers. The British army numbered 54 dead, of whom 4 were officers, including Adju-tant-General Colonel Chester, and 32 wounded. The sepoy losses were much more considerable. They abandoned several colours and thirteen guns. A strange detail, very characteristic of the mutiny, is that the military medals and the Order of British India,[28] given by the Company as rewards for faithful services, wore found on the red coats of dead sepoys, both soldiers and officers; and, stranger still, pouches full of greased cartridges, the final and decisive cause of the mutiny, were picked up on the ground occupied by the rebel regitneuts. The results of this affair were immense, for it re-established the prestige of the English in the eyes of the' Asiatic population; yet it is hardly worthy of notice when.compared with the enormous forces engaged and the torrents of blood shed at Solferino and Gravelotte.

The news of the sepoy defeat passed from mouth to mouth to the most remote frontiers of the Punjab, and gave decisive help to the energetic measures of Sir J. Lawrence. The European regained confidence in his superiority over the Asiatic. A handful of British soldiers, some three thousand leagues from their country, in the depths of Asia, exposed to the burning rays of a, vertical sun and to the hot breath of suffocating winds, were able to look the future confidently in the face. This fortunate beginning was the precursor of still greater successes. The Punjab 'Guides', one of the best

regiments in the Indian army, came into camp on June 7. They were composed of three squadrons and three companies of infantry, and were exclusively recruited among the tribes of the Indian Caucasus. These men of iron had covered the distance from Peshawur to Delhi, some 562 miles, in less than three weeks, in the hottest time of the year; and yet from their appearance one might have imagined that they had left some neighbouring garrison the evening before to take part in a review. However important this reinforcement was from its number, it was still more so from the mere fact of its arrival; for the entrance of the 'Guides' meant that Sir J. Lawrence was undisputed master of the Punjab, which had scarcely been conquered ten years before, and was inhabited by the most warlike race in India. The help given did not stop here. Wondrous triumph of political talent and of the personal ascendency of a great statesman over a whole nation! At the call of Sir J. Lawrence the formidable Sikh population furnished the English army with men, money, and ammunition sufficient to take Delhi, not only before one of the numerous battalions sent from England on the news of the mutiny had joined the besieging forces, but even before a single one had disembarked at Calcutta.

(From author's *The English and India*; translated from the French by a Diplomat, 1883)

References

1. The British flag floated without a rival from the banks of the Indus to those of the Irawaddy.
2. See amongst the documents the table of the population of India and of the Protected States in 1868.
3. The whole population of India can be approximately valued at 200 millions of inhabitants, of which 50 millions belong to the Native States—properly so called, to tbe number of 153. Statistics give the following census of the natives subject lo England according to their religion:—

Native Christians	1,100,000
Buddhists	1,000,000
Aboriginal Tribes	12,000,000
Mahomedans	25,000,000
Hinduos	112,000,000
Parsees	180,000
Emasians (Christians)	91,000

Europeans (including the army)	156,000
Jews	10,000
Armenians	5,000
Total	151,542,000

—*Parliamentary Deeuments.*

4. See Documents, No. II, 'The Extent of Native Administration.'
5. See Documents, No. III., 'The System of Caste'.
6. In 1760 the Bengal army, exclusive of officers in the Artillery and Engineers, only numbered eighteen. European captains, twenty-six lieutenants, sixteen ensigns. The original battalions were commonly designated by the name of the captains who had raised them; for example, Matthew or Galliez battalion (Galliez ka Pultan), from the name of their first commanders. These precursors of the Bengal army were destined to end in the same way by mutiny, In 1764, the Galliez battalion, having shown symptoms of disaffection at Chaprah, under the pretext that the Government had not kept certain promises made to them, Major Munro (since Sir Hector Munro), who was then commanding the Bengal army, felt that a terrible example was neccssary.. Twenty-eight of the principal mutineers were condemned to death by a council of war, and executed in one day. At the last moment, three grenadiers who were among the condemned, claimed the privilege of being bound to the cannons on the right, a position which as grenadiers they had always occupied on parade and in battle—a last favour which was not refused. The Matthew battalion was disbanded in 1784 for having refused to serve beyond seas.
7.

	Bengal Army	Madras Army	Bombay Army	Tota
Cavalry Regiments, R.A.	2	1	1	—
Battalions, Infantry, R.A.	15	3	—	—
The Company's European Infantry	3	3	3	
European and Native Artillery	12	7	5	24
Native Regular Infantry	74	52	29	155
Native Regular Cavalry	10	8	3	21

8. Battalion or regiment can be used indifferently of the regiments of the royal army, as some contain two and even three battalions, and others one only.
9. Officers' commissions were gi:en directly by the Company's directors, and no other conditions were required of the candidate than having received a. college education, and being between the ages of sixteen and twenty years. According to an official document, 1,976 commissions were distributed from January 1, 1836 to December 9, 1843 in the Indian army. Then commissions were divided in the following way: To sons of officers in the Indian service with the rank of captain and below, 128; to the sons of majors and lieutenant-colonels, 143; to the sons of members of the Indian Civil Service, 103; 1 to sons of officers of the Royal army and navy, 383; to sons of

clergymen, 205; to young men whose fathers belonged to the bar or were in business, etc, 938. The total of commissions distributed in less than eight yours equals, if it does not surpass, the contingent of officers furnished to France during the same period by St. Cyr and the Ecole Polytechnique, and is worthy to fix the attention of whosoever wishes to gain a clear idea of the importance of India as a portion of the British Empire.

10. Such a magnificent idea prevails in Europe of the treasures which fall to the lot of Enropeans in India, that a few details of the pay of Anglo-Indian officers before the Mutiny of 1857 may not be perhaps read without interest. An ensign, on service, in the regiment received 202 rs. a month, a lieutenant 256 rs., a captain 415 rs., a major 780 rs., a colonel 1,032 rs. The command of a regiment, gave an addition of 400 rs. a month, and that of a company one of 50 rs. The annual pay of a colonel actually present with the colours was therefore 17,184 rs., about 1,720*l*.; the pay of a brigadier in command was 2,900 rs. a month (250*l*.). As to retiring pensions, they varied according as the officer after 22 years' service, if he was captain, for example, passed into the invalid establishment or retired definitively. In the first rase, he received full pay, but was obliged to reside in India; in the second, he might leave the country, but forfeited about a third of his pay.

11. A camp consisted in three large tents, a single man in a red coat, with a ramrod in his hand, standing as sentinel. The soldiers used to doff their uniforms and assume the Indian costume in all its simplicity, few of them having on as much as a shirt. The most wonderfully fantastic head-dresses were to be seen. One man had his head shaved close, another were plaits of hair six feet long, another, thanks to the razor, exhibited a tremendously high forehead; a Sikh soldier had his hair turned back and knotted in a chignon like a Chinese girl. The native officers were distinguished by a necklace of beads of gilt wood; the most perfect order, the greatest quiet prevailed, Each individual cooked his own little dinner at his own little lire, or occupied himself in cleaning up. The hand of time, the civilising influence of military discipline, had passed over the unchanging character of the Hindoos like, oil over marble. Three strokes of the drum—two words—and these savages, half naked a minute before, presented fine specimens of disciplined soldiers, their uniform and their muskets on their shoulders. Nothing, however, was changed in their instincts or their habits; they were the same men who, two thousand years ago, fought under the standard of Porun against the warriors of Alexander.

12. During the siege of Jellalabad, after the retreat from Cabul, the 35th Regiment of the Bengal army and the 13th of the Queen's became bound to one another by the strictest ties of military brotherhood. Before, the separation of the brigade at Ferozepore, the sepoys gave a dinner to their European comrades, and not satisfied with plying their guests with beer and generous wines, they pushed their kind attentions to the point of providing stretchers to carry back to the barracks those amongst their guests who might be overcome

by the good cheer (*inter pocula*). As a return for this politeness the Queen's soldiers gave their entertainers a native feast, diversified with yams and barley sugar, and subscribed a large sum of money, with which they bought a piece of plate for the officers' mess of the native corps.

13. The Bengal array enjoyed the privilege, precious in the eyes of the orthodox Brahmin, of being liable to home service alone, whilst those of Bombay nnd Madras had to undertake general service, and might be called upon to fight or to do garrison duty beyond seas. Certain articles of the code of enlistment prove the spirit of concession to the prejudices of the Brahmin which animated those who drew them up. One is framed in these words: 'Great, care shall be taken to refuse men of low caste, such as shopmen, clerks, barbers, porters, palanquin bearers, gardeners, washermen, cooks, and other low members of society.' This exclusiveness subordinated in the Bengal army the action of Government to that of a small number of Brrahmins, mollahs, and fakirs, and a soldier was more afraid of offending their prejudices than committing an act of insubordination. The pressure brought to bear on the officers was such that they were often obliged to get rid of good soldiers because their companions thought them too low in caste to associate with.
14. General Seaton, in his interesting Memoirs, tells how, on his arrival with the 36th Regiment, in 1827, he was initialed into certain customs, always faithfully observed in the older corps of the Bengal army. This was one: A Chat or poet was attached to the regiment, whose mission it, was to encourage the soldiers during battle (with his voice) and to celebrate their deeds after the fight This bard was a line old man with a white beard falling to his waist; he had belonged to the regiment since childhood, and knew the history of all its campaigns. Every day after parade he advanced to the head of the line, struck his pike into the ground, and with his right hand raised towards heaven declaimed in a sonorous voice verses celebrating the exploits and virtues of the colonel, the officers, and soldiers of the regiment. At my first parade he introduced my name into his song, and on my thanking him by a small present for this unmerited favour, he predicted for me, with the assurance of a prophet, a future full of success and glory—*Nine Years on the Western Frontier of India*, by Lieutenant-General Sir Sidney Cotton, K.C.B.
15. The rank of subahdar-major (native captain), the highest ever attained by native soldiers, never placed them on a footing of equality even with the youngest European ensign.
16. See Documents, No. V., 'Cabul Disasters'.
17. Not only the army but the population came to the conclusion that the military resources of the little far-away island (Chota, su Tapu) were exhausted by the Crimean War, when they saw the effective force of the royal troops reduced beyond measure. After the capture of Sebastopol, insignificant measures contributed towards reviving this idea, which had

been widely made use of by the native press during the war. The Patriotic Fund, for instance, which was a subscription in favour of the wounded and of the soldiers' families, helped to persuade the natives that the English power was in full decline. The great proprietors and their subordinates felt themselves called upon, and perhaps rightly so, to respond to this appeal for funds, which took the name of Russian tax (Chimdu Russ), and it was generally believed in India that its product was intended to furnish exhausted England with means to fight Russia.—Edwardes' *Reminiscence of a Bengal Civilian.*

18. An Indian may lose caste by debauchery, by crime, by eating impure food, or by kilting a cow! The worship of sacred animals is carried to such an extent in the Indian Peninsula, that the inhabitants do not use soap because cow's fat may enter into its composition.
19. See Documents, No. VI., 'Distribution of Chippatis.'
20. One of the principal arsenals of Bengal, situated in the suburbs of Calcutta.
21. The summer palace of the Governor-General, and a considerable cantonment of native troops, about twelve miles from Calcutta.
22. See Documents, No. VIII, 'Last order given to the Schools of Musketry.'
23. See Documents, No. IX., 'The Danger of the English Position at Delhi.'
24. See Documents, No. X., 'The Malarajah of Pattgalah's Accession'.
25. See Documents, No. XL, 'General Anson's and Sir H. Lawrence's Letters.'
26. The greatest artery in India, at a time when railways existed merely on paper. It presented a continuous development of more than. 1,200 miles.
27. Serai, the caravanserai of the *Arabian Nights*, consisting of rectangular buildings with towers at the four corners, and an internal court destined to travellers.
28. Two military orders were given as rewards to well-deserving soldiers in the Indian service. The first of those, the Order of Merit, was only bestowed for deeds of valour; and though be number of members was not limited by statute, it won very rarely bestowed. It was divided into three classes, each of which had to be won by some brilliant exploit. The badge of the first class was a gold star, with the motto: 'The reward of valour,' on a blue ribbon, bordered with red. For the other two classes the star was of silver. The first, gave double, the second and third two-thirds and one-third extra pay; but the order was distributed so scantily, that many superior officers told the author they bad never met with a gold cross in all their experience, and with very few silver ones. The Order of British India was divided into two classes of 100 crosses each; the first, destined to subahdars and rissaldars, conferred the title of Sirdar Bahadour, and carried with it two rupees a day extra pay. The second class, to which all native officers were admitted, conferred the title of Bahndour, and one rupee extra pay. In point of fact, this reward was only granted to seniority, and few of the members in possession of it were still in the service.

13

THE OUTBREAK OF MUTINY

By

F.R. Sedgwick

THE outbreak at Meerut is said to have precipitated an outbreak prearranged to take place on May 30th. On April 23rd a number of the 3rd Native Light Cavalry refused to receive the new cartridges. Eighty-five men were tried by a court martial composed of native officers and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment; the sentence was read on parade on May 9th, and the men were put in fetters there and then, in the presence of their comrades. The next day, Sunday, at the Church Parade hour, the native troops mutinied, murdered most of their officers who endeavoured to rally them, released the prisoners in the gaol and made a rush for the European lines. Most fortunately the Church Parade had been put off for half an hour on account of the heat, and the natives found the British troops falling in. They tried to sack the cantonments, and then went off to Delhi.

The Meerut Division was commanded by General Hewett.

The actual garrison of Meerut was commanded by Colonel Wilson, and consisted of the following British units—

The Carabineers.
One Troop of Horse Artillery.
One Light Field Battery.
One Company Foot Artillery.
1st Battalion 60th Rifles.

Many of the Carabineers and Gunners were however, raw recruits. Most unfortunately, Wilson did not follow up the mutineers, otherwise he would probably have disperse them. There were difficulties due to red tape regulations connected with the command of the troops, and there was delay in issuing ammunition.

A garrison must, it is true, have been left at the station at Meerut, but it cannot be doubted that a close and vigorous pursuit of the mutineers would probably have been successful. Time was thus given to the mutineers from Meerut to rouse Delhi, the home of a large and turbulent populace, the ancient capital of the Moguls, and withal a powerful fortress. The aged King of Delhi, who occupied the once powerful throne of the Mogul emperors, gave his name to the movement. The native troops at Delhi mutinied and, except in the case of the 74th N.I., murdered their white officers. Most of the Europeans and the native Christians were savagely murdered, a mere remnant escaping to Meerut. The mutineers, of course, tried to seize the Arsenal. Nine gallant men of the Bengal Artillery—Lieutenants Willoughby, Forrest, and Raynor, Conductors Buckley, Shaw, Scully and Crowe, and Sergeants Edwards and Stewart— endeavoured to defend the place, but this was impossible, so they blew up the magazine rather than let that fall into the enemy's hands. Incredible though it seems, four of the nine, all severely wounded, succeeded in escaping.

On May 12th the Sepoys at Firuzpur mutinied and tried to seize the fort. They were driven off by the 61st Regiment stationed there, but the affair was mismanaged, and the mutinous sepoys made good their escape. They joined the rebels at Delhi. At the same time at the stations in Rohilkhand, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, and others there were mutinies. The Rohillas rose Inder Khan Bahadur Khan. The mutineers went off to Delhi.[1] The mutiny at Bareilly was accom- panied by a horrible massacre. It is beyond the scope of this work to detail the events at each station where mutinies broke out. The heroism displayed by the British in India forms a glorious page of our national annals. Let us hope that if such a trial comes again it will be met with the same calm and determination that our fathers and grandfathers showed in those dark days of June and July, 1857.[2]

At Cawnpore were three Regiments of Native Infantry and one of Native Cavalry, but the only European unit was one Field Battery.

The troops were commanded by Sir Hugh Wheeler, a gallant and distinguished soldier, who had entered the Company's Army in 1803, and served in many campaigns, but was now over seventy years of age. On May 14th news of the Meerut outbreak was received, and on the 19th Wheeler received orders to commence preparations to accommodate a large force of Europeans. The immediate necessity, however, was to make a place of security for the white residents. To do this Wheeler had two courses open, either to retire with all Europeans to the Magazine, which was six miles away, or to occupy a disused hospital and barracks in which the sick, the women, and the children of the 32nd Regiment were living. To go to the Magazine would remove officers from their units and precipitate a mutiny. The latter course was decided on. An entrenchment was begun round the buildings and provided with 10 guns. Wheeler's intention not to retire to the Magazine was strengthened by optimistic reports from the Lieutenant-Governor of the N.W. Provinces at Agra. Ominous signs having been observed, on May 21st all the women and children were brought into the entrenchment, but the officers still slept at the Quarter Guards of their regiments.

On the 22nd 55 men of the 32nd Regiment and 240 Irregular Native Cavalry arrived from Lucknow. On the same day "the Nana" arrived with 300 Mahrattas and two guns, ostensibly to support the British. He was quartered at the Treasury. On June 1st the advanced parties of the 1st Madras Europeans and 84th Regiment reached Sir Hugh Wheeler. Wheeler then returned the men of the 32nd to Lucknow.

At this date there were the following Europeans in Cawnpore—

80 officers of all arms.
60 men 84th Regiment.
74 men 32nd Regiment (mostly invalids).
15 men Madras Europeans.
59 men Bengal Artillery.
A few civilians—in particular some railway engineers.
A large number of women and children.

In addition there were a few loyal Sepoys and some 300 half-caste children. There was food for a month.

Suspicions of the Nana had arisen.

On the night of June 4th a cashiered officer in a state of drunkenness fired on a patrol of the 2nd Cavalry; this was the spark that set fire to the dry tinder. Next day the 2nd N. Cavalry mutinied, as did the 1st N. Infantry, and the day following as there was an uproar in the lines of the 53rd and 56th N. Infantry, the guns opened fire on them. The whole of the native troops then rose, sacked the Treasury, and marched off towards Delhi. At the last moment the Nana decided to throw in his lot with the rebels, whom he persuaded to return to Cawnpore, which they did on the 6th; they looted the town, murdered a number of Christians, and opened fire on the entrenchment. The lines were manned by the defenders and the terrible siege began. The entrenchment was under fire continuously day and night; food and water were short; the heat was terrific; there were no medicines; the barracks were set on fire, and the women and children forced to stay in the trenches. Fresh regiments arrived constantly to support the mutineers, but no help was forthcoming for the defenders. On June 22nd the rebels assaulted the entrenchment, but were driven back at the point of the bayonet. On the 24th the Nana, having failed to capture the place by force, tried guile. He made an offer of terms, which were accepted, and on the 27th the British inarched down to the river to embark in the boats prepared for them, according to the capitulation. While the British on their way to the boats were hemmed in a narrow ghat, they were foully and treacherously attacked, and almost all massacred; 5 men, with 206 women and children, were taken prisoners, and confined for a fortnight of the hottest month of the year in a tiny house. When the guns of the relieving force were almost audible in the distance they too were massacred.[3]

After the annexation of Oudh the headquarters of the British administration of that Province was placed at Lucknow, where Sir Henry Lawrence, a gallant soldier and brilliant administrator, was placed as Chief Commissioner. This brilliant soldier fully realized the position, and even in April had disbanded certain mutinous corps. He did not release his efforts to stave off the Mutiny, which appeared daily more imminent after May 10th. On May 30th it broke out, and several officers were murdered.

At Lucknow there were about 300 men of the 32nd Regiment and an European battery. No serious attempt was made by the

mutineers to attack these troops. On May 31st a reconnaissance was made by Sir Henry Lawrence. An outbreak in the town was suppressed. The mutineers in the neighbourhood were dispersed and pursued by a few mounted men, five civilians, under Mr. Gubbins, particularly distinguishing themselves. Harding's Irregular Cavalry and a few Sepoys stood firm.

In preparation for the event, which he had foreseen, Sir Henry Lawrence had prepared the Residency for defence, provisioned it abundantly, and called up some native pensioners to assist in the defence. On June 28th news of the Cawnpore massacre was received, and on the 29th, Captain Forbes, with some Sikh Cavalry, reported the enemy in force at Chinhat. The Residency and Rachi Bhawan were occupied, and a force consisting of

One troop Volunteer Cavalry,
120 Native Troopers,
4 British manned guns,
6 Native manned guns,
300 32nd Regiment,
240 Native Infantry

was ordered to clear up the situation next morning by a reconnaissance in force.

On the 30th the column assembled at the Iron Bridge, and reached the Kokrail Stream without interference. It seemed that the enemy were not coming on, and at first it was intended to withdraw, but patrols reported that the enemy were still at Chinhat, so the advance was continued. The men having had no refreshments were much fatigued by the heat. The enemy, numbering some 10,000 men or more, with about 18 guns, succeeded in surrounding the tiny column; the Native Artillery drivers mutinied, and overturned the guns into the ditches; the 32nd were foiled in an attempt to capture the village of Ismailgang, which would have served to cover the withdrawal. The Native Cavalry bolted, but a dashing charge of Radcliffe's 35 Volunteers cleared the front, and how or other, covered by the Volunteer Cavalry and assisted by native soldiers of the 13th N.I., the Europeans got back to the Bridge over the Kokrail Stream. Here the Volunteer Cavalry again turned, charged 500 rebel horsemen, and dispersed them. Four guns were got into action to cover the

retreat; these the enemy dared not face, and the shattered remnant got safely back. 118 Europeans and 182 Natives were killed or missing; 54 Europeans and 11 Natives returned wounded.

This action seems to have been fought by Lawrence as an administrator rather than as a soldier. A reconnaissance in force is a poor way of getting information, and it would seem that Lawrence hoped to check the enemy and thus turn them away from Lucknow and save his Province from the horrors of war.

The Europeans at Lucknow were now beleagured in the Residency.

At Agra were quartered the 3rd Bengal European Regiment, a battery of artillery, a detachment of native cavalry and two native infantry regiments. It was some time before action was taken, either by Colvin the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, or by Polwhele the Brigadier. Finally on May 31st the native corps were disarmed, a volunteer corps was raised, and Agra placed in a state of defence.

On June 14th the Gwalior contingent[4] rose against their British officers, in spite of the fact that the Maharajah Sindhia himself held for the British. The mutineers murdered some 13 men and 5 women and then marched off towards Agra; the rest of the British escaped to Agra, after incredible hardships.

On July 4th Polwhele went out of Agra to engage the mutineers. They were found about 5,500 strong with 11 guns strongly posted near the village of Sassiah among orchards and enclosures, with their guns skilfully concealed among trees, and difficult to locate. Polwhele formed his troops with the infantry in the centre and three guns on each of their flanks, while the Volunteer Cavalry—100 strong—covered the flanks of the line. The action commenced by by a long artillery duel which was very wasteful of ammunition. The rebels tried to attack the guns, but were driven off by the Volunteers. It was not until the ammunition was well-nigh exhausted, and many teams knocked out, that Polwhele ordered the infantry to attack. As usual the rebels fled before the line of levelled bayonets, but the losses in horses made artillery pursuit impossible. As is always the case with an irregular enemy, as soon as pressure relaxed the fugitives rallied and pressed the column as it retired. The British losses were

severe, 60 killed and 100 wounded. Agra remained isolated for many months.

At Sitapur, where were four native corps, mutiny broke out on June 4th, and the bulk of the Europeans were murdered. At Azamgarh, Faizabad, Benares, Duriabad, Sultanpur, and many other stations, the native troops mutinied, generally murdering their officers, but in some cases seeing them safely away towards Calcutta. The wanderings of some of these parties were most adventurous. The mutineers went off towards Cawnpore or Lucknow. It will be clear that these mutinies threatened to close communication between Calcutta and Cawnpore. In a later chapter we shall see how serious the situation became. For the moment, however, we find that the rebellion was centred in three chief places, Delhi, Cawnpore and Lucknow.

(From author's *The Indian Mutiny of 1857 : A sketch of the Principal Events*, 1920)

References

1. The Rohitlas were originally a Mahommedan tribe of warlike adventurers.
2. These words were written in 1908, Since then Britain has had her trial, and Britons have responded to the call.
3. Atrocious though the massacres of British by the rebels were, they were seldom accompanied by torture and rape. On the whole they were less brutal than the horrors lately perpetrated in Russia and in the Balkans by Europeans. The acts of the rebels were less dreadful than those of the Germans.
4. The Gwalior contingent, though paid by Sindhia, was recruited, trained and commanded by British officers.

14

THE MUTINY

By

Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt

ON Sunday evening, May 10, the day following the degradation and imprisonment of the Meerut troopers, the three Indian regiments at that station shot their officers, broke open the gaol, and after releasing their companions set out with their arms along the road to Delhi, some thirty miles away. The moment was propitious, and no serious attempt was made by the British troops to cut off their retreat.[1] The general confusion was increased by a crowd from the Meerut bazaar, which came, plundering and burning, into the cantonment. The next morning the first mutineers had reached Delhi. Some went to the palace and proclaimed Bahadur Shah Emperor. Others approached the three Indian regiments, which mutinied, murdered their officers, and joined in killing any Europeans they could find. An attack was made on the magazine, but the Englishmen in charge, finding themselves overwhelmed, blew up what they could. It was a courageous deed, which incidentally caused heavy loss to their enemy; but a considerable amount of ammunition remained undestroyed. Within twenty-four hours of the outbreak, Delhi was held by over five thousand armed soldiers. They had as their nominal leader the aged Bahadur Shah, whose name still conjured up to millions the past glories of the Mogul Empire.

The opening of the rebellion was remarkably successful, but it was soon apparent that no one opposed to the Government was

capable of pressing home the advantage, though the British position in Northern India was sufficiently precarious. The hot weather had set in. Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, and his staff were at Simla. The available British troops were insignificant in number, and not mobilised. Neither transport nor supplies were ready. British forces in 1857 were little more mobile than a hundred years before. Communications were still rudimentary. Roads were few and bad, and not more than two or three hundred miles of railway had been laid. The Calcutta line ran 120 miles to Raniganj, the Bombay line only as far as Thana. The one recent improvement had been the linking up of the chief cities and garrison towns by telegraph lines. For some reason these wires—which sepoys afterwards allowed "were 'the strings that hanged us'—were never systematically cut. If any able and energetic Indian had enjoyed the confidence of the sepoys he could have established a rebel government over most of British India between the Narmada and the Satlej, and destroyed or masked the few British troops in that area. This would have emboldened and attracted the dissident and wavering elements amongst the States and the neighbouring provinces. Three weeks elapsed, and then came a fresh crop of military revolts and civil disorder in nearly every garrison town throughout the North-West Provinces, Oudh, and Central India. But there were still no signs of leadership or of well-ordered plans. Over a large area the machinery of government was destroyed, but nothing set up in its place. The first instinct of the sepoys was to take the road to Delhi. Usually, but not always, they killed their own British officers, but they did not attack British regiments. In three or four cases a leader had sufficient force of character to win over the mutineers, and use them locally. The Nana Sahib called back the Cawnpore mutineers to surround Wheeler's little force of four hundred Englishmen, and at Lucknow the rebellious troops remained to fight and finally blockade Sir Henry Lawrence with a thousand British soldiers and seven hundred 'loyal' sepoys. The Rani of Jhansi, widow of the Raja whose State had been annexed, persuaded the mutinied garrison to accept her as leader and defend her capital. Khan Bahadur Khan at Bareilly set himself up as Viceroy. At a later date Kunwar Singh collected the Dinapur mutineers to carry on a guerilla warfare in Bihar. Over the rest of the area in revolt the sepoys either drifted towards Delhi or formed themselves into marauding bands.

The first week gave evidence of fatal weaknesses amongst those in arms against the Government. Regional and religious disunity showed itself in the absence of any co-ordination amongst the leaders. Even at Delhi, neither of the rival commanders, Mirza Mughal and Bakht Khan, were able to control the troops, which by the middle of June numbered some thirty thousand.[2] Even where a local leader asserted himself, religious differences caused trouble. Khan Bahadur Khan was soon involved in disputes with the Hindu landowners of Rohilkhand. The sepoys, freed from discipline, were joined by Gujars and other criminal elements. The general disorder did the rebel cause great harm by frightening the princes and the propertied classes. Another factor was the consciousness of inferiority which affected sepoys when opposing European troops. It did not prevent them fighting bravely, but showed itself in a lack of enterprise in attack. The advantage gained by the capture of Delhi was rendered nugatory by the delay which allowed two small British forces to combine and occupy the Ridge, overlooking the city. Anson had died on May 27; but his successor, Sir Henry Barnard, marched down from Karnal and was joined by Archdale Wilson from Meerut. The combined forces amounted to less than five thousand, but after a successful action at Badli Serai on June 8 they were able to establish themselves within gunshot of Delhi. The moral effect was incalculable. The rebel capital was nominally under siege, though there must have been more than six times as many men under arms in the city than on the Ridge. The presence of this small British force prevented any serious attempt to establish a rebel government, and it was soon apparent that the revolt, even if successful, would only lead to anarchy and the rule of 'war lords' of the type familiar in eighteenth-century India or modern China. The withdrawal of British authority from any area, such as the Doab, was followed immediately by the revival of old feuds, by outbursts of religious fanaticism, and by the unrestrained activities of the criminal tribes.

The failure to establish a reputable authority on the rebel side was one powerful factor which prevented the spread of the rebellion. Another was the personal character of the Bengal sepoys. Their arrogance had made them cordially disliked in every part of India to which they had been sent. Troops which mutinied in the Punjab, or even in Southern Bengal, were attacked by the surrounding villagers.

The peasant rising was confined to those parts from which the Bengal army was recruited, and there was no difficulty in enlisting men to fight against the mutineers from the areas in which they had been stationed. The most important as well as the most striking instance was the attitude adopted by the Sikh community. It was only eight years since the defeat of the *Khalsa* army and the annexation of the Punjab. Everything depended on this new province. The Viceroy could do little from Calcutta, except arrange for reinforcements from England, and indicate, not very effectually, the lines on which the campaign was to be fought and the general policy to be adopted south of the Narmada. If British rule in the Punjab had collapsed, as it had done in the North-West Provinces, nothing could have prevented the troops on the Ridge from being isolated, and probably the whole of Northern India would have been submerged. The prospects of the Punjab going against the British seemed considerable. The new administration had been vigorous and efficient, but hardly popular. The attitude of the frontier tribes was uncertain. The garrison contained only ten thousand European troops (most of whom were in the Peshawar valley), about thirteen thousand Punjab Irregulars, and thirty-six thousand sepoys of the Bengal army. The Sikhs might well have seen in the rebellion an opportunity of regaining their hegemony, or might, like the Pathans, have waited for the outcome of the struggle. So uncertain was the position that John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, was prepared to withdraw his troops from the Peshawar valley, and cede that area to the Amir, but the proposal was vetoed by Lord Canning. The fact that the initiative in the rebellion came from the Bengal army seems to have been decisive. Sikhs and Punjab Muslims joined the Government's hastily formed levies. The population generally supported the authorities in disarming and guarding the Bengal troops at Lahore, Peshawar, and Multan, and in pursuing those regiments, at Mardan, Jallandhar, and elsewhere, which succeeded in mutinying and absconding. The state of the province soon made it possible to send reinforcements to Delhi. Nicholson, in charge of a movable column, completed the disarming of Bengal troops at Jhelum and marched to the Ridge at the end of July.

The Government at Calcutta had the double task of keeping open the road to the north, and of relieving Cawnpore and Lucknow. The efforts which it made were on so small a scale as to be almost

absurd, but however much it may be blamed for the peace-time distribution of forces, there is hardly sufficient evidence to criticise its later policy. The affair was without precedent, and information, especially about the army, came through unreliable channels. Lord Canning's advisers succumbed at first to the official's temptation to minimize unpleasant facts. The Viceroy was over-optimistic in refusing offers of volunteers from Calcutta, which might have enabled him to release a British regiment, but he was deceived by the three weeks' lull which followed the Meerut outbreak and was naturally loath to assume that sepoys at Benares, Dinapur, and Allahabad would follow suit.[3] The second wave that swept through the Bengal army made him unwilling to move the few troops at his disposal without some definite objective, before he knew at what points the rebels were concentrating, and how far the rebellion might spread.

The position in June was very obscure. Several princes, like Holkar in Indore, wavered when the troops garrisoning their States mutinied. Muslim fanatics were concentrating in Haidarabad, and it needed all the courage and astuteness of Sir Salar Jang to prevent an outbreak. One regiment mutinied as far south as Kolhapur, and disturbances occurred in Bombay and in the southern Maratha country. The valley of the Ganges was threatened at several points. Lack of decision prevented the disarming of sepoys at Dinapur, and three regiments escaped with their rifles to form the nucleus of Kunwar Singh's guerilla force. At Benares an attempt to disarm the Bengal regiment led to a confused struggle, but some Madras troops, which had marched from Calcutta under Colonel Neill, restored order locally. Neill then pushed on to Allahabad, where the Indian garrison had rebelled but the fort was still held by Captain Brasyer and a detachment of Sikhs. This became the advance base for operations from the south, and here Neill was joined, on June 30, by Havelock, with orders to relieve Cawnpore and Lucknow. Major Renaud was sent forward on the same day with four hundred British and four hundred Indian troops, Havelock and Neill following about a week later with 1000 British soldiers, 130 Sikhs, and twenty volunteers. In the interval news had come that Wheeler had surrendered at Cawnpore, and that his garrison had then been treacherously destroyed.

By the end of June the rebellion had spread over a large area, but the rebels had done little to consolidate their position. Large armed forces were collected at Delhi and Lucknow, but no attempt had been made to organise the civilian population, or to place the rebellious area in a state of defence. The British had now begun to take the aggressive, with Nicholson and Chamberlain in the north, Havelock and Neill in the south; but the smallness of their forces shows how very narrow was the margin which enabled them to attack rather than defend. The comparative inertness of the rebel leaders is the more surprising because from the first the fighting was of a peculiarly brutal character, no quarter being given on either side. The post-war generation is wisely suspicious of 'atrocities', and it is necessary to discount much conscious and unconscious working up of a war atmosphere. The mutinous conduct of regiments prior to May 10 had been punished according to the normal peace-time procedure. The outbreak of armed rebellion coincided with the first murder of European civilians, men and women, at Meerut and Delhi. The British immediately replied by adopting similar standards, which were applied not only to the Bengal army, but to any Indians known or suspected to be unfriendly. Mutineers if captured were executed, and also subjected to what the *Times* correspondent described as 'spiritual and mental tortures to which we have no right to resort, and which we dare not perpetrate in the face of Europe'.[4] After the abortive rising at Peshawar on June 10, forty prisoners were taken out and publicly blown from guns, and this became the regular punishment for suspected mutiny.[5] Within a fortnight of the Meerut outbreak, and before the second group of mutinies, Nicholson in the Punjab was writing to Colonel Edwardes—'Let us propose a Bill for the flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi. The idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening.'[6] Lynching mentality, as seen to-day in the Southern States of America, soon degenerates into a kind of racial mania. Every Indian who was not actively fighting for the British became a 'murderer of women and children'. Even the servants with the British troops 'at Delhi were treated 'with outrageous harshness.... A general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi, a large number of whom were known to wish us success, was openly proclaimed. Blood-thirsty boys might be heard recom-

mending that all the native orderlies, irregulars, and other "poorbeahs" in our camp should be shot."[7]

Townsmen and villagers near the centres of rebellion were victims of this lust for blood. Colonel Neill, after suppressing the mutiny at Benares on June 4, extended martial law into the surrounding district.

> 'Volunteer hanging parties went into the districts, and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion. One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite "in an artistic manner", with mango trees for gibbets and elephants for drops, the victims of this wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in the form of figures of eight."[8]

Similar events followed the capture of Allahabad a week later. Martial law was strengthened by the Act of June 8, which enabled the Executive Government to proclaim any area to be in a state of rebellion, and to give capital powers to a Commission. By June 20, at Allahabad

> 'soldiers and civilians alike were holding Bloody Assize, or slaying natives without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General of India in Council, that "the aged, women, and children are sacrificed as well as those guilty of rebellion!" They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in villages—perhaps now and then accidentally shot."[9]

Neill himself was not responsible, either at Benares or Allahabad, for the way in which his successors administered martial law, and only partially for the drastic manner in which Renaud, with the advance force, interpreted his instructions to 'attack and destroy all places *en route* close to the road occupied by the enemy, but touch no others'. Havelock's main force followed along a stretch of dreary waste, in which every village had been burnt, and from which every inhabitant had disappeared except those who had been caught and hanged by the roadside.[10]

It has been necessary to describe the nature of the fighting during the six weeks following the Meerut outbreak in order to place in proper setting the terrible events at Cawnpore. These occurred later, about the end of June. General Wheeler had not expected that the

mutinous sepoys would return to besiege the few European troops which he had, and he had collected the European and Eurasian population in an entrenchment poorly suited to withstand a siege. The epic story of the three weeks' defence, from June 6 to the 27th, has often been told. It ended by General Wheeler's surrender on an ambiguously worded safe-conduct to Allahabad by river. The troops were attacked when embarking, and nearly all of them killed. The women and children were taken to the Nana Sahib's palace. About a fortnight later the Nana Sahib, who had had himself declared Peshwa, learnt that Havelock was rapidly approaching Cawnpore, and had defeated his troops at Fatehpur and in two other engagements. The two hundred and eleven women and children were then brutally murdered by some palace servants.

The two massacres must be considered separately in view of the importance which they acquired. The first was the work of mutineers, and, however reprehensible on general grounds, it was in keeping with a struggle in which no quarter was expected, and any trick seemed justifiable. It may be compared with the means by which Cooper, a Punjab civilian, captured and slaughtered some hundreds of unarmed sepoys belonging to a regiment which had been disarmed at Lahore. After escaping during a dust storm, these men were attacked by villagers, and took refuge on an island in the Ravi. About three hundred surrendered to Cooper and a few policemen, thinking they would be tried, but after being secured in a bastion they were taken out next morning and shot. Forty-five were already dead of suffocation.[11]

The massacre of the women and children at Cawnpore was a diabolical act, but it was not the work of the rebel troops, who refused to have anything to do with it. Nor is there the slightest evidence for the stories of rape and mutilation which were circulated at the time.[12] The slaughter seems to have been due to a panic, or possibly to a desire on the part of the Nana Sahib's retinue to compromise their half-hearted leader. It followed and was probably inspired by the savage punishments inflicted at Benares and Allahabad, and by Renaud's advance guard. Its results were altogether lamentable. In India and in England the news gave a welcome and almost religious sanction to any act of savagery which the Government troops might perpetrate. Townsmen were slaughtered wholesale at Cawnpore and later at Lucknow and Delhi.

> 'At the time of the capture of Lucknow—a season of indiscriminate massacre—such distinction was not made, and the unfortunate who fell into the hands of our troops was made short work of—sepoy or Oude villager, it mattered not—no questions were asked; his skin was black, and did not that suffice? A piece of rope, and the branch of a tree, or a rifle bullet through his brain, soon terminated the poor devil's existence.'[13]

In England, to quote a contemporary writer, 'everyone chuckled to hear how General Neill had forced high Brahmins to sweep up the blood of Europeans murdered at Cawnpore, and then strung them in a row without giving them the time requisite for purification'.[14] From Cawnpore can be traced the widespread belief that one European life, especially that of a woman or child, is worth the lives of innumerable Indians. Educated Englishmen came to India with ideas drawn from the Press of that period, invariably depicting the Indian as a cowardly slayer of women. How this was likely to appeal to the rank and file is illustrated by Trevelyan's story of an unfortunate incident amongst the drivers attached to a newly landed regiment. T seed two Moors talking in a cart. Presently I heard one of'em say "Cawnpore". I knowed what that meant; so I fetched Tom Walker, and he heard 'em say "Cawnpore," and he knowed what that meant. So we polished 'em both off.'

Another two months saw the end of the aggressive rebellion and the beginning of the punitive campaigns. Delhi fell after a series of operations carried through with marvellous courage. The siege train arrived on September 6; a week later the Kashmir gate was blown in. The city and fort were then captured after six days' fighting. Nicholson, the moving spirit in a very hazardous enterprise, was mortally wounded.[15] The rebels retreated, leaving behind Bahadur Shah. The ex-Emperor was arrested by Hodson, who also shot three of his sons. The city was sacked as ruthlessly as had been Cawnpore in July. Most of the male population, which had not already fled, were slaughtered, though many were known to have been friendly to the British cause, and few can have actively helped the rebel force. 'All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty

persons were hiding."[16] The rebel soldiers had purposely left behind large quantities of liquor, easily accessible to the incoming troops: and this ruse, while it facilitated their retreat, led to appalling excesses against their compatriots during the final stages of the capture of the city and fort.

Meanwhile Havelock, with his minute force, continued to win victories. After being joined by Outram he fought his way into Lucknow on September 25. These two events, the fall of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow, finally established the superiority of the Government's troops, even when at a great numerical disadvantage. The rebels never again showed the same vigour. Their nominal leader, Bahadur Shah, was captured, they had no headquarters, and their last hope of ultimate victory disappeared as they found reinforcements were steadily arriving from England. After September the British campaign became more orderly, while the rebels were divided into groups under such leaders as the Rao Sahib, Tantia Topi, Khan Bahadur Khan, Firoz Shah, Kunwar Singh, and the Rani of Jhansi. For another nine months these were systematically hunted down. Sir Colin Campbell operated in the North-West Provinces and Oudh, Sir Hugh Rose worked from Bombay through Central India. They were helped by columns under Colonel Greathed from Delhi and General Whitlock from Mhow. At first the hardest fighting fell to the share of Sir Colin Campbell. Lucknow had to be relieved for the second time in November, and he had only just succeeded in clearing the city and evacuating the non-combatants, when he had to hurry back to Cawnpore, where General Windham was hard pressed by some 20,000 men under Rao Sahib and Tantia Topi. Outram with 4000 men was left at Lucknow, where he successfully held the Alambagh against forces estimated at over a hundred thousand. Lucknow had therefore to be relieved for a third time, in March, 1858.

Tantia Topi's force was drawn from the Gwalior garrison. Sindhia's own State troops had remained loyal to their master, and still defended the treasury and arsenal, but the Government troops mutinied in June, This powerful army might have played a decisive part against the weakened British forces, but it did little for five months. It was now faced by Campbell's better equipped army and was defeated on December 6. Joined by a force of Gurkhas under

Jang Bahadur, Campbell then returned to Lucknow, relieved Outram, and began campaigning in Oudh and Rohilkhand, driving Khan Bahadur Khan and his Ghazi followers out of Bareilly in May. These operations in Oudh continued until the end of the year. Ahmad Ullah and the Begum of Oudh fought with great determination round Shahjanpur, until the former was treacherously murdered by a brother of the Raja of Powain, from whom he was seeking help. The Begum ultimately fled to Nepal. This resistance in Oudh developed into a war of local independence. The *Talukdars*, who had previously adopted an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the mutineers, were driven into active rebellion by a singularly injudicious Proclamation issued by Canning at the end of March, which declared that, except in a few specified cases, the *Talukdars*, lands would be liable to forfeiture.[17] This Proclamation was so opposed to the usually conciliatory attitude of the Governor-General that it is probable that he did not fully appreciate its significance, and merely wished to give the administration a free hand in the future settlement of Oudh. Ahmad Ullah was able to arouse the territorial patriotism which was so markedly lacking over most of India during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; but his army had not the training of the sepoys who followed Tantia Topi and the Rao Sahib. The Moulvi fought with great courage, and fully deserved this tribute from a contemporary historian: 'He had not stained his sword with assassination, he had connived at no murders, and he fought manfully, honestly, stubbornly in the field against the strangers who had seized his country'.[18]

Interest in the Central Indian campaign turned on the siege of Jhansi and the combined activities of the Rani and Tantia Topi. Sir Hugh Rose, after capturing Ratgarh and relieving Saugor, reached Jhansi on March 21. He had not completed the investment before he was called upon to meet a determined effort to relieve the city. Tantia Topi, after his defeat three months previously, had collected his forces at Kalpi and now marched on Jhansi. He was again defeated on the Betwa river, and Rose then stormed Jhansi, though the Rani managed to escape and joined Tantia Topi. Their forces were once more defeated at Kunch, but the indomitable Rani tried a final gamble, and marched with Tantia Topi into Gwalior, hoping that the State troops would at last join them. Sindhia went out to oppose them,

but his army would not fight, and the rebels seized the town and fort. Rose saw the danger of a Maratha rising and, making a last effort, defeated Tantia Topi at Morar and Kotah, after which the Rani was killed when riding, dressed as a sowar, with her cavalry. Gwalior was retaken on June 20, and on July 8 Canning proclaimed peace, though nearly all the leaders were still at large. The Nana Sahib, the Begum of Oudh, and Firoz Shah escaped from India during the autumn of 1858. Tantia Topi was given up by Man Singh, a rebellious princelet who hoped to recover his fief by this betrayal. He was tried and hanged for waging war against the king.[19] The Rao Sahib was arrested and hanged three years later.

Thus ended an episode, lamentable in its origin, distinguished by great courage but by few other virtues during its course, and ending in a manner which left the seeds of much future trouble. On the British side the valour and endurance of soldiers and civilians were marred by crude racial passions, and by gross ingratitude to many Indians who assisted them. Indians must also recognise certain failings in the conduct of those who took arms against the Government; the indecision which kept large numbers inactive when they might have been most effective, the selfishness and lack of national pride which prevented their leaders working together or sacrificing their own personal ambitions.

(From author's *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, 1934)

1. There were two British regiments, one infantry and one cavalry, at Meerut, and some British artillery. General Hewett, who was in command, has been much blamed for not despatching troops to Delhi before the mutineers had consolidated their position.
2. A council of twelve, the 'Bara Topi', became the nominal rulers. In view of the controversy mentioned on page 443, it may be noted that Bahadur Shah was not directly or indirectly represented.
3. In replying to the first offer Lord Canning referred to 'the passing and groundless panic'. The news from Meerut *did* cause panics amongst Europeans at both Simla and Calcutta, two curious incidents which gave rise to later controversy.
4. Russell, *My Diary in India*, ii. 43.
5. Cf. a letter written by Lieutenant (afterwards Lord) Roberts to his mother, June 11,1857: 'We have come along this far, doing a little business on the road, such as disarming regiments and executing mutineers. The death that

seems to have most effect is being blown from a gun.'—*Letters written during the Indian Mutiny.*

6. Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, ii. 301.
7. See *The Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi.*
8. The two quotations are from Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, ii. 177 and 203. The reference in the second extract is to papers presented to Parliament, February 4, 1858.
9. See note 5 on previous page.
10. There can be no doubt about the recklessness of these executions. *Parliamentary Papers*, xliv. pt. i. 23. Also see Russell, *My Diary in India*, ii. 402.
11. See Cooper's own account in his book *The Crisis in the Punjab*, 152 *et seq*: 'They were possessed of a sudden and insane idea that they were going to be tried by court-martial after some luxurious refreshment.' 'The doors were opened and behold. Unconsciously the tragedy of Holwell's Black Hole had been re-enacted.. Forty-five bodies dead from fright. exhaustion. fatigue. heat. and partial suffocation, were dragged into light.'
12. See Colonel Williams' valuable synopsis of evidence taken at Cawnpore. Printed in *Annals of the Indian Rebellion.*
13. Lieutenant V. D. Majendie's *Up among the Pandies*, 195. This ingenuous account of the Mutiny operations by a subaltern is of considerable importance in this connection.
14. G.O. Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah*. 284.
15. The scale of the fighting round Delhi may be judged by the casualties The siege cost 992 killed and 2795 wounded. This was more than the total casualties suffered during HaveJock and Outram's campaigns, Sir Colin Campbell's relief of Lucknow, his subsequent action at Cawnpore, Sir H. Rose's campaign in Central India, and Whitlock's campaign in Bundelkhand.
16. Letter in the *Bombay Telegraph*. Quoted by Montgomery Martin, *The Indian Empire*, viii. 449. In view of these events the blame attached to Hodson for pistolling the princes seems hypocritical. They had been active members of the rebel army, and had surrendered without safe conduct.
17. This Proclamation brought a strongly censorious letter from Lord Ellenborough, then Secretary of State for India. He sent this without Cabinet authorisation, and resigned.
18. Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, iv. 381.
19. Not, as frequently stated, for complicity in the Cawnpore murders. The justice of the sentence was severely criticised. See Kaye and Malleson, v. 265. This, like the criticism of Hodson, seems based on a form of snobbishness. Actually, if not theoretically, everyone who joined the mutineers was treated as deserving capital punishment. Hodson laid himself open to other charges affecting his personal integrity, and if he had survived might have been tried for giving guarantees 'in a very unaccountable manner'. These are fully discussed in Kaye and Malleson. See also G. Campbell, *Memoirs of my Indian Career*, i. 247.

15

MEERUT AND DELHI

By

Richard Hilton

IN 1857 the present great port of Karachi hardly existed. The only practicable routes by which British reinforcements from overseas could reach Northern India were through Bombay or Calcutta. Madras, besides being rather a poor harbour, was much too far south for use in this emergency. It was also separated from the Ganges valley by a long stretch of almost roadless country.

From Calcutta, there were good communications by road, by river, and, to a certain extent, by rail, in a north-westerly direction, up the broad fertile valleys of the Ganges and Jumna. From Bombay a " Grand Trunk Road" ran through undulating and, in places, even mountainous country north-eastward to the neighbourhood of Delhi, where it met the network of communications from Calcutta.

North-westward again from Delhi the combined "Grand Trunk Road " from Calcutta and from Bombay ran right across the Punjab to the Khyber Pass and Afghanistan. Thus Delhi and the neighbouring cantonment of Meerut (forty miles away) stood at the focal point of three vital lines of communication. Whoever held these places automatically severed Calcutta from the Punjab and from the vital Afghan frontier. He could also prevent the junction of British forces moving northward from Calcutta and Bombay.

In May 1857, when the Mutiny flared into open war, the news of disaster first reached Lord Canning in the form of a telegram,

from Agra, the capital of the "North-West Provinces" (as the territory between Delhi and Bengal was then called). Mr. Colvin, the lieutenant-governor, forwarded for the information of the governor-general an extraordinary private telegram which the postmaster in Meerut had sent to his aunt in Agra. This private message ran as follows:

"Cavalry have risen ... setting fire to houses ... having killed or wounded all Europeans they could find. ... If aunt intends starting tomorrow evening please detain her." (The lady in question had, it seemed, planned to visit her nephew in Meerut.)

It was in this strange and garbled manner that the ruler of India first heard news of the greatest crisis which had ever befallen that country. It was some days before the authorities in Calcutta received further details.

The Commandcr-in-Chief in Simla was informed of the crisis in an equally unorthodox manner. On May 12th Captain Barnard, son of the divisional commander at Ambala, rode into Simla with another incoherent telegram, dated May 11th, from two British telegraph operators in Delhi. This had just reached Ambala and read as follows:

"We must leave office ... All bungalows are burning ... sepoys from Meerut... came in this morning ... We are off ... Mr. Todd is dead I think ... He went out this morning and has not returned ... nine Europeans killed ... Good-bye ..."

The vague news, received in this highly irregular form, was soon followed by an official report from Brigadier Graves, in command of Delhi cantonment :

"May 11th, 1857. Cantonment in a state of siege. Mutineers from Meerut, 3rd Light Cavalry, numbers not known, said to be 150, cut off communication with Meerut, taken possession of bridge of boats. 54th N.I. sent against them but would not act. Several officers killed and wounded. City in a state of considerable excitement. Troops sent down but nothing known yet. Information will be forwarded."

I have given these early messages verbatim, or as nearly so as can be traced, because it is important for anyone reading the story in the light of full knowledge to realize just how little the authorities (at Simla and Calcutta) knew at first regarding what had happened at the seat of trouble. It was clear that something extremely serious had occurred, both in Meerut and Delhi. That was all.

Telegraphic communication south-eastward from these two places was dead. Gradually in the next few days additional information filtered through to Calcutta in the form of telegrams from Agra. Mr. Colvin, the lieutenant-governor there, forwarded promptly any scraps of news which came through to him from the two places. But it was not till about May 16th that any coherent idea of the situation could be formed by Lord Canning.

The picture which then presented itself was grim indeed. He knew that the British forces in India had been reduced to a dangerously low level, partly on account of the Persian war, just ended, and partly owing to the military occupation of Pegu in Burma. In the whole go miles between Calcutta and Meerut there were less than 5,000 British troops as opposed to sepoy forces of more than 55,000. Outside the Calcutta and Meerut areas most of the total British strength in India was either scattered in hill stations along the Himalayas or else concentrated in the Northern Punjab about Rawal Pindi and Peshawar.

Canning realized that, if the mutineers had established themselves firmly in Meerut and Delhi, our own military reaction must at first be disjointed. It was clear that Delhi must be retaken as soon as possible, and that this must be done from the Punjab—the only base containing sufficient forces within reach of Army Headquarters control. The utmost which could be done from Calcutta, it seemed, was to make Bengal a firm base, from which reinforcements might be sent north-westward into the Ganges-Jumna plain, as soon as they might begin to arrive from overseas.

It seems fitting, at this juncture, to give the full narrative of Meerut and Delhi, remembering all the time that these terrible details were not known outside those places till long after the events.

The unrest, which seemed to have subsided in Bengal after the disturbances of Berhampore and Barrackpore, soon transferred itself to Meerut. Throughout April those who were closely in touch with bazaar gossip kept reporting that great expectations seemed to be centred upon that town. Indians everywhere kept on asking one another whether there was yet any news from Meerut. Those who could read anxiously scanned the vernacular newspapers for mention of the place.

These things were reported through the British intelligence service but no serious view was taken of the information because Meerut, of all places, was considered to be the least likely starting point for trouble. That cantonment contained a strong British force of all arms. There were a regiment of cavalry (Carabineers), a battalion of rifles (60th) and several batteries of artillery—more than enough, everyone agreed, to deal promptly with any nonsense from the Indian units there, which consisted only of two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry.

However, the buzz of expectation concerning Meerut intensified. In mid-April, a "fakir" (Mahomedan religious beggar), mounted on an elephant and followed by a large throng of disciples, made his appearance in the city. His procession caused so much excitement that the police ordered him lo leave the district. He moved out of the city, but concealed himself in the lines of the 20th N.I., who shielded him from the police.

On April 23rd, Colonel Smyth. commanding thc 3rd Light Cavalry, ordered a parade, with ammunition, for the next day. His intention was to explain to his troops that the government had issued a new order, permitting Indian troops to tear the greased cartridges with thcir fingers instead of biting them. To demonstratc this change of drill it was necessary to hand out cartridges to some of his troops. The skirmishers of the regiment, ninety in number, were ordered to draw the cartridges from store, but eighty-five of them refused to carry out this order. A court of enquiry, composed entirely of Indian officers, found that there were no legitimate grounds for refusing to handle the cartridges, other than fear of public opinion and ostracism.

During the ten days or so which elapsed while the report was being considered by the Commander-in-Chief, fires broke out nightly throughout the native lines. At length a decision was received from Simla. A court martial, composed of fifteen Indian officers, was ordered to try the eighty-five troopers. This court sentenced them to ten years' imprisonment, with hard labour, and the sentence was confirmed by higher authority, except in the cases of eleven young troopers, with less than five years' service, whose term was reduced by half. The severity of these sentences appears to have surprised and even shocked many of the British officers stationed in Meerut.

If the sentences themselves were harsh, the procedure for promulgating them certainly exceeded the usages of common sense and military decorum. A punishment parade of the entire garrison was ordered for Saturday, May 9th, by General Hewitt, commander of the Meerut Division.

The setting for this grim ceremony seems to have made a profound impression on all spectators, both British and Indian. It was a sunless day. The sky was full of lowering storm clouds, first signs of the coming monsoon. At dawn the troops were paraded in a hollow square, the British being so placed as to cover the Indian units. By the general's special order the 3rd Cavalry paraded dismounted. On the arrival of General Hewitt and his staff the British units, including the artillery, were ordered to load. Then the eighty-five were marched on to the parade ground. After their sentences had been read out, they were stripped of their uniforms in full view of all their comrades. Blacksmiths then advanced, with their tools and forges, and commenced the work of riveting fetters upon the condemned men.

This terrible proceeding lasted for several hours. Eventually the chained men were marched along the fronts of all the Indian units and then were taken to the civil jail, about two miles distant, where they were handed over to Indian jailers and an *Indian* guard.

During the remainder of that day and throughout the morning of Sunday, the 10th, an atmosphere of sullen rage smouldered in the sepoy lines. It was most unfortunate for us that Meerut was such a widely extended cantonment. The British and Indian lines were separated from one another by a deep watercourse and by a mile or two of straggling native bazaars, so that, from the dismissal of the punishment parade on Saturday morning, the sepoys were left very much to themselves right round till the evening of Sunday.

British officers and their wives followed their normal week-end routine during those fateful twenty-four hours, quite oblivious, apparently, of their coming ordeal. Some noted the fact that, on Sunday morning, their native servants were absent from duty in the bungalows. They commented about this in the club at lunch-time. All were rather annoyed by this extraordinary behaviour, but no one seemed to attach any special significance to it.

At about six o'clock on that Sunday evening the European community, having rested throughout the hot afternoon, were preparing to go to church. It so happened that, owing to the hot weather, the time for evening service had been postponed by one hour, commencing from that very day—a change which was probably unknown to the sepoys. Consequently, the 6oth Rifles, instead of being already in church and helpless, were still falling in upon their parade ground, unarmed, it is true (after the custom of pre-Mutiny days), but not too far from their weapons. An officer, dressing after his siesta, heard a low murmur in the lines of the 11th N.I., not far from his bungalow. Strolling in that direction to investigate, he was met by stray musket bullets and by men running from the lines, who advised him to fly for his life. He ordered his horse and rode to the lines of the British cavalry to warn them that there was trouble brewing. One of the clearest reports of the outbreak was given by the Protestant chaplain:

"I was driving to church, as usual, for the 7 p.m. service when I met two men of the 60th Rifles, covered with blood and supported by their comrades. On reaching the church, I found carriages driving away in great confusion ... Frequent shots were then heard and the distant cries of a large mob ... We abandoned any idea of divine service and I drove home, avoiding public places ... The inhabitants of the bazaar and city committed atrocities far greater than those of the sepoys ... Captain Macdonald's wife was pursued some distance and frightfully mutilated. Mrs. Chambers was murdered in her garden, her clothes having been set on fire before she was cut to pieces."

There are many such accounts still available, copied from diaries and letters written at the time, and these serve to illustrate some of the horrors of that Sunday evening. Picced together from these fragments, the full story seemed to be something like this.

During the twenty-four hours which followed the punishment parade of Saturday the 3rd Light Cavalry had worked themselves into a frenzy, and had persuaded some, though not all, of the two other regiments to join them in liberating the eighty-five condemned men. The hour of evening service was presumably chosen deliberately in the hope of catching the Christians off their guard.

It is evident, from these letters and diaries, that the civil population was also in the plot, because, from the very commencement of rioting, ruffians from the city were prominent in murder, looting, and arson. The turmoil, first heard in the lines of the 11th N.I., was due to angry words between men of that regiment and the cavalrymen, because the 11th refused, at first, to take any part in the mutiny. The instigators and principal offenders were the cavalry, actively supported by the 20th N.I. who, at 6 p.m., fell in upon their parade ground, without orders from their C.O., just as though in accordance with some carefully timed plan. It was only after shots had been exchanged between the 11th and the 20th that the former unit consented, still reluctantly, to co-operate in the mutiny. Even then, they did their utmost to save their own officers and, in many cases, succeeded.

Eye-witness accounts also show inexplicable delays and muddles before any British troops were ready to go into action against the rebels. Even when they did move, the Carabineers, for some unknown reason, marched off by a circuitous route into the country, and only reached the native lines long after the Rifles and the gunners. They were all too late. The mutineers, after murdering most of the officers who crossed their path and after setting fire to their own lines, disappeared into the country in the general direction of Delhi. The artillery fired a few rounds after them as the last stragglers disappeared into a wood, but the range was too long to be effective.

Darkness was falling and pursuit was judged to be useless. Lord Roberts, whose opinion is worth more than that of many of General Hewitt's "armchair critics," has recorded his belief that this was the case—that it would have been useless and even dangerous to pursue the rebels through the night. But even so, it is hard to understand why this powerful British force was not employed more effectively in protecting the white women and children in Meerut itself. During the night, the bulk of the British troops "stood to" in the abandoned Indian lines, no doubt protecting government property from further arson but doing little to save their compatriots in the European residential quarter only a mile or so away.

In that area, a reign of terror prevailed from dusk till about eleven o'clock, when strong patrols were, at last, posted on the roads leading

to the European bungalows. By that time a great deal of mischief had already been done, principally by criminal elements from the city and from the two jails. One of the first acts of the 3rd Cavalry had been to release their eighty-five comrades from the civil jail (the Indian jailers co-operating willingly). At the same time about 1,200 other prisoners were released, many of whom were hardened and bloodthirsty criminals.

In fairness it must be said that the 11th N.I. took very little part in these outrages. When the alarm reached Colonel Finnis, their commanding officer, he rode straight to their lines and reasoned with his men. He appealed to their loyalty and pointed out that, in the end. the mutiny was bound to fail. They listened quietly and seemed impressed, but unfortunately sepoys of the 20th came among them and urged them to kill their officers. While Finnis was still speaking a volley was fired—it is believed by men of the 20th—and the colonel fell dead from his horse, the first British victim of the Mutiny. The other officers of the regiment were hustled away, almost forcibly, by sepoys of the 11th, in an effort to save their lives, but some were shot by soldiers of other regiments before they got clear of the rabble.

There were many deeds of individual gallantry performed by British officers of the Indian units during those first hours of chaos. Some of them. like Colonel Finnis, were slaughtered on parade, but others managed, by sheer personal influence, to hold their men steady and loyal for a while. An outstanding case was that of Captain Henry Craigie, of the 3rd Cavalry (that hotbed of mutiny), who, aided by Melville Clark, his subaltern, held his squadron under control long enough to use them to safeguard many ladies, who would otherwise certainly have been massacred. There were also a few cases, better left nameless, of officers whose presence of mind or courage failed them in this dire ordeal.

Even the best of them could not hold their men for long. The influence of the many disloyal Indian soldiers overwhelmed the loyal instincts of the few. By dawn all but a handful of staunch men of the 11th had marched away to throw in their lot with the rebels.

Though General Hewitt did not know it at the time, the mutineers halted for the night only six miles from Meerut. It is possible that a

vigorous pursuit, even if undertaken only at first light, might have caught them before they could have got on the move again. Much has been written on the conduct (or, rather, inactivity) of General Hewitt and Brigadier Wilson. Much of this criticism, written with fuller knowledge than these officers possessed, is undoubtedly unfair. Nevertheless it is hard to avoid the feeling that things might have gone very differently had there been a Gillespic, a Hearsey, or a John Nicholson in command at Meerut that night. At any rate, whether culpable or not, their inactivity was destined to produce disastrous results in Delhi on the following day.-

In strong contrast to Meerut, with its powerful British forces, Delhi was garrisoned entirely by Indian troops. Even the arsenal within the city had only nine Europeans on its staff—about whose heroism more will be written later. The cantonment lay about three miles outside the city walls, towards the north-west. It contained three regiments of Indian infantry, namely the 38th, 54th, and 74th, and a battery of Indian artillery.

The importance of Delhi as a centre of communications has already been mentioned. But it had other claims to importance too.

In a huge, rambling palace within the city walls, almost a city within the city, there lived in seclusion Bahadur Shah, King of Delhi, a descendant of Timur the Lame, who had founded the great Mogul Empire. The kingship of Delhi was a purely honorary title, granted by the British to this aged remnant of a once mighty dynasty. The title carried with it no power or authority over any person or territory outside the confines of the palace itself.

Within the extensive perimeter of the palace walls the old king exercised a sort of domestic sovereignty, and it was a generally accepted belief among Europeans that the palace was a sink of iniquity, in which flourished every form of vice, crime, and cruelty ever known in any oriental court. But, if white men were inclined to regard this ancient monarch with tolerant contempt, his prestige in the minds of Indians, and particularly of Mahomedans, was very great indeed, as we were soon to find out to our cost.

Delhi itself, that wonderful old walled city, with the ruins of seven still more ancient Delhis round it, represented to millions of Indians a symbol in stone of India's magnificent past. It was only natural

that, when Indian minds began to think of driving the white men from their land, they should couple this idea with the dream of a restored national dynasty, such as the Great Moguls of history who had once ruled so magnificently from the ancient capital city. To what extent this idea was instinctive or to what extent it was a formal part of the great plot—this we shall never know. What we do know is that the mutineers of Meerut headed for Delhi like bees swarming round their queen.

There was also a factor of hard military importance about Delhi. Its arsenal and powder magazine contained two complete siege trains, many brand-new field guns, nearly 10,000 muskets, 900,000 cartridges, and 10,000 barrels of powder.

Telegraphic communication with Meerut ceased suddenly at about 4 p.m. on Sunday, the 10th, just before the outbreak. It is by no means clear to what extent (if any) news of Meerut had reached Delhi during the night of the 10th-11th. It is possible that the severed telegraph wires may have been mended by dawn, because Kaye, describing the scene in the printing offices of the *Delhi Press*, states that " the telegraph had brought in the early morning tidings that the Meerut mutineers were hastening to Delhi." Even if this information had reached the *Press*, it certainly does not seem to have reached Brigadier Graves, who commanded the troops in Delhi, for no defensive steps were taken till the Meerut mutineers were actually in sight of the city walls.

A parade of the garrison had been ordered for Monday, the 11th, to hear promulgation of the sentence on Jemadar Issuri Pandi, the officer in charge of the guard during the Mangal Pandi incident. This parade took place as arranged, and British officers returned to their breakfasts discussing the announcement, but giving no thought to any imminent local crises. Whether Brigadier Graves and his intelligence branch had any inkling of the Merrut situation or not, it is very evident that regimental officers had no idea whatsoever that anything had gone amiss so close to Delhi. No orders on this subject had reached units in Delhi cantonment when the Meerut mutineers were first sighted.

It was shortly after 7 a.m. when watchmen on the walls of Delhi city described a group of horsemen, between a hundred and two

hundred strong, cantering along the Meerut road toward the River Jumna, which skirted the city walls. There was a bridge of boats, unguarded of course under the peacetime conditions then prevailing. In any case the river was fordable in several places at that time of year.

Information concerning these oncoming horsemen was at once given to the civil authorities within the city—to Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, the political agent, and to Mr. Simon Fraser, the commissioner. The latter forwarded the report immediately to Brigadier Graves at his headquarters outside the city. Metcalfe, meanwhile, hurried to the bastion overlooking the bridge of boats, accompanied by Lieutenant Willoughby, officer in charge of the arsenal. They took with them a couple of guns, intending to stop the enemy from crossing the river. But they were just too late. When they reached the bastion, a party of horsemen were already across the bridge. In the distance, as far as they could see, a vast horde of scarlet-coated infantry stretched along the Meerut road, and hurrying toward Delhi. The time was about 8 a.m.

All now depended on two unknown factors—the loyalty of the Delhi troops and how long it would take the British troops to come from Meerut to the rescue of their few compatriots in Delhi. Nobody doubted for a moment that they would come. Most people imagined them to be already near at hand, thrusting along the Meerut road in hot pursuit of the mutineers.

Willoughby, a quiet young subaltern, who up till now had not impressed his senior officers as an outstanding man, went back to his arsenal and made the best preparations possible for its defence. It was situated in the north-east quarter of the city, quite close to the walls and near to the king's palace. It was all too certain that the mutineers would lose no time in trying to take possession of this important military prize.

Willoughby's resources were ridiculously inadequate. Knowing full well that he dare not trust to the loyalty of any of his Indian establishment, he based his plan of defence upon the use of his British personnel only. Besides himself, this party consisted of eight artillery officers and N.C.Os. To realize fully the gallantry of these nine men it is important to remember that they were not physically fit young

soldiers, in the pink of condition, trained up to concert pitch in combatant duties. Most of them were middle-aged men, employed on sedentary work, such as the accounting and issue of stores. The last thing normally to be expected of such men was a fight to the death against overwhelming odds. But they were seasoned old soldiers of the type who take anything in the day's work.

They barricaded the gates and placed two six-pounders just inside, each double-loaded with grape-shot. Another two six-pounder guns were sited to cover the main gate of the magazine, which was further protected by entanglements of *chevaux-de-frise*. Five more guns and a howitzer were sited here and there within the enclosure, so as to cover the principal avenues of approach. All were loaded with grape-shot, and a good supply of ammunition was placed close by. It is worth while mentioning, for readers without technical knowledge of artillery, that these old-fashioned guns normally required a detachment of half a dozen men per gun to keep up a proper rate of fire. In the fight which followed, two middle-aged men per gun, and sometimes one man only, managed to maintain such a brisk and accurate fire that the attackers were held at bay for quite a long time. Willoughby realized, of course, that his handful of stalwarts could only resist for a limited period, so he arranged for the destruction of his arsenal when all else had failed. A train of powder was laid to the magazine and Conductor Scully was given orders to explode it on receipt of a visual signal. So, with these preparations completed, they waited in silence for what might come to them.

Meanwhile, in cantonments outside the city, preparations had been made to deal with the situation as a whole. Of the three Indian infantry regiments stationed there, the 38th had at that time the duty of providing guards upon the main gates of the city. This was unfortunate, because it was a regiment whose loyalty had been open to question on a previous occasion.

The 54th Regiment, commanded by Colonel Ripley, marched toward the Kashmir Gate, which the mutineers were already approaching in considerable force from the other direction. Before they marched off, the entire garrison paraded in front of Brigadier Graves, who harangued them suitably on the gravity of the situation. The sepoys responded with cheers and protestations of loyalty. All

the British officers present were much impressed by the fine bearing of the troops, particularly those of the 54th and 74th. They were soon to be grievously disillusioned.

On reaching the Kashmir Gate the 54th suddenly halted and began to break ranks, leaving their British officers standing, an isolated group, in the roadway. A party of the 3rd Cavalry rode straight at the group of officers, discharging their pistols upon them at short range, and then falling on them with the sword. The officers seem to have been taken by surprise owing to this sudden defection of their own men. Colonel Ripley shot down two of the troopers, but the rest were upon the group of officers like a flash. After a short melee all the officers were hacked to pieces. The 54th then entered the city with all the other rebels to join in the orgy of loot and murder which was already in full swing.

Already several parties had penetrated the city wall by other routes. The guards, provided by the 38th N.I., in every case fraternized with the oncoming rebels and threw open the gates. Even had they not done so, the city defences would soon have been infiltrated, because the king's palace lay adjacent to the city wall, and had its own private gateway. This was at once flung open by the king's household and the mutineers came through the palace grounds into the city.

There seems to have been some method in their movements. A party of them hurried to the king's apartments and shouted for him to take his place, as their leader, in a great war for religion and for restoration of the independent Mogul Empire. At first, the king appears to have hesitated. He sent to Captain Douglas, commanding the palace guard, a request that he should disperse the shouting deputation by replying to them (from inside the house) that the king did not wish to be dragged into the affair. When Douglas suggested going among the mutineers to calm them down, the king begged him not to do so. But, shortly after this, some of the rebel guns from Meerut reached the city and fired a salute of twenty-one guns in honour of the restored Mogul Emperor. It is said that this mark of regal pomp tickled the vanity of the foolish old man. From then onward his attitude suddenly changed, and he threw in his lot with the rebels. Douglas and all his family were shortly afterwards murdered by the

mob, if not with the king's approval at any rate without his attempting to use his influence to save them.

The mutineers lost no time in making use of the so-called "Emperor's" newly usurped authority. In his name a message was sent to Willoughby, ordering him to hand over the magazine forthwith. If he did not, so the message continued, the king would send scaling ladders from the palace, and the defenders would be put to death. Willoughby made no reply to this impudent communication.

The remark about ladders was no idle threat. It is clear that these ladders must have been kept in readiness within the palace, perhaps for this very purpose, because only a short period elapsed before the attack began.

Conductor Crow and Sergeant Stewart, with lighted matches in their hands, stood by the two six-pounders, covering the outer gate. As the heads of the leading rebels appeared above the wall, Crow and Stewart swung their guns swiftly on to them and swept them off the wall like flies. Again and again the attackers poked their heads over, but coolly and swiftly, as though on ceremonial parade, the two old soldiers maintained a brisk rate of fire. It could not last. Thunderous blows were heard on the barricaded gate, which began to splinter under the onslaught. The two men traversed their guns back on to the entrance, and waited for the flood of attackers who would soon be rushing in.

The great door collapsed, and a seething crowd poured through the gap. The old soldiers waited until the gateway was packed with enemy. Then they fired those two guns for the last time. In accordance with Willoughby's orders, they fell back to the inner keep, leaving the guns empty, facing a heap of dead and dying men.

The principal or inner gate was similarly defended, but here the fight was more prolonged, because there were half a dozen tough old soldiers to keep the guns busy. Even when the enemy had almost surrounded two of the guns and were shooting at them from the shelter of buildings less than forty yards away, Scully and Buckley, assisted by Lieutenant Forrest (an invalid), managed to get off four more rounds per gun before Buckley and Forrest were wounded.

Willoughby saw that the time had now come for destroying the magazine. He gave the order, and Buckley and Scully an to their

appointed posts. Calmly Willoughby waited till the walls of the magazine were swarming with hundreds of mutineers frantically trying to burst in through windows and doors and over the final wall. Then he gave a signal. Buckley, standing on a little mound, raised his hat as a sign to Scully, and a terrific explosion shook the city.

Hundreds of mutineers were blown to smithereens or crushed by falling masonry. Native reports, probably exaggerated, put their losses at over 1,500. None of the gallant nine escaped unhurt, but four of them, stunned and battered, crept away from the ruins under cover of the smoke, dust, and general confusion. They were Willoughby, Forrest, Raynor, and Buckley. Scully, Crow, Stewart, Edwards, and Shaw were never seen again. Willoughby, unfortunately, was killed during the final retreat from Delhi.

This epic fight began at about 11 a.m. and lasted till about 4 p.m., when the great thud and a huge pall of smoke over the city heartened the anxious British survivors on the Ridge outside Delhi, who then knew that the mutineers within the city were not having things entirely their own way.

The survivors badly needed some such encouragement. The British situation was far from satisfactory. A building known as the Flagstaff Tower had previously been chosen as a refuge point to which all women, children, and other non-combatants should go in case of trouble. Accordingly during the morning a large number of people from cantonments crowded into this building, which was provided with a guard of sepoys from the 74th N.I. Thither also went many British officers who had no special duties elsewhere, staff officers and officers of the Indian units whose men had mutinied and left them.

The tower stood about midway between cantonments and the city on the summit of a rocky range of low hills, later to become famous as "The Ridge." It was too small a building to accommodate so many refugees. It lacked most of the usual facilities for normal European comfort. The heat was almost unbearable. To add to their physical discomforts, most of the women were the wives or relatives of officers or civilians who were facing unknown perils down in the city, from which horrible noises and visible signs of rioting and turmoil were ascending to torment the spectators on the Ridge with agonies of suspense.

Despite their misery and anxiety the refugees from cantonments were more fortunate than others who happened to live down in the city. There was quite a large community of European and Eurasian civilians, whose work lay in the city itself, and who lived there with their families, mostly in a quarter of the city called Darya Ganj. Here also lived a large number of Indian Christians. While some of the mutineers were attacking the arsenal, large numbers of others, accompanied by the riff-raff of the city, made straight for Darya Ganj, intent upon murder and looting. Very few of the Europeans, Eurasians, or Indian Christians who happened to be inside the city that morning escaped from the frenzy of the mob. Mr. Ball's history, written in 1859, very close to the events which it describes, contains page after page of details too horrible for modern publication—the reports of eye-witnesses, mostly Indian, who secretly sympathized with the victims but dared not show their feelings in face of the violence of the mob. One such account alone is sufficient to exemplify the horrors of the Delhi massacre. "An officer and his wife were tied to trees. Their children were tortured to death before them, and portions of their flesh were crammed down the parents' throats. The wife was then ravished in front of her husband. He was mutilated ... Then both were burned to death."

Nor was it only Europeans, Eurasians, and Indian Christians who suffered from the bestial anarchy which was let loose on that day. Wealthier Indian citizens were tortured and forced to disgorge their treasures, shops in the bazaars were looted of all that they held, and merchants, both rich and poor, were utterly ruined.

All day long the handful of survivors in the Flagstaff Tower anxiously strained their eyes and ears for the first signs of rescue from Meerut. Brigadier Graves, in particular, was amazed and puzzled by the delay. It seemed incredible that a large British force, only forty miles away, should make no attempt to get into touch with Delhi in order to find out what was happening there. Could it be possible, he wondered, that General Hewitt simply did not realize that Delhi needed his help?

Surgeon Batson, an expert Hindustani linguist and an adept at oriental disguises, volunteered to make his way to Meerut with a message from Brigadier Graves. He disguised himself as a "fakir" and set out, but was detected before he had got very far. Thanks to

his intimate knowledge of the Koran and other Mahomedan religious lore, and thanks also to the kindness of certain villagers, who befriended him at great risk to themselves, he escaped death, but he was stripped naked, robbed of all that he had, and left for dead by the wayside. After wandering for twenty-five days and suffering incredible hardships he at last reached safety— perhaps one of the most amazing of all true "escape" stories in history.

Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, too, had a remarkable experience. He lay hidden inside Delhi city for three days, while the rebels searched every nook and cranny for surviving Europeans. Then with the help of loyal Indians he was smuggled over the wall and hidden in the neighbouring jungle, whence he made his way with several hairbreadth escapes into safety.

With great difficulty, Brigadier Graves had succeeded in retaining a very doubtful loyalty throughout the day among those sepoys of the three regiments who had remained in cantonments. It is probable that fear of the expected British troops from Meerut may have had a lot to do with the continuance of this loyalty for so long. Everybody in Delhi, British or Indian, momentarily expected to see the British marching along the Meerut road. But they never came!

As the afternoon wore on most of the remaining sepoys filtered away to join their comrades in the looting of the city. Only the 74th N.I. continued loyal in any appreciable numbers. At the Kashmir Gate of the city there was a building, called the Main Guard, where another group of British survivors had taken refuge, under the doubtful protection of a sepoy guard found by the 38th N.I. Toward evening, when it became apparent that the British from Meerut were not coming, the patience of these sepoys became exhausted. Suddenly, without any warning, they fired a volley into the white men and women who had been under their protection till then. Fortunately for the few who survived this volley the lure of loot drew the sepoys away without completing their work of slaughter. As soon as dusk fell the handful of survivors made their way down the steep escarpment into the moat and up the other side, the men assisting the ladies across this obstacle by making a rope of their belts.

So began the British retreat from Delhi. At about the same time the Flagstaff Tower party evacuated that place also and started on

their journey to Kurnaul up the Grand Trunk Road, the nearest locality known to contain British troops. The women, children, and wounded were conveyed in such vehicles as it had been possible to collect during the day. The column was escorted for a few miles by sepoys of the 74th N.I., but gradually, as darkness fell, these men slunk off, by twos and threes, to join in the sack of Delhi, leaving eventually nobody but the British themselves and a mere handful of staunch Indians.

The hardships and adventures of that retreat fill many pages of Mr. Ball's narrative, but space will not permit their inclusion here. Bereft of all armed protection, the helpless column was attacked by Gujars (a criminal nomad tribe) and soon became split into dispersed groups. Many of them were slaughtered. Others, abandoning their vehicles and the road, plunged into the jungle and made their way across country. It was a miracle that any of them got through. The most encouraging aspect of this grim exodus was the friendship, kindness, and heroism of many simple villagers, which proved to the wretched fugitives, even at this early stage of the Mutiny, that the British were not universally hated by Indians.

Brigadier Graves remained at his post in the Flagstaff Tower till the last of his party had started for Kurnaul. Till then, by personal influence, he had retained the loyalty of the few sepoys who had not deserted their posts. Finally he ordered a bugler to sound the retreat. The remaining troops dispersed in search of plunder, and Graves made his own escape alone by devious ways across country to Meerut.

By dawn on May 12th not a vestige of British power or authority remained in the ancient capital of India. The king maintained, for a short while, the pretence of acting under compulsion as a prisoner of the mutineers. But he soon gained courage when he saw the feebleness of the British reaction, and henceforth exercised the full powers of sovereignty. Indian officials were appointed and proclamations were issued to neighbouring princes urging them to rally to the anti-British cause. It became abundantly clear to Lord Canning and his advisers that Delhi had become the pivot of the rebellion.

(From author's *The Indian Mutiny—A Centenary History*, 1957)

16

THE IMPASSE AT DELHI

By

George MacMunn

The British Position on the Ridge

In the first phase of the Mutiny, that of the immediate action taken by the various authorities in the different theatres of the rebellion, we left the Delhi Field Force, the Army of Retribution as it was called, just as it had defeated the mutineers at Badli-ka-Saral, and had swept them triumphantly from the Ridge. It had then taken up its position on the old cantonment ground, after somewhat foolishly burning the native troops lines which might have afforded it some shelter.

However, in the highest spirits, it set itself down to occupy the Ridge with a series of strong piquets, establishing a stronghold to be held by the 6oth Rifles and the Sirmoor Battalion, on the commanding point on which was built the substantial residence of one Hindu Rao, a Maratha worthy recently deceased. Posts were established at the sites which still stand out on the Ridge, the Observatory, the old Pathan Mosque and the Flagstaff Tower, so lately the scene of the agonized collection of ladies and children in the cantonment. Hard by was found, where its driver had left it on June 11th, the bullock cart with the remains of four officers of the 54th shot that same day at the Kashmir gate. On the 9th the Guides swung in under Major Daly, after their astounding march down the Punjab from Mardan, 500 miles in 27 days—3 troops of horse and 6 companies of foot—a noble accession.

From the Ridge the avengers now looked down through the haze and dust to the minarets of the guilty city, the rose-red turrets of the Lahore gate of the Palace, and the great dome of the Jama Masjid.

The actual combined force as it lay behind the Ridge was but 600 cavalry 2,300 infantry, twenty-two field guns principally nine prs. and the light siege train. The actual troops were:

The Carabiniers (2 Squadrons).
9th Lancers.
60th Rifles (6 Companies).
75th Foot.
1st Bengal Fusiliers.
2nd Bengal Fusiliers (6 Companies).
Sirmoor Battalion.
Bengal Sappers and Miners (150).
Money's troop of Horse Artillery 2nd of 3rd Bde.
Turner's troop of Horse Artillery 3rd of 3rd Bde.
Tombs' troop of Horse Artillery 2nd of 1st Bde.
Scott's Light Field Battery 14th (3rd co. 3rd Battn.)

The light siege train

8, 18 pr. guns	
4, 8in. howitzers	manned by 40 gunners of the 4th Company,
4, 8in. mortars	6th Battalion Bengal Artilley and 100 gunner
12, 5½in. mortars	recruits from the Meerut Depot.

The total of the mutineers in Delhi at that time was far less than when contingent after contingent of sepoy corps had marched in from Rohilkhand, from Nimach, from Nasirabad, from Jullundur and many another station within reach of Delhi, but it was still formidable enough, consisting so far as could be known, then of the 3rd Lt. Cavalry, the 11th and 20th N.I. from Meerut, the 5th Light Field Battery, the 38th, 54th and 74th from Delhi, the best portion of the 9th from Aligarh, the Hurrianah Light Infantry from Hansi, the 45th from Ferozepore, some of the Sappers and Miners and a few more. But as many of the Moslems in the army came from round Delhi there were probably a good many furlough men who had joined the units there, while the King of Delhi's infantry and artillery were available, and a large number of police, *chaprassis*, etc. The Delhi arsenal would have provided plenty of arms and equipment for those who had not got them. The mutineers had mounted a large number

of guns on the bastions, and never seemed to lack gunners nor ammunition, despite the blowing up of the 'magazine'!

The right rear of the British position was to be greatly harassed from the Sabzi Mandi[1] and adjacent orchards, and to this day can be seen the loopholed garden walls which our piquets on this flank held against them. The force at Hindu Rao's was further constantly harassed from Kishenganj, another suburb which made an admirable alley-way for parties sortie-ing from the city.

Happily, behind the camp ran the deep drain which led off the surplus water from the Najafghar *jheel*.[2] Normally this would have been dry in summer, but the prolonged rains of 1856 had so swollen the lake and extended its area that during the siege ample clear and pure water ran past the camp in which also the men could bathe. The drain with its steep abrupt banks was in itself a tactical protection of great value. Not only in the matter of the rains of 1856 was nature fighting on the British side, but '57 itself was an abnormally cool year. A blanket in Delhi was needed o' nights[3] and at Ferozepore in the middle of June it was quite cool in tents.[4] Further, the actual rains came on sooner than usual.

So though it was hot enough it was nothing like so hot as might have been expected and the early rain made life trying but bearable. But in its own opinion, the Army of Retribution had not come down from the hills and up from Meerut, to sit playing at long bowls or outpost fireworks with the mutinous troops within the walls, and every one was agog to storm the city. Intense bitterness at the details of the massacres, fed by the tales brought by the refugees from Delhi, and the troops from Meerut, ran riot in men's minds, and nothing was more keenly looked for than to wipe out the whole murderous crew. The staff of the Army, neither that of headquarters nor that of the Ambala division which formed the Delhi Field Force, did not appear to have been well trained or of commanding spirit. Sir Henry Barnard now confided to an eager young field engineer, Wilberforce Greathed and another, associated with William Hodson, the task of preparing a scheme for the assault, hsfving apparently no staff fit to do it themselves. A plan for a storming, probably the work of the more experienced mind of Hodson, was drawn up and accepted by Sir Henry, accepted probably because of the eagerness of the young officers who framed it. There seems to have been little serious

discussion at this stage as to whether the 2,400 infantry available could storm the gates by dint of petard, defeat the several thousand trained soldiers inside, known to be at their best behind walls, and the several thousand auxiliaries to a number as yet unknown, that must be with them. Success for the moment was probable, but what after that? With casualties the British might be down to 1,400 at the end of it, and India in arms before them. Taking courage by the forearm, however, Sir Henry issued the necessary orders for the assault at daybreak on June 13th, but the staff mechanism seems to have been extraordinarily bad. Brigadier Graves was in command of piquets and outposts that day, and apparently had not been taken into the General's confidence nor had the orders been explained to him. It was not possible for the assault to take place unless all the British piquets on the Ridge, to the number of several hundred were withdrawn to form the assaulting columns. Early in the morning Graves received a verbal order to bring all the piquets away to some rendezvous. Not knowing what it all meant, he was not going to abandon the whole of the front from Metcalfe House to the Ridge without more precise orders, so he galloped down to headquarters for confirmation. It was then obvious that these troops, essential to the operations could not arrive till the sun stood high in the heavens, and any concealed advance of the powder parties to the gates was out of the question. The assault was therefore countermanded. Loud were the complaints against the brigadier, and young officers talked of pistolling him. But there is no doubt that there was no one to blame except the staff concerned. If the young engineers who outlined the plan, were also responsible for implementing it with the necessary detailed instructions, they were obviously incompetent to do so.

To leave Brigadier Graves who had just been in command of the place out of the discussion, was to miss all the best information as to locality. When he galloped down to see what the orders meant, he at once expressed his views most strongly that though the walls might be captured, it would be impossible to hold the city, and this confirmed Sir Henry in his decision to counter-order the assault already too long delayed.

Young Greathed however still pressed his scheme with modifications, and that absurdity a council of war, the refuge of the ineffective commander was summoned to consider it.[5]

Those in favour of an assault pointed out that the mutineers had received two swishing defeats in the open field and had made four ineffective attacks on the outposts before the plan was drawn up and must be suffering from lowered morale, that British prestige was now so high that an assault would so demoralize them that there would be no question of their fighting in the great streets of Delhi. To this the reply was made that so far from being dovahearted they had sortied again and attacked us on the 12th. It was all gallant talk, but the older heads, the commonsense if feeble General Reed who was the Commander-in-Chief in Northern India, and Brigadier Wilson, spoke very strongly against assault, although Commissioner Greathed urged rightly enough that the political situation rendered the capture of Delhi the one thing in India that mattered. Nevertheless the mass of responsible opinion would have none of it, and so the force sat down disappointed enough, to await what might befall.

Now opinion may differ for all time, as to whether or no Delhi could have been carried, or what would have resulted from a successful lodgement in the walls and gates. Every one could see the importance of success, but many wise heads saw also that the results of failure would be more dangerous to the cause than the results of success would have been advantageous. None of the three leading personages, Reed, Barnard or Wilson had reputations to conjure with, but such great authorities as Roberts and Norman[6] have thought that the staff failure, which upset the plans for the assault of June 13th, was singularly fortunate.

A great deal of the impatience at the delay in the Punjab and in Calcutta, was due to a misapprehension as to the true state of Delhi as a fortress. The walls of the city were seven miles in circumference, with seven bastioned gates, and thirty bastions, pierced and embrasured. The walls were protected for more than half their height by a somewhat steep glacis, with deep ditch, scarp and counter-scarp the whole structure being in reasonable repair. The walls had been thoroughly overhauled by British engineers and strengthened after the siege by Holkar in 1804, and had been kept in repair ever since. They were not the sort of walls and glacis that would hold out for a day against such an army and such a siege train as Lord Combermere had taken against Bhurtpur in 1826, but they were very adequate to repel the small force and light siege train

which was all that could as yet be brought to bear. As has been explained the rebels had an inexhaustible gun park from which to arm their bastions.

The Impasse

But whether or no the gambler's throw of assault was wise, when it was rejected the Field Force settled down to a dogged life of fierce ineffective fighting, that was to last through July and August and well into September. Immense reinforcements were to pour into the city, whole brigades of horse and foot with colours flying and bands a-playing, and as John Lawrence and his noble band of administrators strengthened their grip on the disaffected and took to their hearts in splendid cameraderie thosb who were not, reinforcements flowed down to the force without the walls. But as they came, death, disease, the almost daily casualties — for each accession of mutineers felt itself compelled to show its quality by attacking the British, even to their own undoing — were continually putting the position 'as you were,' till Lawrence and General Gowan thought they were filling a bottomless pit.

Nor was the defence of the Ridge which did not face more than half a mile of that seven-mile girt city, well organized. Troops were not told off to sections and reliefs. If the sepoys attacked as they constantly did, the whole force got under arms, whether it was necessary or whether it was not. When the enemy was attacked in the positions to which he had sallied, no one seemed to take control, the regiments and the brigades fought under anyone who would command. When the great book of staff sins of the British Army comes to be written, the page that deals with 'Staff at Delhi, inefficiency of,' will be very stiff reading. And all the while the army when off duty and not repelling sepoy attacks was riotously happy, cricket being especially the order of the day, for the eternal football had not then come to content the hearts of unemployed men.

The doctoring was unusually good. The senior medical officers were more competent than the staff, and the hospitals were well manned and well organized, despite the wounds cholera and malaria, that helped fill the old cantonment burial ground, and sent the long sick convoys off to the Simla hills. Mr. Commissioner Barnes of Ambala had succeeded by astounding exertions and personal influence

especially with the chief of Patiala, in keeping the country between Delhi and the Simla hills quiet and open. Supplies now poured into the force. The splendid Punjab Chiefs, Patiala, Nabha and Jhind, sent their troops to Keep the road open. The Naseree Battalion[7] from Jutogh came down to help keep the road open. This battalion had rioted - not mutinied -just after the Chief had left Simla, and the hill station lost its nerve and head.[8]

Simla, Kasauli, Sabathu and Dagshai remained as the great • concentration centre for refugees and the convalescent depot for the force at Delhi, and without the air and accommodation in the hills the force at Delhi would probably have gone under. From the hill depots drafts of sick and wounded constantly came back to the ranks.

On June 12th, 13th, and 15th the rebels made determined attacks on Hindu Rao's house, at times to the very point of the defenders' bayonets, repelled again and again by the men of Reid's Gurkhas and the 60th Rifles now caste brothers in life and in death.[9] On the 17th came the British turn to sally forth and destroy a battery destined to enfilade the Ridge. After this came a lull for a week and then on the 23rd, the hundredth anniversary of Clive's victory of Plassy, on which day the astrologers had predicted the downfall of the British, the rebels swarmed from the Lahore gate to attack Hindu Rao's once again, and to find their way to our rear. On the 19th the enemy attempted to get in rear of the camp but were chased off with ignominy, and then the British destroyed the bridges over the Najafgarh canal, which made access to our rear far more difficult.

Next day came Neville Chamberlain to take over the Adjutant-Generalship of the army, which in those days also meant the chief of the fighting staff. His arrival was hailed as likely to bring vigour into the councils, and sound commonsense and knowledge of the situation.

Another accession of strength was Lieutenant-Colonel Baird Smith the Principal of the great Engineering College at Roorkee, who came to take the place of the chief engineer who was invalided.[10] Behind him were all the resources of that institution, and he brought marching after him a labour corps which he had equipped and organized, and was, of course, invaluable. Organized labour corps at this period of army development, were not recognized essentials

of an army in the field, and it needed a trained intellect like Baird Smith to realize it.

Towards the end of June another considerable batch of reinforcements from the Punjab marched in, consisting of a wing of the 8th Foot and a wing of the 61st Foot, from Jullundur and Ferozepore respectively, with Coke's rifles (1st P.I.) and a squadron of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and some European and Sikh artillerymen, the latter beaten up by Lawrence from among the old gunners of the Khalsa army. These artillery drafts were in great request, for the gunners in the siege batteries under Brind, at present in battery on the Ridge for repelling assaults, were terribly short-handed.

The question of assault had been revived on their arrival, and Baird Smith like all newcomers was eager for it to take place. The commanders however were not to be persuaded, for indeed losses since the subject was first discussed, had neutralized the effect of reinforcements.

There were within camp, corps not yet disarmed but which were looked on with suspicion, the 4th and 9th Irregulars and 450 Hindustani Infantry. There was no time to disarm them, and Barnard was not prepared to leave the camp to their mercy while the reliable troops assaulted the city. On July 1st and 2nd the numerous Rohilkhand mutineers marched into the city with colours flying and bands playing, clad in their scarlet coats, and the opportunity was over. This rebel increment consisted of the 18th, 28th, 29th and 68th Infantry the 8th Light Cavalry the 15th Field Battery[11] and a couple of post guns.

On July 5th Sir Henry Barnard who was worn to a shadow was smitten with cholera and died the same night. Deeply mourned by all who were in touch with him and regretted by the troops, for he was always among them and spared himself not at all, he died a martyr to his personal exertions and the trials of the astounding situation in which he had found himself a few weeks after his first arrival in India. General Reed with Chamberlain behind him now took actual command of the Field Force as well as the Army, though little fitted by health to do so.

A week later occurred one of the famous minor incidents of the siege. A party of the 8th Irregular Cavalry from Bareilly galloped

into the camp from the Sabzi Mandi and were at first taken for our own irregulars, and allowed to get near the Carabinier piquet with which were two horse artillery guns under Lieutenant Hills. The piquet was surprised, and bolted, and Lieutenant Hills became engaged in a desperate encounter with the rebels near the old brick kiln known as the general's mound; into them he charged alone, while his guns got into action, was unhorsed and only rescued by Captain Tombs who came up to find him hard pressed. The rebels then galloped into the cavalry camp calling on Renny's native troop of horse artillery to join them. Renny's gunniers surprised before they could get to their guns, called on the next troop, a European one to fire through them, and ere long the rebels were driven out after creating immense excitement and alarm by their daring exploit.[12]

The conduct of the 9th Irregulars was under some suspicion. But they had been Neville Chamberlain's regiment, and he apparently reluctant like so many officers to believe that their own corps could be tainted, succeeded in having them marched to the frontier instead of being disarmed. They marched right through the Punjab and the Sind Saugor Doab, mutinying at last near the Indus. Here a sensational duel described by Sir Evelyn Wood took place between their wardi-major[13] and the risaldar of a troop of loyal Multani Horse. The rebel being killed, his men were attacked by the Multanis, near Mianwali on the Indus, and dispersed.

The raid of the rebel cavalry just described resulted in the severe total of some 200 casualties, and a few days later was to occur a very serious loss indeed. On July 14th the mutineers turned out once more to attack Hindu Rao's houuse and any part of our defences assailable from the Sabzi Mandi. All day long the garrison of the posts held their own, and as the afternoon drew on, Neville Chamberlain took out a column to counter-attack the invaders, calling on Reid to take part. Brigadier Showers led forth the 75th, Coke's Rifles and Hodson's Horse with six horse artillery guns under Turner and Murray. Handsomely were the enemy chased back from the suburbs to the walls of Delhi, and just at the end Neville Chamberlain finding some men hesitating before a low wall held by sepoys, jumped his horse over it calling on them to follow. As he did so he was struck by a musket ball which broke his arm below the shoulder.[14] And that was the end of his active part in the siege, though his mind

was soon clear enough to be of value as a councillor, both to the commander and to the staff.

This week alone had resulted in a loss of 25 officers and over 400 men, while a fortnight of the heat and strain was enough for General Reed who, at last, could but do his work from his bed, and agreed on July 17th that he too must be invalided. Before he went, after discussion with Neville Chamberlain he agreed that Brigadier Wilson, though not the senior officer in camp, was the only possible selection to the command. His seniority was secured by the local rank of Brigadier-General being conferred under Reed's authority, which was afterwards enhanced to that of Major-General by the Governor-General.[15]

General Wilson takes Command

As Wilson's character and efficiency have often been the subject of controversy and criticism it may be well to review it, especially as, since histories were written we have his own intimate letters to his wife, which give us the clearest idea of his conception of the position and throw genuine light on his real character.

As described in Chapter II in the account of the outbreak at Meerut, Wilson who was commandant of the Bengal Artillery and as such the commandant of the station, was looked upon as somewhat above the average regimental officer of his age. His artillery knowledge was probably the best in India. He had but returned to the heat from the hills the day before the Meerut outbreak after convalescing from an attack of small-pox, in itself but a poor preparation for a hot weather campaign for a man over sixty, who had spent the best part of forty years in the East. The other brigadiers were stout fighting men, but little more than brigadiers, while with a siege to be faced an artilleryman in command was obviously an asset. Seriously wounded as he was, Neville Chamberlain could not take actual command, but with him at his elbow Archdale Wilson was the best appointment possible. In the Punjab there was no one available. Wilson without any preparation by the nature of his career, in the planning or making of war, was a trained and disciplined officer of experience, and had, like all artillerymen, a developed sense of system and organization. His hand on the helm was immediately noticeable by a great improvement in the staff organization. Troops

were told off in reliefs so that only those necessary should stand to arms during the daily alarms. Forces attacking the enemy were properly commanded and every one knew who was in command, while the costly habit of following the retreating sepoys up to the walls which always involved needless casualties was forbidden. In fact the force became what it had hitherto so strangely failed to be, an Army 'in being' that knew exactly what it was about. The instinct of the trained gunner was readily evident. When that has been said there was little more to say, except to point out that from his private letters, Wilson was fully aware of his own shortcomings, fully prepared to do all possible so far as knowledge and health would let him, was also fully and very properly aware of the magnitude of his task. Like Barnard he too, realized how little those at a distance knew what the real problem was. His letters to Lawrence and the Governor-General are clear and manly letters, and if in face of the growing strength of the mutineers, and the drain on his own force which nearly equalled the intake of reinforcements, he at one time thought of withdrawing for a while till the reinforcing columns swept up the country, he was not the only one. Indeed as we know, John Lawrence himself was prepared to give up Peshawar if need be.

Within the force there were naturally 'ginger groups,' and their friends in days to come writing their lives, have attributed to this and that energetic and determined young soldier, the credit of having gingered Wilson to this and that action. Wilson kept his force well managed, well found, disciplined, and in good heart, and when the final reinforcements arrived under the dynamic John Nicholson, agreed as heartily as his shattered nerves and weakened constitution would let him, in the plans for the storming which were ultimately successful. We may leave it at that, and agree that Wilson was a very gallant officer who did his duty to the best of his lights and qualities. He could not, even if the ablest and most forceful of men, have assaulted Delhi before the middle of September. The gravamen of those criticisms levelled against him in the literature of the period, lies in his anxiety when the time for the storming had come, and his fears when the first storming was successful and he himself was prostrate from the heat and strain, that after his heavy losses and loss of morale due to liquor, he could not hold what he had taken. He gained his object handsomely in the end and deserved well the kudos that came to him.[16]

The Long-drawn Wait on the Ridge

The latter half of July dragged on much as before, the troops however benefiting greatly by Wilson's improved system. On the 18th the Rohilkhand mutineers endeavoured to intercept a big convoy and failed and on the 23rd the sepoys made an attack in force on the British left and the Metcalfe House group of piquets, through Ludlow Castle, being driven off by a force under Brigadier Showers. And all the while the high spirits in camp were maintained, and the games flourished. The officers' messes well-tented were centres of hospitality, especially that of the Meerut gunners, with the well stocked godowns of the Meerut Mess behind them. In fact supplies of 'Europe' stores as well as rations were fairly plentiful, for the countryside other than the unruly Goojar villages now properly chastised, was not in the least hostile. Keith Young tells of vast supplies of bottled beer being brought into camp to the huge delight of the troops. Apart from the daily fighting and stern work on the Ridge with its ceaseless toll of casualties that exhausted reinforcements as fast as they arrived, the camp was in great heart and spirits. The plague of flies which military sanitary science had not learnt to abate was the worst trouble. Bad enough in the tents it was unbearable in the otherwise well found hospitals, which also, while reasonably well off for anaesthetics, were running short of antiseptics.

As soon as Wilson had taken stock of his position he had written at length to Sir John Lawrence on the situation, and Lawrence, now realizing that no help could come from below, till Lucknow had been relieved, determined that as soon as the Punjab had been cleaned up, he would scrape the country once more and send even the Movable Column itself to Delhi. John Nicholson had long been impatient for such orders, and all had realized that the unhealthy season in the middle of September at Delhi must be avoided and that the Column would just about furnish sufficient troops for the storming. From Lawrence's point of view things were now improving. The Movable Column was disarming all doubtful troops, and the communications with the sea via Sind and the Indus flotilla were daily developing. Sir Bartle Frere, Chief Commissioner there, readily understood the difficulties at Delhi, and was active in supplying aid, sending up both the Belooch battalion and a battalion of the Bombay Fusiliers, which released more troops for Delhi.

By now every sort of rumour and 'shave' to use the slang of the period, was prevalent in camp, which was not in telegraphic communication with Calcutta by any route. Pat Grant was at Cawnpore with six battalions of Europeans! Sir Hugh Wheeler had been destroyed! Sir Hugh Wheeler was marching on Agra! Lawrence had been killed! He had been seen alive but wounded! and so forth. Even when the news of Cawnpore came through, people hoped against hope, till at last Havelock himself sent the true story, saying also that as soon as Lucknow had been relieved it was hoped to march up country, none even then suspecting that it would be late September before he would get into Lucknow, let alone get out.

It was at Simla perhaps, full to overflowing with anxious and widowed women and thronged with wounded and convalescent officers that gossip and rumour ran riot, but husbands at Delhi did their best to write cheerfully, knowing how hundreds hung on their reports. The various hill barracks vacated by the troops were now properly organized as hospitals convalescent and detail depots, etc. and not only was there a steady stream of returning drafts towards Delhi but there would be big efforts to get as many as possible down in time for the September 'push' to use a more modern phrase. It has not been realized that this wonderful group of hills and valleys on the way to Simla was practically the base of the Delhi force, with its organized line of communications, thanks to Mr. Commissioner Barnes, very well stocked with transport and supplies. Indeed it was largely on the Ambala district and to a lesser extent on Meerut that the Force relied. At Meerut, General Hewitt had been removed and a Company's officer from a Gurkha regiment, Major-General Penny was in command. It is the custom of the historians to reflect on the large number of reliable troops the former had held up at Meerut all this while, but with the usual want of military sense that characterizes them, they do not realize that Delhi was perfectly competent to order what it thought necessary. Probably •the importance of Meerut as a supply centre in addition to its well equipped hospitals, made it appear worth while to hold it strongly, as a support to Delhi, as well as on account of the number of families sheltering there.

Within the Guilty City

It is now perhaps time to look at the other side of the screen and to try and understand what was actually going on within the city of Delhi and the palace of Shah Jahan. That drama is psychologically, perhaps one of the most interesting studies of the whole of the period, and while of transcending interest, has been but little studied save in the inimitable fiction of Mrs. Steel.

In the first place we must realize that for a whole month the Palace and the first batches of mutineers lived in a delightful fools' paradise. The 'hell-doomed ones' had been wiped from the face of the earth, the House of Timur had been restored, and the army was all powerful and was going to do as it liked ! For four weeks the English gave no sign. The old cry of India:

Khalk-i-Khuda	Mankind belongs to God
Mulk-i-Sirkar	The country to the Government, and
o Hukm-i-Sahib an Alishan	authority to the mighty Sahibs.

had given way to

Mulk-i-Badshah	The country to the Emperor
o Hukm-i-sipayanj	authority to the sepoys.

and very fine it sounded, till it began to be borne in on the royal entourage that that way buttered no parsnips.

And then one fine day four weeks after the massacres there came the demand note from their creditors, in the shape of the Union Jack once again a-flying on the Ridge.

And indeed the sight thereof was a terrible shock, and a warning that whatever the harvest it would have to be fought for. The aged King had for a short while been happy with his bands a-playing, his elephant rides abroad and the congratulatory addresses often forged by his entourage, that came to him in the little embroidered bags. But the quarrels of his sons and the army officers, the unruly demands of the soldiery for pay and the like soon made life only too burdensome and the glamour, like the comfortable Government pension, soon passed. When more and more troops marched in, the clamour grew but greater, varied now and again as some odd European or Christian was available for the slaughter. No master-mind as military leader was thrown up from among the forces or

chiefs in Delhi, and not only was there no commander but their was no machinery to make command effective. Nevertheless as we have seen, time after time each successive wave of incoming mutineers seemed to have to earn their spurs by attacking the 'hell-doomed' ones, often with bravery sometimes with skill. That the effete seniority system of the Bengal Army should throw up no leader was not surprising, but in the Irregular Cavalry there should certainly have been some soldier of commanding character. Mirza Mogul the King's eldest son, who had assumed the role of Commander-in-Chief had neither knowledge nor prestige, and ere long by apparently general consent, Subadar Bakht Khan of the 15th Horsed Battery from Bareilly was raised to the office of *Sipah Salar*.[17] A very stout man of over sixty and a bad rider, he had some considerable ability and at any rate knowledge of routine. A little later when the Nimach mutineers marched in there appeared a rival in one Ghaus Khan, a cavalryman and at last they were appointed each to a wing. The incoming mutineers for all their bands and their scarlet coatees and British medals, brought little cash, for even when they had decided to bring the captured treasure to the 'Padishah'[18] it had always melted away a good deal en route. In the city the bankers had closed their offices and refused to function, while the shop-keepers could but wring their hands and bury their valuables. But still the regiments and the brigades marched in triumphantly, or now and again slunk in without their arms, when deserting after having been disarmed. And all the while the heart of many grew cold and sick that they were on the wrong side and fighting the *Sahibs* who had so often led them to triumphant, well-fed, and punctually paid victory. Ahsanullah the King's minister alone knew perhaps the full bitterness of the difficulties that made his fanatical dream go so badly awry.

Before long Hodson with the help of Rajab Ali, an agent sent him by John Lawrence, had succeeded in establishing an admirable intelligence and spy service so that most of the doings in the city were duly chronicled on the Ridge. As soon as the dream began to fade the principal actors at the King's court including the Begum began to send out feelers as to their own position, and Hodson was ere long in touch with most of them. Further, with the corps of irregular horse that General Anson had commissioned him to raise, now in a state of wild efficiency, he had dominated the whole country

round Delhi for miles, entirely restoring prestige, hampering the rebel supplies and improving our own, and extending his sources of information in every quarter.

Events in the Punjab

The rallying of the Punjab to the side of Government, the disheartening of the subversive element owing to the firmness and activity shown, and the coming of the reinforcements from the Bombay side, combined to put Sir John in a strong position. The drain of Delhi and the impasse on the Ganges it is true induced him to put forward his plan of handing back Peshawar to Dost Muhammad. To the vigorous expostulations of his advisers came a peremptory order from the Governor-General that Peshawar was not to be abandoned. Then Sir John set himself down to reinforcing Delhi in grim earnest. His only troubles were some unrest in the hills near Murree due to unruliness, and a rising which broke out later among the wild grazier tribes of the Gogaira in the Multan direction. But all the disarmament plans did not go so well as those at Lahore and Peshawar. At Jhelum, close to Rawalpindi was the 14th N.I. known to be disaffected. General Gowan ordered Colonel Ellice with several companies of H.M. 24th, some horse artillery guns and Lind's Multani Horse to march there from Pindi, and carry out disarmament. They arrived on the morning of July 7th to find the regiment drilling. Seeing the Europeans approach the sepoys threw themselves into the lines, and outhouses and commenced firing. The Europeans apparently none too well handled, attacked and met with heavy loss. The fight continued with no success and this sepoy corps had the credit of sustaining all day a severe attack from a force of all arms. Colonel Ellice himself was mortally wounded and the troops bivouacked round the sepoys to find by the morning that they had fled. It was not a creditable performance, and had the direct effect at the comparatively adjacent Sialkot. Sialkot a popular well built station, commanding a magnificent view of the snows of the Pir Panjal, had a considerable garrison, consisting of the 52nd Foot,the 9th Light Cavalry, the 46th Native Infantry, Dawes'troop and Bourchier's battery. A good number of Europeans and families resided there; Sialkot had in fact taken the place of the first cantonment at Wazirabad on the Chenab which had proved so unhealthy.

For some reason much criticised at the time, Lawrence and Gowan had withdrawn the whole of the 52nd and the European batteries for the Movable Column, leaving the station to the mercy of the 46th and a wing of the 9th, the other wing being also with the column. It is probable that the proximity of the Jammu frontier may have made authority unwilling to disarm, but the alternatives were to leave sufficient reliable troops or to have the tragedy that occurred. On the 8th the troops received the news of the British failure at Jhelum, probably described as an unprovoked attack on the sepoys by Europeans. Early on the 9th the troops broke into mutiny and apparently surrounded the European quarter with piquets headed by the cavalry, usually the first to break out. The officers hurried to the lines, those of the 46th eventually escaping towards Gogranwallah after two seniors had been offered employment under the Padishah coupled with a guarantee of summer leave to the hills! The residents and officers tried to make their way to the old fort near the city hunted by cavalry troopers and the rabble, who at once poured into the bungalow area. The old brigadier, Fred Brind of the Artillery was shot by a trooper and died that night, a Scottish missionary and his family were killed driving to the fort, and several others. Then the mutineers made off towards Delhi, via the Trimmu Ghat on the Ravi river, taking with them the station time-gun, which was on a field carriage.

Before they went, aided by their friends the rabble, they looted the treasury, destroyed the *cutchery*,[19] blew up the magazines, and gutted the bungalows. Curiously enough, contrary to the usual faithful service, the domestic servants appeared in some cases to have aided the rebels, the brigadier's bearer taking the caps from off his pistols that lay by his bed and his *khansaman* installing himself as leader of the gun crew. Curiously enough too, church and chapel alone were untouched.

But nemesis in its most complete form was awaiting the mutineers.

The Movable Column after proceeding to Jullundur and Phillaur as already related, marched back up the Grand Trunk Road, and took up a position at the central station of Amritsar. Here it was well enough placed to cope with the march south of the Sialkot mutineers.

As soon as news came of the failure at Jhelum, Nicholson very reluctantly disarmed the 59th[20] at Amritsar, a corps of which nothing but good was known or reported. Nevertheless no risks could now be run, and the reports from Sialkot next day but confirmed the wisdom of the action, which took place after an execution parade.

Gowan and Sir John then disarmed at the same time the 58th and two detached companies of the 14th at Rawalpindi, but not without the native troops bolting from parade and being with difficulty brought to hand without contretemps. Up at the Peshawar outposts the same fate was meted out to the 24th for the same reasons.

Trimmu Ghat

The column itself was soon to be on the move as news came in of the Sialkot tragedy, followed by a report from an escaped musician of the 46th, who had ridden in with a note from a civil officer written at 6.30 a.m on July 9th, actually calling for the column. The bandsman, a lad named McDouglas, had escaped from the parade ground on a small pony, and commandeering a succession of *tats*[21], finished his eighty mile ride into Amritsar just as the mail cart brought in the news from Lahore, no mean effort on his part. With the column was a wing of the 9th Cavalry which Nicholson now did not hesitate to disarm, an act he had hitherto held up for fear of precipitating trouble at Sialkot. Nicholson expected that the mutineers would march via Gurdaspur, Nurpur and Hoshiarpur towards Jullundur carrying with them various outlying corps en route, and he determined to head them off if possible at the crossing of the Ravi. Commandeering all the horsed vehicles he could lay his hands on for his infantry, Nicholson started off on the 43 miles to Gurdaspur, accompanied by the civil officers of the division. Enough carriage for all his foot soldiers had not been procurable, and by daybreak they had made but 25 miles of the way. He then learnt that the mutineers were still a march the other side of the Ravi, and as all his men were not up till late on the nth, he decided to lie quiet till he received more news, in the hope that the mutineers were marching towards him. His hopes were justified, and at 9 next morning he learnt that they were crossing the river at the Trimmu Ghat. Thereon he set forth in the blazing sun. By noon he had discovered that a long line of scarlet was drawn up on his front and ahead of it the blue grey uniforms of the light cavalry vedettes. The sepoy right lay on a village and their left on a

ruined mud fort. Nicholson hurried up his guns masked by parties of mounted police. Thereon the rebel cavalry charged, with the result that the heels of the police could not be seen for the dust. However, the guns were now in action, at effective range, as the infantry jogged up in their conveyances. It was a fight between two portions of the same brigade and the native drivers of the artillery might well have jibbed. Cowed or staunch however, they did their duty, and batteries and Enfield rifles were too much for Brown Bess and the station time-gun, which the brigadier's *khansaman* handled remarkably well. Leaving close on four hundred of their number dead or wounded on the field the mutineers now fled to an island in the Ravi, not however, before they had stayed almost to cross bayonets with their former comrades of Sialkot. Leaving some Punjabi Infantry to watch the ford and ferry, Nicholson now took his exhausted force back to Gurdaspur, having captured the whole of the rebel baggage and their wagon-loads of Sialkot loot.

The river rose in the night; the civil authorities had secured all the boats for many miles and the remnant of the mutineers were hopelessly cut off. On the morning of the 16th after three days' rest, Nicholson moved out his men and landed on the island by ferry boat unknown to the mutineers and a mile and a half from them, while his guns faced them from the opposite bank, quite unable however to silence the *khansaman* and his gun which was hidden in the grass. As the doomed and desperate rebels realized that the 52nd were advancing against them, they endeavoured to form front to their flank and even switched round their old time-piece. But the time had come to pay in full the penalty of their mad act, whether born of cruel hysteria or undue panic. The British advanced with the bayonet and every mutinous wretch died stoutly, or was drowned in the Ravi, save a few who escaped to be brought in later to their doom by the villagers. It was the first fight that the Movable Column had had and it fully justified its leader's reputation for energy and resolution. The sepoy menace in the Punjab was over.

On the 21st Nicholson hurried to Lahore to meet Sir John Lawrence and General Gowan, and then the great policy that was to settle the Delhi question, and steady India was decided on. Nicholson was to take the Column to Delhi at once with such other accretions as could be ready, arriving by August 15th while other Punjab troops to the grand total of 4,200 men, would be there by

the end of August. It was a magnificent policy. With Nicholson himself were to go the following :

H.M. 52nd (600 bayonets).
Multani Horse (200 sabres).
Bourchier's Horsed Battery (9 prs.).
The Kumaon Battalion of Gurkhas (400) was already on the way.

The subsequent additions would be :

Wing of H.M.'s 61st (400).
Wing of Beloochis (400).
2nd Punjab Infantry (200).
4th Punjab Infantry (600).
4th Sikhs (100).
H.M. 8th (200).

Those who know the Indian army will note that with Coke's Rifles, already with the army at Delhi, there were three Frontier Force Battalions, with a detachment of another and a detachment of Cavalry (1st P.C.) which took part in the capture of the city,[22] as well as the Guides.

Nicholson was back with his column at Gurdaspur on the 24th and next day had started on the welcome road to Delhi.

In addition every effort was being made to equip, man, and transport the medium siege train at Ferozepore arsenal, that General Wilson had asked for, the original light improvised train from Phillaur being little more than heavier field artillery.

(From author's *The Indian Mutiny in Perspective*, 1931)

References

1. The Green Suburb.
2. *Jheel* = swamp.
3. Mr. Greathead's Diaries.
4. Life and opinions of Sir Charles McGregor.
5. It is of course possible that the civilian historians of the day persist in using an inaccurate expression. A Commander may well summon a conference to elicit information and to discuss detail, without having the least intention of relying on anything but his own decision and judgment.

To the modern soldier it seems incomprehensible that the Chief of the Staff in the Crimea should have summoned a council to make up his mind for him. At Benares the Commissioner asked Colonel Neill when 'the council of war was to be held,' and he was very properly bitten for his pains. Neill was not the sort of man to summon councils of war, whatever the phrase may mean.

6. Both took part in the siege, the latter from the beginning, and became field marshals.
7. This was an Irregular 'extra' battalion of Gurkhas raised when the original Naseree Battalion was taken into the line as the 66th in place of the regiment of that number that refused to go to Sind, in Sir Charles Napier's time.
8. A most ridiculous *sauve qut pent* to the jungles round had taken place, due perhaps to delay in promulgating arrangements for assembly and protection in case of alarm. The station time-gun at Boileau-ganj was crammed with blank and copper coin and planted down the road that led to the Gurkha lines to the huge amusement of the little men, and that was all.
9. A regimental affinity which lasts to this day.
10. Major Laughton from the Ambala Division. He had married a Persian lady whom for some unexplained reason he was allowed to bring into camp with him, encumbering the road with numerous vehicles of baggage.
11. 6/8.
12. Hills and Tombs received the Victoria Cross for their gallant deeds.
13. Native adjutant. *Vide* Sir Evelyn's memoirs.
14. So Kaye's careful narrative. Chamberlain writing to his sister merely states that he was hit. In Reed's prostrate state Chamberlain was the real commander of the Force.
15. Two officers of Army Headquarters were unsoldierly enough to betake themselves to Simla in chagrin at being superseded and also one of the brigadiers. It may be remarked here, that 'brigadier' and 'brigadier-general' were separate ranks, the latter the higher.
16. The opinions of Colonel Keith Young, the Judge Advocate General of the Army at this distance of time are not uninteresting. He refers to General Barnard as about as fit to command as the Pope of Rome, and that General Reed was fit to command the Simla Militia, recording however his belief that had he been fit in health it might have been otherwise. He was a 'Peninsula veteran,' a class who came under some obloquy in the Crimeal.
17. *Sipah Salar* = 'Lord of troops.'
18. *Padishah or Badshah* = 'King.'
19. *Cutchery* = The Courthouse.
20. *Vide* Appendix II.
21 *Tat* = pony of the countryside.
22. The author went round the Ridge with a party of the survivors of Coke's Rifles at the time of the Royal Durbar in 1911—by which date the survivors of Delhi and of those who had been to the 'Baillie Guard' were few enough.

17

NEW LIGHT ON THE REVOLT OF 1857 AT AZAMGARH

By

Nandalal Chatterji

SOME recently discovered official papers in Uttar Pradesh show that during the Revolt of 1857 the town and even the countryside of Azamgarh became for several months independent of British rule. This independence of course was shortlived, but still it is memorable in the history of India's freedom movement. It is not possible to reconstruct the whole story about the nature and extent of this brief period of freedom. It is a pity that adequate information is not available for most of the records have perished and, among those which have survived, nearly all the contemporary documents relate to the British point of view. The side of the rebels is practically unrepresented, and, therefore, it is extremely difficult to visualise the story from the Indian standpoint. What little can be known about this is available only indirectly from the British records.

The story of the exploits of the rebels at Azamgarh is eventful, for it unfolds an epic of heroism and sacrifice which are unparalleled, and which unfortunately have not received from the European historians the attention they richly deserve. The European writers have not only ignored the achievement of the rebels, but have also distorted their story and have pictured them as lawless bandits. There is no doubt that when fuller details will be available the Azamgarh chapter of the Revolt will be immortalised in the history of India's

freedom movement. From what is already known from the British records, it is quite clear that the rebels gave evidence of a wonderful power of organisation, matchless courage, and burning zeal for and love of the motherland.

On the eve of the Revolt, there were about five-hundred British troops at Azamgarh, belonging to the 17th Indian Infantry. These troops were brigaded with the 19th and 34th Regiments stationed at Lucknow. Just when the British authorities suspected that a military rising might take place, they hurriedly fortified the Collector's Court-House, closing up the verandahs with barricaded walls. Numerous sand-bags were placed over the parapets as additional protection, and the main entrance was commanded by two heavy guns, covered by a trench. On June 1, the trouble started unexpectedly. The authorities were taken by surprise when they learnt that the Indian Sepoys were holding a seditious meeting on that day. On the next day, some sepoy leaders tried to tamper with some of the troops who had come with Lieutenant Palliser to escort the spare treasure of Gorakhpur and Azamgarh into Varanasi. On June 3, some more treasure came to Azamgarh under the charge of another batch of sepoys. This was the signal for a rising. The sepoy leaders decided to loot a few lakhs of rupees which happened to be in the charge of the British officers. Most of the sepoys of the 17th Infantry rose in rebellion in a body, and declared independence. They soon managed to subdue the British element and easily got possession of at least five lakhs of rupees. The British authorities made a desperate attempt to save the situation, but their attempt was foiled. The rebels fought for several hours with a dogged tenacity and got possession of most of the fortified buildings. The Quarter-Master, Sgt. Lewis, was shot down and other officers had to escape to Ghazipur. The Magistrate, Mr. Home, and the Joint Magistrate, Mr. Simson, finding that the situation was beyond redemption hurried to the Civil Station, leaving orders to the Kotwal to stem the advance of the rebel sepoys through the town. But the Kotwal was helpless and he had no means to stop the rebels. The jail was stormed and the convicts were taken out by the rebels. These convicts were so much of a reinforcement to the rebels. The attack on the jail and the release of the prisoners were carried out in the midst of remarkable enthusiasm, which recalls the revolutionary attack on the Bastille during the French Revolution.

Barring a small number, most of the sepoys had by now joined the rebels. Some officers like Lieutenant Hutchinson were shot down while they tried to persuade the sepoys to remain loyal. If the sepoys had cared to murder the Europeans, they could have murdered a large number of them, but it is worth noting that the sepoys did not wish to indulge in a senseless killing. What they needed most immediately was money, and so they tried to collect as much booty as possible. They could immediately get all the guns and much of the treasure available in the Government Treasury.

In the third week of June, some British fugitives tried to recapture Azamgarh and one of them, Mr. Venables, enjoyed full magisterial powers. He formed a small committee of public safety and collected a band of loyal troopers. A few eastern parganas of Azamgarh were recaptured, but a majority of the parganas of the district, specially those which were under the Palwar Rajputs, could not be regained. In the countryside the Palwar Rajputs were supreme and they maintained their independence with a superb bravery which has been completely forgotten at the present day. The British officers marched against the Palwars and near Koelsa there was a battle with them which lasted for three full days. This is one of those unrecorded battles which the British historians have completely ignored. In this battle the Palwars fought heroically and stoutly held their own. As the main engagement was fought with the Palwars at Koelsa, the whole operation may be called the battle of Koelsa of which details are unfortunately not known. This battle the rebels actually won, for the British records admit that Mr. Venables and his men became disorganised and were driven out. The victory at Koelsa filled the rebels with a new zeal. They were now encouraged to march on the city of Azamgarh once again where Mr. Venables was reinforced by a large number of troopers recruited by Captain Catania. When the Palwars approached the city, Mr. Venables had to move out to meet tshem. He saw that the rebels had entrenched themselves in groves, their front overlooked by high crops. With the recent attack the defenders found that they could not meet the rebels effectively.

The battle of Azamgarh was fought bravely on both sides, but the Palwars proved their superiority and won a decisive victory. The Britishers were completely routed and they were forced to retreat. This retreat soon turned into a mad scramble. In their hour of

success the rebels, however, failed to exploit the situation to the utmost. If they had been able to do so, the result would have been extremely perilous to the British. There was, however, a grim fight all over the city of Azamgarh in which the British matchlockmen took part, but they suffered great losses, in the street fighting. The rebels also had to face losses on their side, but they steadily pressed on the British force. There was hard-fighting after this. The British were indeed on the point of retreating to Ghazipur, for they had no provisions left and the entire countryside was up by now. Even the loyal sepoys who had shown no appetite for warfare openly said that they could not fight so long as they were starving for food. If the Palwars had been better organised and led, the British would have found it impossible to retreat. As it is, though the Britishers could stay on in the countryside for some time, a large part of the district was virtually independent of British rule.

The tide at last turned with the arrival of the Gurkha Regiments who eventually saved the situation for the British. For the time being, however, the rebels were elated with success, and even got possession of the whole town. Such was the panic among the city merchants that they also went out of the city with their valuable movable properties, while the Europeans evacuated Azamgarh. After this evacuation the British lines at Azamgarh were plundered and there was complete disorder in the whole town. The Indian Nazir and Sarishtadar who had been left behind were forced to leave for Ghazipur. The whole Police also quitted the city.

It is unfortunate that practically nothing is known about the manner in which the rebels ruled Azamgarh during the brief period of their power. It appears that, one, Prithipal Singh, leader of the Palwars, commanded the city and levied a contribution in the town so as to make both ends meet. It is also likely that there was some indiscriminate loot as a result of which many innocent people suffered losses. That only proves that the Indian rebels were lacking in administrative organisation and police efficiency. There were some difficulties also which the Palwars could not overcome. Firstly, most of their force was engaged in distant Parganas and so they could not collect an adequate force in the city itself. Secondly, Muzzaffar Khan, a rebel leader, who had lately occupied Mahul could not send any timely reinforcements to the city. Thirdly, the chief Palwar leader,

Beni Madho, who was engaged at Mundari, only nine miles from the city, had no reinforcements from any source and he had to take refuge at Atraula and had later to fly to Avadh when the Gurkhas appeared. Lastly, the time at the disposal of the rebels was wholly inadequate for the preparation of an effective defence of the city. The consequence was. that the success of the rebels could not endure, and as the Gurkhas appeared, the British sovereignty was restored at Azamgarh, at least nominally. Beni Madho, Prithipal Singh and Muzzaffar Khan had to seek safety in flight.

Even though the city was recaptured, the rebels were still unsubdued in the countryside. The Palwars were only half-defeated, and the fact that they were still strong in some parts of the district is proved by the British overtures to them to make peace. One British officer, Mr. Pollock, toured the countryside so as to induce the Palwars to settle down. Accompanied by a force, Mr. Pollock met the Palwar chiefs at Koelsa in a friendly conference. British diplomacy succeeded as it had always succeeded in the past, The Palwars were finally made to agree to British terms and they declared their friendship for the British Government. Such was the loyalty of these Palwars that they after this not only gave no trouble, but refused to help the great rebel leader, Kunwar Singh, when the latter came to Azamgarh in April, 1858. The ease with which the Palwar Rajputs were won over by the British diplomacy demonstrates, the common weakness of the rebels in political acumen and diplomatic ability. Their disunion was naturally exploited by the foreigners.

The British success was initially short-lived, for the patriotic hero, Kunwar Singh, came and re-occupied Azamgarh for a short while. In 1858, the situation in Azamgarh proved favourable to the rebels. At this time the major portion of the British army was stationed at Lucknow, and so Azamgarh and the neighbouring area were devoid of adequate protection. This opportunity was brilliantly taken advantage of by Kunwar Singh, who was hovering in western Bihar with a small force of his own. He made a heroic diversion in eastern Uttar Pradesh and joining with a large number of rebels still at large in the vicinity of Azamgarh, he made a sudden attack on the town. His ultimate plan was to move from Azamgarh either towards Allahabad or Varanasi. Kunwar Singh's position was further improved when another band of rebels joined him at Atraula. Kunwar Singh's

memorable coup was highly successful and Azamgarh again temporarily became free from British rule. But, as before, the rebels were running short of supplies and materials. The number of combatants on their side was also not adequate. Leadership was woefully deficient. The consequence was that, despite his wonderful galantry, Kunwar Singh could not hold on at Azamgarh for long. In the meanwhile, his position became untenable for two reasons. Firstly, there was famine all round Azamgarh and food was scarce and it was difficult to maintain law and order in the city and maintain a fighting army in a condition of efficiency. Secondly, Kunwar Singh, who lacked adequate organisation of his own, could not keep down the criminal element in the town, and there was disorder which could not be checked. The anarchical conditions led to loot, brigandage and incendiarism which weakened Kunwar Singh.

Kunwar Singh's occupation of Azamgarh is a grim chapter in the history of his chequered career. Here he displayed wonderful energy and enterprise and ability for organisation, but individual brilliance could not compensate the lack of concerted action. The British soon collected reinforcements at Varanasi, Ghazipur and Allahabad, and marched on Azamgarh towards the end of March. The initial attack of the British under the command of Colonel Milman and Colonel Dawes proved unsuccessful. When the news of the British defeat reached Lord Canning at Allahabad, there was great anxiety. With a leader of the ability of Kunwar Singh taking the offensive the position was bound to be extremely grave. It was at this time that Lord Canning took personal interest in the military operations and sent Col. Lord Mark Kerr against Azamgarh. Kunwar Singh and his men were now outnumbered and his left-wing had to retreat forthwith. The English received further reinforcements from Lucknow. Even though Kunwar Singh occupied the town, he found that the position all round him was militarily untenable for want of resources. On the rapid approach of the British army, Kunwar Singh collected his forces along the banks of the river Tons, and decided to stop the British advance here, if possible. When he found that the British advance could not be stopped, he thought of marching in haste with all his forces to the Ganga, cross it, and attempt to retire to the wild country of Jagdishpur. The heroism which Kunwar Singh showed while fighting a rearguard action is indeed remarkable.

He offered a stout and relentless resistance all along and fought with such a bravery that the British had to suffer heavy losses at the great battle which was fought at the bridge over the Tons. The British lost one of their principal leaders, Mr. Venables. But, Kunwar Singh knew that victory had cruelly eluded his grasp and retreat was the only alternative that was open to him. Azamgarh was lost this time once for all and the British regained it triumphantly. The flight and accidental death of Kunwar Singh form a different story, the poignant tragedy of which is no part of the present story.

Even after the fall of Azamgarh the district remained in a troublesome condition for some time, and was threatened from time to time by the rebels of Avadh, but except for temporary dacoity and disorder caused by the rebels, Azamgarh remained free from any serious trouble. That, however, Azamgarh had freedom twice for brief periods in 1857—58 is a fact which needs to be recalled at the present day.

(From author's *India's Freedom Struggle*, 1958)

18

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE SEPOY MUTINY

(KANPUR MASSACRE)

By

Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee

I WAS lucky enough recently to read through the good offices of a friend of mine a compilation of some, contemporary records about Kanpur outbreak and massacre and the part played therein by the Nana Sahib of Bithoor. These records are statements by survivors and were compiled by one J.F. Bellamy. Englishman Press, in the very same year as the Mutiny, *i.e.*, 1857.

Now that an attempt is being made to have an impartial history of this epoch-making rising, whether we call it a rebellion, a faction, a mutiny or the first war of independence, it is interesting to sift the evidence historically and logically without any prejudice or bias. "It is known that different elements with different objects in view, patriots with a high sense of duty to brigands who thrive on chaos or disorder, people with a deep religious sentiment to gay cavaliers, people who wanted Hindu domination, to people who wanted the Imperial Moguls to recapture the rapture of their vanished glory, men dissatisfied, men who had an axe to grind, men who had grudges or grievances against the British rule, disgruntled feudal elements, army rebels, all combined to join this movement which, to be more correct, was more factional than national, heterogeneous than

homogeneous. We were told that there was no unity of purpose, no methodical approach, no definite idea of what the national commitment was going to be, yet to a certain extent, at least in local areas it was the advance spark plug of a national dissatisfaction against British rule and contained the rudiments of a popular resistance. At this stage I would confine myself to the extracts from the records quoted above. These refer particularly to the Kanpur incidents, There is no question that the evidence recorded refer to. a gruesome story though it has to be examined from other records whether they give the entire picture. A discount has also to be made that it was a record at the heat of thc moment and with a sense of injured grievance. There is also the fact that the tragedy did happen and was not only most unfortunate but cruel as well. Yet a historian's task is to sift facts and present them.

A brief account of the outbreak at Kanpur, and the disasters which resulted therefrom to the Christian community of the station is contained in a report dated 29th August, 1857 which was apparently sent to Calcutta. The report says :

"Previous to the outbreak at Cawnpore, reports of diffcrent kinds were afloat in the station, from all of which it was as certained that the Native soldiery, whenever they should break out into open mutiny, would., on no account, molest or hurt thc European community at Cawnpore; and the informers employed by General Sir Hugh Wheeler, on all occasions confirmed the same. They reported that the three Infantry Regiments (1st, 53rd and 56th) appearedwell-disposed towards our Government, with the exception of a few sepoys of really bad character, but that the 2nd Regiment Light Cavalry (who were discontented) were endeavouring to persuade them to rebel, when all should join and proceed in a body together to Delhi after possessing themselves of all the Govcrnment money lodged in the Collector's Treasury which they proposed taking on as a present to the newly created King there, whom they acknowledged to be their true Sovereign.

Under the above supposition, the European merchants and others of the station, though they had at first provided, themselves with boats and other means of escape from Cawnpore, abandoned the idea of deserting this place; the only precaution that appeared to be

necessary was to avoid the fury of the mutineers, at the moment the outbreak might take place.

For this purpose almost the whole of the non-Military residents were promised shelter in the entrenched camp, then under preparation under the General's direction; this promise appears to have completely satisfied them, and all determined to continue to stay at Cawnpore."

"About this time the 'Nana' of Bithoor, offered his services, and pretending to be a most faithful subject of Government, undertook to protect the Treasury in conjunction with our own sepoy guard, with a couple of his guns, and about two thousand men in his employ; very great confidence appears to have been placed in him, as his services were accepted: and in the meantime about a lakh or upwards of rupees was withdrawn and placed in the entrenchment, under the plea of meeting the salaries of the Troops, etc., for May, leaving about eight and a half lakhs in the Treasury."

"For the first four or five days of the outbreak, our Artillery kept up a brisk firing, but after that it was considered inadvisable to exhaust our Magazine, for the rebels took great care to always keep well under cover, and we could not do much execution among them.

The heat was very great, and what with the fright, want of room, want of proper food, and care, several ladies, and soldiers' wives, as also children, died with great distress, many officers and soldiers also were sun-struck from exposure to the hot winds. The dead bodies of our people had to be thrown into a well outside the entrenchment, near the new unfinished Barracks, and this work was generally done at the close of each day, as nobody could venture out during the day on account of the shots and shells flying in all directions like hail-stones; our entrenchment was strewn with them. The distress was so great, that none could offer a word of consolation to his friend, or to attempt to administer to the wants of each other. I have seen the dead bodies of officers, and tenderly brought up young ladies of rank (Colonels' and Captains' daughters) put outside the veranda, amongst the ruins, to await the time, when the fatigue party usually went round to carry the dead to the well as above. For there was scarcely room to shelter the living, the buildings were so sadly riddled that every safe corner available was considered a great object."

"'A message was sent by the Nana to General Wheeler, offering to let him and all his people go to Allahabad unmolested, if he would consent to vacate the entrenchment and abandon Cawnpore and at the same time make over to him all the public treasure, the guns and magazines in the camp."

"All hostile proceedings were stopped on both sides from the evening of the 24th. The 26th was employed by the English people in preparing for their journey, and a few officers were allowed to go on elephants, to see the boats provided as above.

On the morning of the 27th a number of carts, *doolies* and elephants were sent to the entrenchment by the Nana, to enable the women and children and sick to proceed to the riverside; it is reported that the persons that came out that morning from the entrenchment amounted to about 450, and a general plunder took place of what property the officers and others were obliged to abandon in the entrenchment. The men and officers were allowed to take their arms and ammunition with them, and were escorted by nearly the whole of the rebel army. It was about eight o'clock a.m. when all reached the riverside, a distance of about a mile and a half, those that embarked first managed to let their boats go, thus three or four boats got off a short distance, though deserted by their crews, but the rest found difficulty in 'pushing their's off the banks, as the rebels previously had them placed as high in the mid as possible, on purpose to cause delay. In the meantime the report of three guns was heard from the Nana's camp, which was the signal (as previously arranged) for the mutineers to fire upon, and kill all the English, and accordingly, the work, of destruction commenced. The boats' crews and others were ordered to get away; some of the boats were set on fire and volley upon volley of musketry was fired upon the poor fugitives, numbers of whom were killed on the spot, some fell overboard, and attempted to escape by swimming, but were picked off by the bullets' of the sepoys who followed them on shore and in breast-deep water."

"One young lady, however, was seized upon (reported to be General Wheeler's daughter) and taken away by a trooper of the 2nd Light Cavalry to his home, where she at night, finding a favourable opportunity, secured the trooper's sword, and with it after

killing him and three others, threw Herself into a well and was killed."

There is another account by a survivor which says :

"Next morning the 7th June a letter was received from the Rajah of Bithoor, who was supposed to be on our side, saying he meant to attack us. Soon after, two guns opened upon us from the North-West, and musketry from all directions. On the 8th three more guns were brought against us. The number of guns against us increased daily and on the 11th the enemy had been playing upon us, night and day, 3 mortars, 2 twenty-four pounders, 3 eighteen pounders, one or two twelve pounders, about the same number of nine pounders and one six pounders. On or about the 12th June, the insurgents by firing set on fire the large barracks in which all the women of the 52nd Regiment and the wounded were placed. No sooner was the fire perceived than the assembly was sounded, and every man had to stand to his post as we expected to be attacked. There was no place for the women and children to go to, but the trenches where many of them had to remain night and day. There was no shelter now for the men anywhere during the day and from this date we lost fiye or six men daily by sunstroke. On the ... June after having been on half rations for some days the Rajah sent a half caste woman with a note into the trenches to the effect that all soldiers and Europeans who had nothing to do with Lord Dalhousie's Government and would lay down their arms should be sent to Allahabad. General Wheeler gave orders to Captain Moore to act as he should consider best. Captain Moore that evening signed a treaty to the effect that "the Rajah should provide boats and carriage for the wounded and ladies down to the river bank whilst on our side we were to give up what treasure we had together with arms and ammunition."

This is another account called Nujoor Tewarree's Account :

"When the Nana's guns opened on the boat in which Wheeler Sahib (the General) was, it has now been fully ascertained from servants and others who were with the English party, that General Wheeler was not dead before the massacre, but was put wounded on board the boats,—they cut its cable, and dropped down the river.

"Some little way down, the boat got stuck near the shore; the Infantry and guns came up, and opened fire. The large gun they could not manage, not knowing how to work the-elevating screw, and did not use it. With the small gun they fired grape tied up in bags, and the Infantry fired with their muskets. This went on all day; it did not hurt the Sahib-logue much; they returned the fire with their rifles from the boat, and wounded several of the sepoys on the bank, who therefore drew off towards evening. The sepoys procured a very big. boat, into which they all got, and dropped down the river upon the Sahib's boat; then the Sahibs fired again with their rifles, and wounded more sepoys in the boat, they drew off and left them. At night came a great rush of water in the river, which floated off the Sahibs' boat, and they passed on down the river; but owing to the storm and the dark night, they only proceeded three or four koss (six or eight miles) . 'In the meantime, intelligence of the Sahibs' defence had reached the Nana, and he sent off that night three more Companies of the Native Regiment (1st. Oude Infantry), and surrounded the Sahibs' boat, and so" took them and brought them back to Cawnpore. There came out of that boat 60 Sahibs, 25 Mem Sahibs and 4 children,—one boy, and three half-grown girls. The Nana then ordered the Mem Sahibs to be separated from the Sahibs to be shot by the Gillis' Pulton 1st B.N.I., hut they said, 'We will not shoot Wheeler Sahib, who had made our Pulton's name great, and whose son is our Quarter Master; neither will we kill the Sahib logue. Put them in prison, then said the Nadire Pultun. What word is this? Put them in prison? We will kill the males.' So the Sahib logue were seated on the ground and two Companies of the Nadir Pultun placed themselves over against them, with their muskets ready to fire. Then said one of the Mem Sahibs, the Doctor's wife she was (what Doctor, I don't know the name, but he was either Superintending Surgeon or Medical Store-keeper), 'I will not leave my husband; if he must die, I will die with him,' So she ran and sat down behind her husband, clasping him round his waist. Directly she said this, the other Mem Sahibs said, 'We will also die with our husbands, and they all went and sat down beside their husbands; then their husbands said, 'go back' but they would not. Where upon the Nana ordered his soldiers and, they going in pulled them forcibly away, seizing them by the arm; but they could not pull away the

Doctor's wife, who there remained. Then just as the sepoys were going to fire, the Padre (Chaplain) called out to the Nana and requested leave to read prayers before they died. The Nana granted it, and the Padre's hands were loosened so far as to enable him to take a small book out of his pocket, from which he read; but all this time, one of the Sahib-logue, who was shot in the arm, kept crying out to sepoys, 'If you mean to kill us, why don't you set about it quickly, and have the work done,—why delay?" the Padre had read a few prayers, he shut the book, and the Sahib-logue shook hands all round. Then the sepoys fired. One Sahib rolled one way, one another, as they sat; but they were not dead, only wounded, so they went, in and finished them off with swords. After this the whole of the women and children (that is including those taken out of other boats) to the number of 122, were taken away to the Yellow House, which was your hospital. This was the Bithoor Rajah's house in the Civil Lines, where I and four more sepoys were con-fined, and where I had the opportunity of talking to the Serjeant Major's wife. After this, when we sepoys were taken down with the Nana to Futtehpore, the women and children were taken away, to the house where they were afterwards murdered.

"Were any of our women dishonoured by the Nana or his people? No one that I know of; excepting in the case of General Wheeler's youngest daughter and about this I am not certain. These are the circumstances: As they were taking the Mem Sahibs out of the boat a Sowar (Cavalry man) took her away with him to his house; she went quietly, but at night she rose and got hold of the Sowar's sword; he was asleep, his wife, his son and his mother-in-law were sleeping in the house, with him. She killed them all with 'the sword, and then she Went, and threw herself down the well behind the house."

This is the Deposition of Marian, an *ayah* in the service of Mr. J. Greenway of Cawnpore :

"It was taken on the 21st August, and a horrible account of the dreadful massacre:

On the 3rd of May all the Native Infantry and Cavalry. Regiments at Cawnpore mutinied, and ran off to loot the Treasury, which they took. Then they burnt the Collector's house and proceeded to

Kulinpore, seven miles from Cawnpore and encamped there. At this place the Nana Saheb met them, and said to the mutineers, 'You receive seven rupees from the British Government, I will give you fourteen. Don't go to Delhi, stay here, and your name will be greater; kill all the English in Cawnpore first, and I will give you each a golden bracelet.' On hearing them, all the mutineers agreed to the terms of the Nana. They made a Subadar of the first Regiment, General, and he again "made all' the Havildars, Naicks, Captains, Lieutenants and Ensigns. The Nana said, 'I will supply you all with food.' On the following day the Nana with the above Regiments, proceeded to Cawnpore, looted all the residents' houses, and then set fire to them. All the residents were in the entrenchment; those who did not go there were all murdered, together with the Drummers and Native Christians. It was the intention of some of the officers to blow up the magazine and for this purpose proceeded into the station. When they reached the Canal, all the Regiment fired on the party, killed one officer, Adjutant of. 2nd Cavalry, and the rest escaped to the entrenchment for their lives; they unfortunately left a gun behind them which they had taken from the entrenchment. On the party reaching the camp, fire was opened on the English people by the mutineers, and cannons were placed on the three sides of the entrenchment. On the canal side a 24-pounder, on the Hospital side an 18-pounder, on the third side near Subadar, two 12 pounders were placed."

''Nana Sahib said to Mrs. Jacobi, Will you take a letter to General Wheeler?' She said, 'Yes'. The letter was written and sent by Mrs. Jacobi to the General. She was not at first allowed to come near the camp by the soldiers, but when they heard the English voice, they allowed her to do so. The contents of this letter were: 'It is far better for you who are alive to go at once to Allahabad unless you wish to continue fighting; if so, you can do so. Let Cawnpore be given up, and you shall be saved.' On reaching the entrenchment, General Wheeler went to meet Mrs. Jacobi, and when he read, the note, he said, 'I cannot agree to anything sent this, way by letter; if the Nana has any propositions to make, tell him to make it in person.' Mrs. Jacobi took the reply back to the Nana. He said, 'If the Europeans will cease firing, I will go and send a reply.' The General said, 'Let both sides cease firing during the conference;' this was'agreed to. On the following day the Nana, his brother Baba Bhut, and nephew,

and a large party of, soldiers came up to the entrenchment. General Wheeler was ready to meet them. The Nana said, 'Take away all the women and children to Allahabad and if your men want to fight, come back and do so. . We will keep implicit faith with you.' General Wheeler said, 'You take your solemn oath according to your custom, and I will take an oath on my Bible, that I will leave the entrenchment.' The Nana said, 'Our oath is that whoever we take by the hand, and one who relies on us, we never deceive, for if we do, God will judge and punish us.' General Wheeler said, 'If you intend to deceive me, kill me at once. I am not armed.' The Nana replied, 'I will not deceive you, rely on us, I will procure food, etc. and convey you to Allahabad.' On this the General went into the entrenchment and consulted with the soldiers, who said, 'There is no reliance to be placed on natives; they will deceive you.' A few said, 'Trust them, it is better to do so.' On this the General returned and said, 'I agree to your terms; see us only as far as Fattehpore, from thence we can get easily to Allahabad.' The reply was, 'No, Sir; I will see you all safe to Allahabad.' Twenty boats were then ordered with covers to them. When the Nana saw all was settled, he said, 'Don't let the treasure be taken away, send that to me.' The General said, 'You may have the money.' There were three lakhs in cash at this time. The Nana said, 'You will breakfast on board the boats at 10 a.m. tomorrow and also dine on board and leave the entrenchment clear by 11 a.m.' The General assented to this. They were all ready, when a message from the Nana came, saying, 'The boats will not be ready today, you must leave tomorrow, you had better leave in the evening, etc.' the General's reply to this was, 'I won't leave at night, as you may play us, false ' The Nana then said, 'Very veil, you can leave at 4 p.m.' On the following day the Nana took away all the treasure. At this time some delay again took place in their departure. All the ladies and, children were dressed and ready. The General asked the Nana, 'Are all our servants to go with US, or do you supply us with servants?' The reply was, 'Yes, you can take them? The next day, though suspicions were entertained of the faith, of the Nana's party, still they hoped all was right. The Nana sent word on Sunday to say the servants were not to go; that the ladies and women could look after themselves. On this being heard they were all alarmed. At 7 a.m. the mutineers surrounded the entrenchment and all the English

were in their power. The servants ran away and were cut down, a few escaped; all were alarmed. The rebels entered the entrenchment, and said, 'Come to the boats, all is ready.' The ladies and children were sent on elephants, doolies, etc , and the men marched to the river, and then embarked in the boats. When they all saw food prepared, and all comfortable they were delighted. When a few had gonc on board and others were waiting to embark on the river side, a gun opened on them and canister. shot (this gun and others had been masked); one boat took fire and then another gun was opened and four boats were fired, Those who escaped the firc jumped into the watcr. The sepoys also fired with their muskets. The Sowcrs entered the water on horseback and. cut numbers down, fifteen boat-loads of the English were massacred; 108 women and chıldrcn escaped this massacrc but many of them were wounded. The Nana said, 'Don't kill those, put them in prison.' One boat in which was General Wheeler was paddled off by the soldiers. The poor peoplc were crying in the boats and when in the water wcre calling out on God for help. A daughter of General Wheeler was taken off by a Sowar, and put into his house along with his wife and children near the Chowck Church. This girl remained with this man till night. He went out, and came home drunk and fell asleep. She then got up, took a sword and cut off his head, his brother's head. two childrens' heads, his wife's and mother-in-law's and then went to the back of the hut, jumped into a well and was killed.

"All the prisoners were.killed. This was duly reported to the Nana, who ordered, the ladies to be cast into a well and the 25 women and children who remained alive under the heap of dead bodies were killed, by executioners and some of the little children were dashed to pieces against the ground. This took place early on the morning of the 17th July and in the evening the Nana ran off to Bithoor. Many wounded women were thrown into the well alive with the dead bodies and earth."

This is the story of the massacre as recorded in the evidence taken. The following factfi emerge:

(1) Nana had originally offered his services to the English.

(2) He had, however, subsequently given ample notice of his defection.

(3) Nana had agreed to guarantee a safe journey.

(4) Nana failed to do it. Everybody has assumed that Nana was responsible for this shabby tragedy but it is not clear whether his failure was deliberate or the situation, got out of his control or his orders were not obeyed or he was a bloodthirsty roan as he has been painted.

(5) Dead bodies heaped on the well also contained bodies of persons who had died a natural death.

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MAHIDPUR IN 1857*

By

B.N. Luniya

MAHIDPUR is about seventy-five miles from Indore (Madhya Pradesh-Central India region). It is a very old town with a strong fort on the hills. It is six miles away from the Mahidpur Road Railway station on the Bombay-Delhi line of the Western Railway and linked together with Indore, Ujjain and other big towns of Malwa with roads. The river Kshipra with its small tributary surrounds the fort and the town on the three sides and thus creates natural defence for the place. Tradition has it that the famous serpant-sacrifice and other sacrifices were performed here on the banks of the river Kshipra and a huge hill of ashes on the right bank of the river is pointed out as a testimony for it. When the Ilolkars established their sway in Malwa, they set up one of their military stations at Mahidpur for their prolonged warfare in the Northern India. Later on, with the rapid advance of the British in Malwa a pitched and decisive battle was fought at Mahidpur in 1818 between the forces of the Holkar

This article is based on the original reports, letters, messages etc. of Shri Gaogadhar Mukand, a Vakil of the Holkar Durbar, stationed at Mahidpur, Sadashiva Govind, the Amin of Mahidpur, Shri Ramchandra Rao, the then officiating minister of the Holkar Durbar, Major Timmins, officer commanding the Malwa Contingent at Mahidpur and Shri Ramrao Bhagwant, Chitnis Office Indore. All these were discovered recently in the Government records at Indore, once the Capital of the Holkar State.

and those of the British, the latter inflicting a crushing defeat on the Holkar. Holkar has to accept a humiliating treaty and a British Cantonment was set up at Mahidpur.

In 1857 Major Timrnins was the officer commanding a portion of the Malwa contingent at the Mahidpur Cantonment and Sadashiva Govind was the chief executive officer of the Holkar State at Mahidpur. He haci entertained hostile designs against the British. Probably likc other contingents of thc British Cantonments in Central India, the sepahis of the Malwa contingent at Mahidpur were unfavourably inclined towards the British and were discontented with the British domination. The news of the outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut and the fall of Delhi and other places into the hands of the munineers impelled them to seek their own opportunity to break out into rebellion.

When Lt. Colonel H. M. Durand, the then British A.G.G. at Indore, ordered Major Timmins to send four risalas (companies of the cavalry sepahis) to Neemuch for safeguarding the British position there against the mutineers, the Mahidpur cavalry sepahis marched for Neemuch. On their way they were joined by the sepahis of Agar, a military station of the British in Mahva. On the second June 1857 near Tal in Jaora state these sepahis were given the much hated greased cartridges by their officer Adjutant Hunt at the time of the parade. But they refused to accept them and secretly decided to mutiny. But the common sense and resourcefulness of Captain Barodie prevented the mutiny there for the time being. However, when the troops reached Malhargarh, fourteen miles away from Neemuch, they refused to march further against their brothern who had rebelled at Neemueh and mutinied on the 6th of June at 8 p.m. attacking and killing their two British Officers. This was the first mutiny of the sepahis of the Mahidpur Mahva Contingent. They were the second to break into open rebellion against the British in Madhya Pradesh in 1857, the first being the sepahis of the Neemuch Cantonment. After the munity some of them proceeded to Delhi, while others returned to Mahidpur to excite their brothern there. Similarly, two companies of the Infantry under Rahamtullah and hundred sawars under Gulkhan Risaldar Mahidpur Cantonment, deputed to project the British at Indore, also expressed anti-British sentiments and activities and consequently they were ordered to

return to Mahidpur. It is reported that instead of coming peacefully to Mahidpur some of them went to Jaora and persuaded the Nawab of Jaora to take up arms against the British, but in vain. Then they marched towards Delhi.

These incidents clearly reveal that the sepahis of the Mahidpur Cantonment were already British activities disaffected against the before June, 1857. Some of them mutinied and deserted their ranks, while others stayed on at Mahidpur waiting for a more suitable opportunity to strike blows at their enemy.

When the news of the Malhargarh mutiny reached Mahidpur, Major Timmins, fearing a similar occurance there, left Mahidpur for Lalgarh on the nineteenth June, accompanied by some European officers, probably to seek shelter there with the Dewan of the place. Bat the Dewan pursuaded the Major to leave Lalgarh as the Amin of Mahidpur would complain to Holkar Durbar against him for offering shelter to the Europeans. Consequently Timmins had to return to Mahidpur, but he had to pay Rs. 2000/- for safe conduct to Mahidpur. On the 9th of June in the absence of Major Timmins, the sepahis of the Mahidpur Cantonment, now joined by those who mutinied at Malhargarh, demonstrated their anti-British feelings and looted some of the Cantonments bungalows. The bungalow of Major Timmins was now occupied by the Walayati sepahis—Some of the residents of Mahidpur joined hands with these anti-British elements and forcibly entered the bungalow of the Major. When the guards of the bungalow protested they remarked, 'the bungalow belong to His Highness the Maharaja.' Iswariprasad the Subedar of the Cantonment protested to the Amin of Mahidpur against these anti-British demonstrations and urged him to take immediate action against them. The Amin instead of punishing and suppressing these anti-British elements and the mutinears, welcomed them and assured them of employment in the Holkar State forces. The Amin had already recruited some Walayatis and Makaranis.

Major Timmins also complained to the Amin against the Walayatis and desired him to take strong action against them. But the Amin replied to the Major that the Walayatis did not commit, any crime and removed the watchman from the Major's bungalow without intimating to the Major about it. Consequently the Major lodged a

complaint against the Amin in strong words to the A.G.G. at Indore and Holkar Durbar,

On the evening of the 2nd July a report about the outbreak of the Mutiny at Indore was received at Mahidpur and the Amin and his associates, feeling jubilant over it, spread the news quickly giving it a very favourable colour and immediately commenced recruiting in large number anti-British elements like the Sondhiyas, Makaranees, Walayatis etc. Some of the Walayatis were asked to patrol the vicinity of the cantonment and the Major's bungalow.

On the 3rd July, 1857 Shaikh Gawan Jamadar was deputed to foment troubles in the ranks of the cantonment sepahis and excite them as well as the ordinary servants of the cantonment to rebel against the Europeans and kill them or expell them from Mahidpur, while a few of the Amin's Walayatis began to saunter about the cantonment to procure information about the military preparations and secrets of the British.

All these encouraged anti-British activities in Mahidpur and consequently some of sepahis took up arms against the British on the 3rd of July, but they were quickly suppressed. However, the Amin tried to send the rebel troops to Indore to serve Maharaja Holkar and he also asked the rebel Risaledar Mohammad Sakur to enroll more troopers for his cavalry which he did immediately. Then the Amin induced the Munshi of Major Timmins to desert him and join the mutineers. He told the Munshi, 'I only tell you what is in your own interest. You should accept the service of the Maharaja Sahib and come to me. I shall send you to Indore with your papers. I shall recommend you for a dress of honour. Your status will he enhanced.

You should put the infantry and arttilary under my control. If you want to save the lives of the Europeans, you should ask them to escape from the this place ... We shall all march together from this place ...' But the Munshi proved loyal to the British.

Now the anti-British activities were intensified by the Walayatis and on the 4th of July a rumour was spread that at 2-o'clock in the afternoon all the Europeans would be killed. The sepahis and the troopers of the Amin excited the people of the cantonment and the city to kill the Europeans, while the Amin till the night of the 18th July launched a surprise attack on the cantonment from the river

side with the help of some four to five hundred cavalry and infantry men brought from Dhulet. But the alertness of the cantonment guards and the British cavalry and infantry units foiled the attempt of the Amin. However, to strengthen his force the Amin deputed two persons on the 20th July to Tarana to bring to Mahidpur troopers and guns sent there from Indore, but in vain. In the meanwhile a message for the sepahis of Mahidpur was received from Subedar Hirasingh, once at Mahidpur, now serving Shahjada Ferozshah at Mandsaur, to desert their posts, join Ferozshah's army and bring their guns, ammunition etc. to Mandsaur.

All these circumstances coupled with the activities of the Amin smoothed the path for an open rebellion in Mahidpur. The Walayati sipahis of the Amin came to a secret understanding with the cavelry and infantry men under Major Timmins that when they (Walayatis) would fire five shots, they should come out, rebel and attack and kill their British Officers, Consequently on the morning of the 8th Nov. at 8—a.m. the British cantonment at Mahidpur was attacked by the Walayatis, Rohillas, Makaranaes, Sondhiyas and others, led by the Amaldar, the native police officer of Mahidpur. The Invaders numbered between fifteen hundred to two thousands. The British endeavoured to face the attack and immediately tried to put their men in battle array. But as planned before a large number of their own sipahis deserted their ranks and went over to the side of the enemy. The whole of their infantry refused to attack the invaders. One of the infantry officers Rahimtulla hoisted the green flag of Deen (religion) and joined the insurgents, followed by many Goiandaz (artillarymen} and Muslims of the contingent. Only a portion of the artillery belonging to the Blieel Company stood firm to their guns. But the British did not lose their heart. They took up the position and began to feed and fire the cannon themselves. A battle followed and the firing continued from both sides without any interruption for a long time. Some of the British officers were killed in the action and one of their cannon burst. This slakened their firing considerably and encouraged the insurgents to rush forward on the British position with a loud uproar and soon they captured the British guns. At this the surviving British mounted horses and escaped safely towards Ujjain. After the capture of the fort and the cantonment the insurgents set fire to the cantonment bungalows, stakes of hay, military

barracks, hospitals, stables, etc. and so devastating was the fire that when Orr visted Mahidpur after a few days no trace was left of these.

After their victory the insurgents secured from the Amin a large number of carts, horses, provisions, fodder, fuel, equipment etc. besides Rs. two per head. Then the leaders of the insurgents enlisted a few more artillery men and new recruitment at the rate of Rs. 8 per month. On the 11th November all the insurgents, numbering about fifteen hundred left Mahidpur for Mandsaur with guns and sixty cart-loads of ammunition and equipment. On their way next day they had to fight a very desparate hand to hand battle with a British force under Orr, who was advancing towards Mahidpur to rescue the British there. The insurgents offered a stubborn resistance. While the battle was raging the British asked one of the leaders of the insurgents, a Rohilla, to surrender. But he refused. Then ensued a deadly struggle for life. He maintained his position fighting gallantly till a sharp spear of his antoganist pierced his breast. ' He fell upon the ground, cast one agonised withering look of a still unvanquished spirit on his face, threw his arms across his eyes and died without a groan.' The desparate battle continued till the darkness of the night descended on the battlefield and enveloped it, and the insurgents disappeared leaving behind them some of their guns and stores. When the British regained their position and power in Central India, they got Sadashiva Rao, the Amin of Mahidpur, arrested and executed for his anti-British activities.

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THE REBELLION IN HYDERABAD IN 1857

By

Nani Gopal Chaudhuri

THE year 1857 was a momentous year in the history of the British rule in India. In the month of June of that year the whole of Northern India was ablaze with the mutiny of the sepoys. It spread like a wild fire from one military station to another. Rumours about the reverses suffered by the British troops in the northern part of India were received with great pleasure and eagerly believed in by the people of Hyderabad. Gradually, the mutiny was spreading towards the south. In Central India Tantia Topi and the Rani of Jhansi became aceredited leaders of the mutinous soldiers and captured the fort of Gwalior. Agents were sent by Nana Sahib to influence in his favour the Muslim? of Hyderabad, who constituted the real military strength of the State, but he failed in his objective as they had been estranged from the Marathas by the bitter memories of the past. The situation might have taken a different turn if Muhammadan emissaries in favour of the emperor of Delhi were sent to rouse the feelings of the Muhammedan citizens of Hyderabad. A rebellion, or mutiny of sepoys in Hyderabad which ocupies a central position in the Deccan, would have offered a serious threat to the English in the Deccan.

That rebellion of a very serious kind did not break out in Hyderabad was due to several factors. First, the Nizam and all great nobles of his court were staunch supporters of the English. Secondly,

although Hyderabad was teeming with turbulent Arab, Rohilla and Afghan soldiers (attached to the nobles and jagirdars) who revelled move in lawlessness than in peace, absence of able leadership kept them inactive. With an able leader to rouse their sentiments and guide them, they would certainly have made Hyderabad a place too hot for the few English people who were living there. The gunpowder was dry but there was none to set fire to it. Thirdly, Colonel Davidson, the British Resident, was a very tactful and able officer who took every precaution to meet the situation if it worsened. Reports of the revolt in the northwestern part of India reached the principal Indian bankers of Hyderabad as early as the middle of June, 1857, and excitement ran high in the city of Hyderabad. Several people tried to inflame the minds of the people with hatred to organize a rising against the British Government. But Davidson, the British Resident, did not consider even then that any disturbance beyond common street row would occur. Still he deemed it prudent to reinforce the Residency escort.[1]

On the 13th June, two inflammatory placards were posted on the walls of a mosque in the city of Hyderabad exhorting the people to rise against the British and fixing a day for a general rising. The people in the city of Hyderabad were agitated by rumours which were percolating from Northern India. A faquir who was addressing the peole in seditious language and assuring them that they would be joined by a regiment from Secunderabad, was apprehended and handed over to the minister.[2]

The regiment referred to by the faquir was suspected to be the 7th Light cavalry stationed at Sekanderabad. On the 8th June when the Resident was going to the city of Hyderabad, a trooper of the Resident's escort joined the crowd and exhorted the mob who had collected in the street to take part in the uprising against the English.[3] On the morning of the 15th June, the Resident desired that the regiment should be paraded for his inspection. At the conclusion of the parade the Resident addressed the troopers of the regiment regarding what he had heard in the city about them, though, he said, he did not believe it. An equiry was instituted afterwards by the Commander of the Hyderabad Subsidiary force to ascertain the correctness of the rumours about the regiment." The rumours proved to be absolutely false.[4]

In the morning of the 17th July, the Resident got the information through his assistant Thronhill that a jehad would be proclaimed against the British Government and he communicated it to the minister who refused to give credence to it.[5] At noon a seditious meeting took place in the great Mecca Mosque where a green flag, the symbolic colour of Islam, was hoisted. The crowd which assembled there, was dispersed by the Arab soldier who had been sent by the minister. At about one O'clock the minister sent a note to the Resident that the crowd had been dispersed and the rumour about the jehad was absolutely false.[6] At about two O'clock Muhammad Ghaus, the eldest son of the Jagirdar of Toorkapilly, who was one of the staunch supporters of the British in this crisis, gave the first information to the Resident of the outbreak of rebellion in the city and on the first move of the insurgents he rushed to the minister with the intelligence, of it.[7] The Resident on receiving the information made every preparation for meeting the situation and by 2 p.m. he had the whole force of the Residency under arms. The defence of the Residency was placed under the charge of Major Briggs, his military secretary. The police arrangements of the Residency Bazar, were placed under Captain Thornhill, the Assistant Resident. So well planned were the police arrangements in the Residency Bazar which had twenty thousand inhabitants that not a single case of outrage or atrocity was reported during the outbreak.[8]

Only a quarter of an hour previous to the attack on the Residency, Resident got the information ot it from the minister.[9] The minister did not expect that the Residency would be attacked by the insurgents and when they actually proceeded towards the Residency, troops were sent to stop them, but they had in the meantime advanced so far that it was impossible to stop them. The troops who went in pursuit, found that the men had already entered the boundary of the Residency, The soldiers did not advance further, fearing that the troops of the Residency might open fire upon them mistaking them for insurgents.[10]

At about four O'clock in the evening a band of Rohillas and Arabs led by the notorious Rohilla leader Toorbaz Khan and Maulavi Alauddin Khan, attacked the Residency. While they were engaged in breaking

down one of the gates of the Residency garden, the Madras Horse Artillery opened fire upon them. This had the effect of dispersing the insurgents who then occupied two large houses with terraced roofs belonging to soucars (Indian Bankers) named Ubbu Shaib and Joygopal Das. From the roofs of these two houses the insurgents throughout the whole night kept on firing to which the Residency troops also replied with their guns. The Resident telegraphed to the Brigadier commanding the Hyderabad subsidiary force stationed at Secunderabad to send a reinforcement which arrived at about eight O'clock at night. Being thus reinforced the Resident was able to hold his own against the insurgents till morning.[11] In the morning the insurgents evacuated the two houses with the connivance of the Arab soldiers who had been sent by the minister to prevent their entry into the city.[12] Among the insurgents thirty-two men were killed and wounded by the fire opened by the Residency troops.[13] The Nizam offered a reward of four thousand rupees for the Capture of each of the two leaders of the insurgents.[14] Jamadar Toorbaz Khan was taken prisoner after being severely wounded and was in the custody of the minister[15] He however escaped from confinement and was shot dead when he refused to surrender. Maulavi Allauddin Khan was caught and sentenced to transportation for life.[16]

Although the Muhammedan population in the city of Hyderabad was restrained' from excesses by the chastisement which the insurgents suffered at the hands of the British army, their mood became sullen and sulky. Neither the minister nor the nobles of the court were in a position to control the rowdy elements of the city. Muharrum was near at hand. Apprehending that something might happen during that festival the minister requsted the Resident to reinforce the European troops in Hyderabad, The Resident could, of course, meet the whole armed population of Hyderabad with the help of the subsidiary force, but he could not entirely rely upon the Indian troops of that force. The position which Hyderabad occupied in Southern India, demanded that peace should be maintained at any cost in that state in order to preserve tranquillity in the whole of the Deccan. The Resident therefore telegraphed to Poona and Madras for European troops. With the arrival of European troops from Poona and Bangalore the Resident was in a position to meet any emergency during the Muharrum.[17] Salar Jung, the minister of Hyderabad, made

arrangements for the preservation of peace during the Muharram festival. The Sikh and the Rajput troops had been posted in all the thoroughfares within the city and its suburbs, especially in the direction of the Residency.[18] The Nizam placed a thousand troops at the disposal of the Resident. Shums ul-Umara, a grand uncle of the Nizam by marriage, also sent to the Resident a body of troops. Some instructions given by the Major General Commanding of the Residency to his troops occasioned some excitement among a section of the people in the city, who gave out that the troops under the control of the Residency had stopped the Muharram procession at Secunderabad. The Resident's tactful tackling of the situation eased the tension among the people and the Muharram passed off peacefully.[19]

But the attempt to stir up the people in Hyderabad bad not ceased even after the repulse of the attack upon the Residency in 1857. On the South-western corner of the Nizam's dominions lay the small principality of Shorapur. Formerly, it was a dependent state of Hyderabad. Subsequently, it became a protectorate of the English East India Company, and was looked after by the British Resident at Hyderabad. During the disturbance of 1857, it was rumoured that the Raja of Shorapur was engaged in treasonable activities. Captain Rose Campbell of the Hyderabad Residency was deputed to Shorapur to institute an enquiry. In the course of the enquiry, the Raja admitted that he had ordered the enlistment of troops. On the 7th of February, 1858 at about 5 p.m. the Raja's troops attacked a detachment of the Hyderabad contingent encamped before Shorapur and killed captain Newberry. On the next morning the detachment of the Hyderabad Contingent being reinforced, the Raja's army was routed. The Raja fled to Hyderabad where he surrendered himself. He was tried by a court-martial and was sentenced to transportation for life, But on his way to the Andamans he put an end to his own life.[20]

In the month of April, 1859, one Rang Rao who was carrying with him some seditious letters and one proclamation, was apprehended by a British military officer. The proclamation invited all the princes, chiefs and people of the Deecan to rise and join the army of Nana and exterminate the Englishmen. The man admitted that he was an emissary of Nana and was endeavouring to enlist troops under Nana's orders. Capital punishment was passed upon

him by the Resident, but it was commuted to transportation for life by the Governor-General.[21]

But these attempts to rouse the people against the British did not bear fruit after the suppression of the insurrection in 1857. That rising was the climax of the anti-British movement. Its failure showed to the people of Hyderabad that the British force in Hyderabad was strong enough to suppress an anti-British insurrection if it was not backed by the Nizam and his nobles or by any person of rank. That the Resident was able to cope with the insurrection was due to the support he received from almost all men of position in Hyderabad. The Nizam and his minister, Salar Jung all along stood by the British Resident and the British interest. For his open and avowed support given to the British Government Salar Jung became very unpopular and was almost ostracised by the Muhammedan population. Attempts on his life were made several times, but neither the dread on this account nor the news of reverses suffered by the British Government in the north could move him an inch from the line of conduct he had adopted towards the Company's regime from the beginning of the disturbance. Next to Salar Jung, the British Government was most indebted to Shums-ul-Umara for the preservation of peace in Hyderabad. He had great influence over the fanatic Muhammedans of the City. When the mind of the people of Hyderabad became agitated by a rumour given out by the insurrectionists that the military authorities of the British Residency were determined to stop the celebration of the Muharram, Shums-ul-Umara on receiving an explanation from the Resident at once interfered and quieted the mind of the excited people. The Resident was of opinion that had this noble of the Hyderabad court turned against the British Government, nothing would have stopped the rebellion extending throughout the State of Hyderabad. Yakub Ali Khan, the jagirdar of Toorkapillay, and his son Muhammad Ghaus supplied the Resident or his assistant with all secret information regarding any seditious movement in the city. The former had close connection with all the maulavis and persons of that class in the city and he made them believe that he was on their side and thus had access to all their secret counsels. Being thus supplied with secret information the Resident could forestall all seditious movement in the State. The prominent Hindu

citizens of Hyderabad were not lagging behind the influential Muhammadans in helping the British Government. Ununt Reddy, the Zaminder of Mogulgeddi, was the actual captor of Toorbaz Khan who led the attack on the Residency. The heads of several Hindu Banking houses were willing to lend whatever sums were required by the Resident at a very normal interest.[22] Thus both the Muhammedan and the Hindu influential persons were, as it were, vying with each other in rendering help to the British Resident.

In the year 1860 those who had helped the Resident in maintaining peace in Hyderabad, were amply rewarded by the British Government. Both Salar Jung and Shams-ul-Umara received each a Khilat of the value of thirty thousand rupees. Others received presents of various values in accordance with the importance of the services rendered by them. But mention may be made here of the reward given to the Nizam. The Governor-General-in-Council requested the acceptance of presents of English manufacture valued at one lakh of rupees. These were presented to the Nizam by the Resident in an interview with him at a public Darbar. The Nizam in return forwarded for the acceptance of the Governor-General presents valued at one and a half lakh of rupees.[23] But these prescnts were insignificant in comparison with the territorial gains which the Nizam received from the British Government in recognition of his faithful services. The principality of Shorapur which had reverted to the British Government after the rebellion of the Raja, was made over to the Nizam. This principality was included among the territories which were handed to the Nizam by the treaty of 1861. Moreover, in the year 1861, the knighthood of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India which had been instituted a few months before was conferred upon the Nizam at a Darbar held for the occasion by the Resident on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of English.

Before the conferment of the honour the Resident was advised by the Governor-General to ascertain from the Nizam whether he was willing to receive the insignia of the order of the ' Star of India' in a proper manner and wear them on suitable occasions. The Nizam at first raised a slight objection pointing out that it was not in accordance with the usages and practice of Islam[24]. Indeed, Muhammedan law strictly forbids the wearing of any graven images

and the Nizam was afraid lest the wearing of the cameo of Queen Victoria as an insignia should put him in a difficult and embarrassing position. And then the Governor-General's Persian translator in translating the statutes used the Persian word "towk" to mean "necklace or garland" (a part of the insignia). But "towk" literally means a collor or a slave's collor. That word suggested to the minds of the Nizam and his nobility loss of Hyderabad's independence. So the Nizam found it difficult to accept this dubious honour the Governor-General was willing to confer upon him. But the Nizam at last gave way when he learnt that the name of the Prince consort was at the head of the Exalted Order.[25] Perhaps the Nizam was obssessed with the idea that the acceptance of the honour from the hands of the Queen of England and the wearing of the insignia would be an open declaration on the part of the Nizam that he was not an independent ruler. That this view was held by some of his subjects was shown by certain placards which stuck up in various places of Hyderabad including the Nizams palace and two mosqucs where Salar Jung and Shams-ul-Umara usually said their prayers. The authors of the placards held that all these proceedings, namely, the 'Star, Effigy, Title, etc.' were entirely the result of the minister's intrigues and they threatened that if the Nizam accepted the 'Effigy and Star' all the Muhammedans would rise in revolt.[26] But it may be mentioned that no disturbance took place on the day on which the honour was conferred.

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References

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15. *Ibid.*, no. 866.
16. *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 82.
17. *Secret Consultation*, 18 December, 1957, No. 866.
18. *Ibid.*, 27th November 1857, No. 380.
19. *Ibid.*, 27th November, 1857—No. 386.
20. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 308-10.
    *According to Madows Taylor the Raja was transported to a place (Chingleptrt ?) near Madras and while he was being escorted there he committed suicide on the way. *cf.* Taylor, *The story of my life*, pp. 412-14).
21. Briggs, *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 82.
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25. Fraser, *Memoir ami Correspondence*, p. 419.
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MUTINY IN BIHAR

By

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I

IN the historic struggle of the Sepoys with the British Government in India between 1857 and 1859 the province of Bihar, as then constituted, became a storm-centre of popular resistance and challenge to the British authority which seemed for a time to bow low before the blast. The then Bihar formed a part of the territories under the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Mr. Frederick Halliday and was territorially composed of the Patna division comprising the districts of Patna, Gaya, Sahabad, Saran, Champaran and Tirhut; the Bhagalpur division consisting of Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Purnea and Sonthal Parganas; and of the Chotanagpur division embracing Lohardaga, Hazaribagh, Singhbhum, Manbhum, Sambalpur and certain tributary Mahals such as Bhokar, Korea, Sirguja, Udaipur, Jashpur, Gangpur, Bonai and Sarunda. While Bengal, Orissa and Assam, also under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, were by comparison little affected by the mutiny and remained practically peaceful, Bihar stood seriously and universally affected. The effects or the mutinous occurrences in the North-western provinces did not take a long time to be felt in the Lower provinces under the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, but excepting in Bihar, in no other area, included in the Lieutenant governorship of Bengal, was there any large-scale rising of the sepoys and of the

people noticed or was there any disposition evinced by the people to sympathise with the mutineers and insurgents in a spirit of challenge and opposition to government. Bihar mutinied, while her neighbours, Bengal, Assam and Orissa on the east and south remained practically tranquil. This fact justifies a separate study of the history of the mutiny in Bihar between 1857 and 1859.

The Indian mutiny was the work of the so-called Bengal army. The earliest mutinous occurrences took place in Bengal, when the 19th and the 34th Regiments of the Bengal Native Infantry mutinied at Berhampur and Barrackpur respectively. The spirit of mutiny thereafter travelled up, to the North-western provinces where Meerut rose into revolt on the 10th May, 1857. This revolt of Meerut threw the whole. North-western area in a ferment and cast its shadow on Bihar too. In fact during the early part of June considerable excitement prevailed throughout the province of Bihar in consequence of the spread of a general belief that Government contemplated an active interference with the caste and religion of the people. Government adopted various precautionary measures[1] such as strengthening the Police force in Bihar, carefully watching and regulating the 'ghats' (landing places), and guarding the frontiers of the neighbouring disaffected districts. The treasure at Arrah and Chapra was removed to Patna for the defence of which a volunteer guard was formed there and six companies of the Sikh Police Battalion at Suri were rapidly marched to it. They reached Patna on the 7th June and there they continued rendering valuable and efficient services. Despite these precautionary measures mutiny occurred in Bihar. Mutinies flared up in Dinapur, Arrah, Patna, Gaya, Champaran, Saran, Tirhut, Bhagalpur, Sonthal Parganas, Purnea, Singbhum, Manbhum, Muzaffarpur, Palamau, Chaibassa and Sambalpur, in fact, if not in the whole of Bihar without exception, at least in the major part of it.

Bihar was not destined to escape the contagion of the mutiny of the so-called Bengal army. The province bordered on the already affected districts of the North-western area. Similarity[2] in manners, language, sympathies and race of the majority of the inhabitants of the two areas served as a powerful bond of union drawing them closer to one another. The province was, above all, widely garrisoned by detachments of the disaffected Bengal army with whose rising the Indian mutiny straightway began in 1857. Again, those portions

of the Bengal army which were posted in Bihar were locally recruited, were, in other words, composed of the native population of the province. Bihar like Oudh was a rich recruiting centre. More than one of its districts supplied sepoys to the Bengal army. Sahabad, for instance, supplied sepoys to the Dinapur Regiments. In fact, a large number of Rajput sepoys in Bihar was drawn from the district of Sahabad which appeared as 'notoriously turbulent' to the military authorities in India during the mutiny. The Bhojepuri-speaking people of Sahabad 'formed the fighting nation of Hindusthan... They furnished a rich mine of recruitment to the Hindusthani army and they took a prominent part in the mutiny of 1857'.[3] Again the Ramgarh Battalion which was but a local corps, composed of Hindusthani recruits garrisoned the various stations of Hazaribagh, Ranchi (Doranda), Purulia, Chaibassa and Sambalpur. This Ramgarh Battalion consisted of a full corps of infantry with cavalry and artillery attached.[4] The army in Bihar, thus obtained by local recruitment and forming a part of the mutinous Bengal army, had a natural sympathy with their brothers in arms in the North-west and rose into sympathetic revolt along with the civil population in many a part of the province.

The hostility of the army alone would not evidently have sufficed to produce almost a general conflagration in the province of Bihar. The disaffected army of Bihar was guided principally by the old but veteran Rajput hero, the zemindar of Jagadishpur, Kuwar Singh as also by his followers, namely his brothers, Amar Singh and Reethnarayan Singh, his nephews, Nishan Singh, Jai Krishna Singh, four other zemindars of Sahabad named Narhan Singh, Joohun Singh, Thakur Dayal Singh, Bisheswar Singh and by one or two Muslims of rank. Of these heroes of the Bihar mutiny it was Kuwar Singh 'who had the instincts of a real general' and gave an effective lead to the sepoys in arms. Kuwar Singh was a zemindar in Sahabad, owning several parganas in that district. He was a fine, good-looking old man on the wrong side of seventy at the commencement of the mutiny. Snave in manners, dignified in bearing, courteous in dealings and noble in appearance and conduct, Kumar Singh during the days before the mutiny was a staunch supporter of Government and a personal friend of Mr. William Tayler, the commissioner of Patna. In course of time he came to cool in his friendship for the English

through resentment for the treatment which he, in common with many other great landowners, had received from the Board of Revenue of Bengal.[5] Kumar Singh had in his early days become deeply involved in debt and his estates were heavily mortgaged. By 1854-55 the Government of Bengal just to save him from complete ruin undertook the management of his estates from the proceeds of which his creditors were to be gradually repaid through the Collector of Sahabad. Kumar Singh at the same time engaged to borrow money to the extent of twenty lakhs of rupees for the purpose of paying off some of his debts. Eventually Kumar failed to procure the loan and shortly before the outbreak of 1857 the Sadar Board of Revenue sent through the Commissioner of Patna, Mr. Tayler a peremptory message to Kumar Singh that unless he obtained the entire loan within a month (which was impossible) they would recommend the Government to withdraw all interference with his affairs and to abandon the management of his estates'.[6] This decision of the Board of Revenue was regarded by Kumar as 'the sequestration of his property' and by Tayler as 'unjust'. Tayler protested against the decision in a private letter to Mr. Halliday but in vain. In pursuance of the recommendation of the Board of Revenue Government abandoned the management of Kumar's estates. A final law-suit was also decided against him in the Sadar Court and he was left without resources. Kumar Singh then made a common cause with the mutineers. A considerable part of Bihar rose into mutiny under his leadership.[7] Before he finally declared himself for the mutineers, he was never in want of expressions of loyalty to Government or of partiality for European Society. It was accordingly difficult for Government to believe that he meditated mutiny notwithstanding strong rumours to that effect. The Commissioner of Patna deputed Syed Azimuddin Hussain, Deputy Collector of Arrah to intimate to Kumar the suspicions gaining ground against him and to request him to come over to Patna to make a clean breast of the whole thing. Syed Azimuddin Hussain called on Kumar and 'found him lying on bed, pleading extreme sickness, old age and infirmity as preventing obedience to the order of the commissioner to proceed to Patna. He was profuse in his expressions of loyalty and good will, maintained that it was difficult and dangerous for him to arrest mutineers and deserters, utterly denied having any intention of acting with disloyalty,

pleaded old age and infirmity in excuse of his not being personally active in the cause of order and pledged himself to repair to Patna as soon as his health would permit and the Brahmins could find a propitious day for the journey.[8] Kumar was not however, sincere in his professions of loyalty to Government. The unkind treatment of the Board of Revenue estranged his feelings and made him determined to espouse the cause of the mutineers. His subjects, the brave Rajputs, cast in their lot with him as their feudal chieftain, as he raised the standard of rebellion ostentatiously to give his valued leadership to the sepoys but really to feed fat the grudge he bore against Government for his personal losses and sufferings.

While the soil of Sahabad and of the neighbouring areas was thus prepared for revolutionary seeds by the machinations of Kumar Singh and his followers, Patna was fast assuming a mutinous garb at the instance of the muhammadans of the wahab Sect. The activities of wahabism in Patna went a great way in preparing Bihar for the mutinous outbreak. Muhammadanism was very strong in Patna and it was the most active kind of muhammadanism, as its followers belonged mostly to the wahabi sect. Wahabism, so called after its founder, Muhammad Wahab, began as a religious reform movement but ended as a political and economic agitation. So far as the political programme of the movement was concerned, it aimed at fighting against the Sikhs who oppressed the muhammadans of the Punjab as also at carrying on hostilities against the British in India. This anti-British and anti-Sikh programme of the wahabi movement in India was sought to be carried out by Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly and his followers who had their centre of activity at Patna. 'The fanatical devotion of the wahabis to their spiritual leaders, their abnegation of self and their mode of confidential communication with one another without written documents rendered it difficult to produce legal proof of their machinations, while their fidelity to one another was proof against temptations',[9] Naturally the wahabis with Patna as their centre fast wove the web of conspiracy against the British in India without the Government being aware and convinced of it suffieiently beforehand. At the commencement of the mutiny such wahab leaders of Patna as Peer Ali, Waris Ali, Ali Kureem, Luft Ali Khan and the three Maulavis, Muhammad Hussain, Ahmad Ullah and Waizul Huqe kept the city in readiness for mutiny at the slightest

provocation. Besides the influence of wahabism other factors were at work to make Patna a source of mutinous development in Bihar. Oudh, which was a powerful centre of opposition in the North-west was, for instance, seeking to inject Patna with, the virus of mutiny. 'The annexation of that country had sent to Patna a small Oudh colony with all kinds of embittered resentments against the British Government and there was an active correspondence continually going on between the mahomedans of the two great cities (Patna and Lucknow).[10] Again agents of conspiracy such as Khaja Hassan Ali Khan were at work in Patna to encourage the sepoy regiments to mutiny by instilling into their minds the fear of interference with their caste and religion by Government. It was a credulous time. So people really believed in whatever reports had been brought home to them. Reports had been in circulation to the effect that Government proposed to destroy the caste of the Hindus and to abolish muhammadanism 'by forbidding the initial ceremony through which admission is obtained to the number of the Faithful' as also to 'prohibit pudrah' and to compel the muhammadan females 'to go about unveiled".[11] Hindus and Muhammadans, high and low, compared these reports with the actual legislations of Government on inheritance, education, messing system in gaol and so on and felt convinced of the sinister designs of Government upon native caste and religion. It was also very popularly believed that 'the introduction of the messing system into the gaols Was to be followed by its introduction into the Army and that the sepoy was not much longer to be allowed to have uncontrolled dominion over his own cooking-pot." The situation became alarming and exciting in Patna. Not only the civil but also the military classes, including the Police and the Nujeebs there stood highly unsettled and ready to revolt.[12] Attempts were made to spread this alarm and suspicion in the neighbouring areas too. At Dinapur, for instance, the Dinapur regiments grew mutinous at the instance of Patna. The mutiny in Bihar was thus largely occasioned by the conspiratory developments in Patna. Again, the presence of the opiumgodown in Patna and of some twenty lakhs of rupees in the Collector's 'cutcherry' (court) there offered sufficient inducements to the city-rabble to rise for the sake of plundering the Treasure and looting the opiumgodown. Patna, thus disaffected, conspired with Sahabad, Dinapur and other areas to

produce a provincewise conflagration. In fact, what with the activities of wahabism in Patna, what with Kumar Singh's hostility towards Government, what with the local composition of the regiments in Bihar and last but not the least, what with the popular suspicion about the designs of Government on native caste and religion mutiny at last broke out in the province of Bihar, which occupied a very strategic position in the then British India from political and financial points of view.[13] The political importance of the location of Bihar lay in the fact that different parts of it had more or less easy access to the Ganges, and the Grand Trunk Road ran through a large part of the province, so that any untoward incidents endangering the safety of the province would have cut off the two great highways to the Upper Provinces. The strategic importance of Bihar from the financial point of view lay in its immense opium cultivation, the quantity of manufactured and partially manufactured opium in the godown at Patna and in the large and scattered treasuries, almost unprotected, so that in case of mutiny all such Government property in Bihar was likely to fall in the hands of mutineers. The military position in Bihar was no less significant on the eve of and during the mutitny. Militarily speaking Eihar stood defenceless in the sense that the province was garrisoned mainly by native regiments with an almost negligible percentage of European forces to exercise any effective control over them. Thus reviewed, the mutiny in Bihar formed an important chapter in the history of the Indian mutiny.

The mutiny in the north-western area had its early repercussion on Bihar. There, at Rohini, a village in the Deoghur sub-division in the District of the Sonthal Parganas three men of the 5th Irregular Cavalry aimed at raising an insurrection by killing the Commander of the Regiment, Major Macdonald, his Adjutant, Sir Norman Leslie and the Assistant Surgeon of the Regiment, Dr. Grant on the evening of 12th June 1857. Sir Leslie was cut down while the other two escaped with injuries. The mutineers were seized, tried and hanged to death in the presence of the entire regiment. A general rising came to be postponed. The attempted rising at Rohini took place a month after the mutiny at Meerut which had occurred on 10th May 1857. The fate of the three mutineers belonging to the 5th Irregular Cavalry at Rohini did by no means arrest the mutinous activities of the civil

and military classes in the various parts of Bihar. The situation in the west Bihar division with Patna as its Head Quarters had been alarming for a long time past. Long before the actual outbreak conspiracies had been systematically and extensively carried on in Patna and the neighbouring territories ; men were engaged and regularly paid ; subscriptions to finance mutinous preparations were raised and the collections distributed ; and communications maintained with the evident and obvious purpose of declaring a general crusade against the British in India and helping the restoration of the muhammadan sovereignty.[14] While all Patna wanted but an opportunity to rise, Mr. Tayler determined to take the initiative, to arrest the ringleaders and by paralysing their plans, to check the revolt in the bud.' He determined, in other words, to strike at the root of disaffection by arresting the three maulavis who were at the head of the Patna branch of the wahabis. Along with a few respectable citizens of Patna the maulavis were invited by Tayler to his house 'for consultation on the state of affairs'. At the end of the discussion the Maulavis were detained as hostages for the good behaviour of their followers and were handed over to the custody of Captain Rattray, while the rest were allowed to depart. This measure was followed by an order requiring the citizens to surrender their arms and to remain indoors after 9 p.m. These orders were quietly obeyed.[15]

Patna was not destined to remain tranquil. On 3rd July some 200 men with flags and music, armed with guns broke into the premises of the Roman Catholic Mission in the heart of the city, This was followed by the murder of Dr. R. Lyell, the principal Assistant to the Opium Agent of Bihar. Referring to the nature of this rising the Magistrate of Patna, Mr. J. M. Lowis wrote to Mr. A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal as follows:

"The fact of the rioters choosing the Catholic Chapel as the first place of attack, their destroying a considerable quantity of property none of which was taken away by them, the green flags carried and the cry of 'deen, deen' raised by them show that the rising was a religious one. When it is considered that in what a disturbed state many of the neighbouring districts are, it is wonderful that we have not before had similar demonstrations. If the object of these rioters

was to raze the city, the attempt was a miserable failure and the ease with which the disturbance was put down cannot but be a source of confidence and had it not been for the sad fact of Dr. Lyell's self sacrifice and the loss sustained by his death, this attempted rising might almost have been looked on as a subject for congratulation."[16] Consequent on the failure of the attempted rising the ringleaders were sought to be arrested and the city underwent a complete search. In the house of a book-seller, Peer Ali were found letters indicating the existence of a widespread conspiracy. He was arrested with many others. In fact thirty one ringleaders were apprehended. Amongst these were Peer Ali, Sheikh Ghuseeta, the jamadar of Lootf Ali Khan, the richest banker in the town and Looft Ali Khan himself. The three men were released by Mr. Samuells, the successor of Mr. Tayler, with a view to eliciting more information from them. Of the thirty one who were seized fourteen were hanged in company with a man named Waris Ali jemadar of Mr. Ali Kareem, 'a man of great wealth, large estates and corresponding influence'[17] who escaped falling into the hands of Tayler. When Waris Ali was taken to the gallows he cried aloud: If there is any one who professes to be a friend of the king of Delhi, aid me.'[18] The boldness of the steps taken by Tayler made Patna secure against mutiny for the time being. His policy of 'constant arrests' and "continued hangings' was warmly supported by the mercantile community of Calcutta whose commercial interests had every chance of being jeopardised in case of risings in the district of Tirhut for which Patna and Dinapur were the two most important stations.[19] The interests of the mercantile community of Calcutta were bound up with the indigoplantation in Tirhut.' Any revolt before the plant had been cut and even subsequently during the process of manufacture would have been fraught with ruin to many of them.' But much to their apprehension and headache along with Patna, Dinapur also had assumed a threatening attitude and had been marking time for a suitable opportunity to strike a blow. The station of Dinapur was at that time garrisoned by one European regiment, the 10th Foot, three regiments of native infantry, 7th, 8th and 40th and by one company of European and another Company of Native Artillery.[20] The Dinapur regiments had decided to mutiny; but there was a difference of opinion between them and the townspeople as to the day of occurrence, the sepoys choosing Sunday, while the

townsfolk preferring Friday, being the sacred day to the muhammadans.[21] The three native regiments, the 7th, 8th and 40th at last mutinied on Saturday the 25th July 1857.[22] The immediate cause for the mutiny was the order issued to them by General Lloyd for surrendering percussion caps. The mutineers escaped from Dinapur almost unharmed, crossed the Sone, and proceeded unopposed to Arrah on the other side of the river to muster strong under the banner of Kumar Singh, the well-known zemindar in Sahabad. 'It was Kumar Singh who procured boats for the passage of the mutineers across the Sone and it was he who had advised them to march without delay on Arrah, plunder the treasury, murder the residents and then crossing the Ganges at Buxar to make at once for Ghazeepur and Oudh. It was a bold plan and was very nearly succeeding. The sepoys mutinied on 25th; on 26th they crossed the Sone and were joined by Kumar Singh; on 27th they arrived at Arrah, let loose the jail-birds, plundered the treasury and attacked the residents.[23] On 30th July martial law was proclaimed throughout the Patna division.[24] On 31st was extended to the whole of the lower provinces of Bengal the operation of Act XVI of 1857 'which made temporary provisions for the trial and punishment of heinous offences in certain districts.'"[25] When on 4th August Tayler was removed from the commissionership and Mr. Samuells came to succeed him 200 British soldiers and 2 guns were sent to Patna for its protection. The military measures might have restored order in Patna but the territories around Patna knew no peace since Gorakhpur came to be overpowered by the mutineers. 'Bands of mutineers roamed at will over the country, destroyed public buildings and levied tribute. These raids, however, did not produce any general rising and were merely local disturbances.'

It would be unjust to hold that the district of Patna as a whole had been mutiny-minded and up in arms. The rural population of the district did not share in the mutinous spirit of the sepoys.[26] The total failure of the attempted rising on 3rd July 1857 signified the unwillingness or inability of the mass of the people of Patna to join the mutiny against Government. The Patna mutiny was mainly the work of wahab muslims. The district had been a centre of long-standing conspiracies which, however, remained, in the main,

confined to the muslim community. Referring to the hostile attitude of the muslims of Patna Mr. J. M. Lowis, the District Magistrate wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 28th June 1857: "The greater part of the muhamedan gentry here are more or less dissatisfied and would be ready to rise had they the opportunity but they lack the means. Had a man like Maulavi Ali Kareem backed with money and influence attempted to make a disturbance, he would have got plenty of followers."[27]

The mutineers two thousand strong from Dinapur made for the district of Sahabad which during the mutiny had become 'the arena of more than one sanguinary conflict.' The sepoys garrisoning Sahabad were locally recruited. Their mutiny accordingly aroused a natural and spontaneous sympathy among the members of the civil population. Consequently Sahabad became the centre of the peoples' war, waged against the British Government in India. As the Dinapur mutineers crossed the Sone, they were joined by Kumar Singh who along with his army of 7,000 to 10,000 brave Rajputs made a common cause with them against the Government. The whole band of mutineers marched on the little civil station, Arrah. The native population of Arrah was of a fierce and turbulent character. The warlike native population stood composed for the most part of the Rajput sepoys, and their relations. There were 300 or 400 prisoners in the jail. The European inhabitants of Arrah and its neighbourhood at the beginning of 1857 consisted of the usual officials, attached to a civil station with their assistants, as also of certain railway engineers and inspectors. There were also some Europeans in Government employ. In anticipation of a mutiny at Arrah the European women and children were sent early in June to Dinapur where the presence of 600 men of 'Her Majesty's' 10th Regiment was expected to ensure their safety. The rest of the European community took up their abode together in the house of the Judge, Mr. Littledale. Meanwhile disquieting and panicky rumours began to pour into Arrah from Patna and Dinapur most frequently. 'The cry of wolf, wolf from Patna and Dinapur having been so often heard without the appearance of danger began after a time to be almost disregarded. But the peril was the same as before. The crisis was in fact approaching and the wolf came at last. On 25th July the Dinapur regiment mutinied. The receipt of the news of this Dinapur mutiny at once induced the European

officials, and their party to take shelter on the night of Sunday, the 26th[28] in Mr. Boyle's (the Railway Engineer) two-storeyed building, originally meant for a billiard room. Regardless of the jeers and opposition of his friends, Mr. Boyle had kept this building in a state of defence and provided if with a large supply of food-stuff, a prudent step that saved him and the rest in the company from the hands of the sepoys. The party that took shelter in Mr. Boyle's bungalow consisted of 9 Europeans, 6 Eurasians, and 1 native (Deputy Collector of Arrah, Syed Azimuddin Hossain). There were also with them 50 sikh police whose. fidelity remained unshaken in the face of alluring inducements to them for abandoning the party to its fate. 'Had the Sikhs who were with the party been treacherous, they might have eaten the men up for breakfast.' On Monday, the 27th July about 8 a.m. the insurgent sepoys, the whole of the 7th, 8th and 40th Native Infantry arrived at the station and having first released the prisoners, rushed to the Collectorate where they were at once joined by the Nujeebs and looted the treasury amounting to Rupees 85,000,[29] Then they charged Mr. Boyle's bungalow from every side. ' Hiding behind the trees with which the compound was filled and occupying the out-houses and Mr. Boyle's residence which stood within 60 yards of the fortification, they kept up an incessant fire on the party during the whole day. They were joined by Kumar's men, and the sepoys repeatedly declared that they were acting under his express orders. Kumar was even seen on the parade a short time after the commencement of the siege and remained during the siege. Every endeavour was made by the rebels to induce the Sikhs to abandon the party. Heavy bribes were offered to them. But they treated every offer with derision, showing perfect obedience and discipline.[30] The besieged party determined to hold out as long as their provision lasted. The want of water was removed by digging a well, 18 feet by 4 in 12 hours.[31] 'The rebels tried to suffocate the garrison by setting fire on a heap of chillies outside the walls but a favourable wind arose and blew the stifling smoke away. The same wind carried off the disgusting stench arising from the rotting carcases of the horses belonging to the garrison which the rebels had killed and purposely piled up around the house.' A rescue party, four hundred and ten strong sent under the command of Capt. Dunbar in pursuit of the mutineers from Dinapur and to the relief of the besieged was

completely rendered *hors de combat* by the mutineers fighting under the cover of thick groves of trees. Relief at last came, when Major Vincent Eyre marched towards Arrah. He defeated Kumar's forces at Bibiganj on 3rd August 1857, reached Arrah and relieved the English garrison, besieged by the sepoys. The mutineers thereupon led by Kumar Singh disappeared in the jungle fastness at Jagadishpur on the way to Sassaram. At Jagadishpur Kumar Singh had stored a vast amount of grain, enough, it is said, to feed an army of 20,000 men for six months and had also established a manufactory of arms and ammunition'[32]. Mayor Eyre followed Kumar to Jagadishpur, captured the stronghold and forced him to leave the village of Jagadishpur which along with his house was left behind at the complete mercy of Eyre and his party. Kumar fled towards Sassaram. Eyre captured Jagadishpur on 12th August 1857. He blew up and destroyed Kumar's house and a new Hindu temple in its vicinity, set fire to the village in several parts and departed following the route of the mutineers towards Sassaram. Sir Vincent Eyre privately wrote to Mr. Tayler about the reaction of the destruction of the temple thus: 'It was curious to see how the Hindus in my camp seemed rather to delight than otherwise in the sacrilege of its destruction. I suppose the fact is that they care as a rule only for public fanes such as jagannath and are indifferent as to the fate of private ones, built like this one for self-glorification. 1 regarded the act at the time as necessary to injure Kumar Singh's prestige and think it had that effect'[33]. Being a European Eyre was far from feeling the pulse of the Hindus correctly. Nothing would wound a Hindu, it is idle to stress upon, so seriously as the injuries done to his religious feelings or to the religious institutions public or private. The feelings of the natives had definitely been outraged by Eyre's vandalism. If they did not take up arms in protest against Eyre's action subsequently and preferred remaining peaceful, it was because they felt helpless at the flight of the mutineers and of Kumar Singh too on the failure of the siege of Arrah. while, however, the siege of Arrah was on, the people of Arrah and Jagadishpur had demonstrated their manly character and warlike nature by fighting shoulder to shoulder with the sepoys against the British. Government. As a matter of fact the mutineers of Arrah and Sahabad were composed not merely of the military classes, city-rabble and the refuse of the jail but also of the warlike

population of Rajput villages and feudal retainers, headed by Kumar Singh of Jagadishpur.

The Dinapur Mutineers crossed the Sone to reach Arrah and from Arrah after the failure of the siege of the extemporised fortress of Mr. Boyle they proceeded towards Sassaram. Sassaram came to be attacked and plundered by 2000 of the mutineers from Arrah. The inhabitants of the town and of the neighbouring areas were however kept under control by Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad of Sassaram who had a considerable hold over the muslim community of the area. A petition expressive of loyalty to Government was submitted by him along with others on June 20, 1857 as follows:

"We hear that some native troops have rebelled against the Government. We never expected that these people who had hitherto experienced every kindness from Government would adopt such a course; and we feel assured that they will soon be visited with merited punishment and that the ryots will continue to live in comfort under the British Government as heretofore. The rebels have given out that Government intends to interfere with the religion of its subjects, but this is evidently a lie; for since the last 100 years during which Government had held the administration of this country it has never interfered with the religion of any class of people, though it has every power to do so. Nay, it issued notification annually, declaring that it had no intention to interfere with the religion of its subjects and thereby removing their apprehensions. It would fill up a volume, were we to describe the measures which the Government is adopting, at a considerable expense for the benefit of the people. We are prepared to perform voluntarily, whatever the Government may order and what we are capable to do.[34] The people of Sassaram did not evidently respond to the call of the mutineers, and remained peaceful.

Kumar meanwhile after the destruction of his stronghold at Jagadishpur gave up for the time being the idea of immediately recovering the lost ground in the land of his birth and sought instead to right against the English in other areas, Banda, Cawnpur and Lucknow for instance with the help of his heterogeneous army of sepoys and feudal retainers. He hung about Rhotas and its neighbourhood and could not be dislodged from his position without difficulty.[35] Marching into Oudh Kumar laid his head on a village

called Attrowlia, situated at a distance of 25 miles from Azamgarh. The army garrisoning Azamgarh was then under the command of Colonel Milman of the 37th Regiment. Milman in his attempt to oust Kumar from his position at Attrowlia had to accept defeat and to retreat to the encamping ground of Koilsa, not far from Azamgarh. Colonel Dames of the 37th Regiment made another attempt to defeat Kumar but was repulsed by him with a heavy loss. After two successive reverses at Azamgarh at the hands of the old Rajput Chief Lord Canning deputed Lord Mark Kerr to proceed to the rescue of Milman and Dames. Lord Kerr reached Azamgarh on 6th April and at once engaged in a tussle with the mutineers who in this battle of Azamgarh came to be defeated. Azamgarh, however, still remained invested by Kumar's followers who were thirteen thousand strong.[36] To relieve Azamgarh completely Sir Edward Lugard with 3 regiments of European infantry, 700 Sikh cavalry and 18 guns arrived at the opposite bank of the river Tons flowing past Azamgarh.[37] Kumar Singh matured a bold plan for himself avoiding any clash of arms with Lugard in Azamgarh—such a clash with so vast an army of Lugard meaning sure defeat—and escaping to Jagadishpur. 'Kumar knew very well that the soldiers who had failed to stop the small force of Lord Mark Kerr would have no chance against the more considerable brigade of Sir Edward Lugard. He therefore so arranged his forces that, whilst those upon whom he could most depend should defend the passage of the Tons as long as possible, the great bulk, traversing the town, should march with all speed to the Ganges, and crossing that river at or near Ghazipur, should endeavour to reach his native jungles at Jagadishpur, there to renew the War'.[38] Kumar acted as he had planned. He left Azamgarh on 13th April with the bulk of his army, and proceeded towards Ghazipur, leaving behind the flower of his army to oppose the crossing of the river by the forces of Lugard. A portion of his army, thus left behind, to defend the passage of the Tons had indeed a gallant fight with Lugard's forces when on 15th April 1858 the latter crossed the river by a bridge of boats. Defeated in the encounter, the mutineers fell back in perfect order and disappeared in the direction of the Ganges, while pursued by Brigadier Douglas under the orders of Sir Lugard. A proclamation was also issued at the same time by Government for the capture of Kumar Singh, the person handing him over to

Government custody being promised a reward of 25,000 rupees and a free pardon.[39]

On the way to Jagadishpur Kumar and his men meanwhile came to discontinue the retreat and to halt at the village of Naghai, about fourteen milss from Nathpur on the bank of the Tons where Lugard had fought with a party a Kumar's army. Here Douglas found Kumar Singh on the 17th April and proceeded to attack him. But Kumar Singh carefully eluded Douglas and his army, marched to Sikandarpur, crossed the Gogra and on 20th April 1858 reached Manohar in the Ghazipur District. The presence of Kumar Singh in the Ghazipur district excited a tremendous popular agitation there in favour of the mutineers. Discontented chiefs, landlords, and villagers came forward to swell the army of the retreating Chief, Kumar Singh. To them he owed much for his success in deceiving his pursuers as to the exact point at which he would cross the Ganges. The villagers voluntarily supplied him and his party with food and shelter which they were badly in need of. Kumar still could not escape the pursuing hands of Douglas who succeeded in searching him out at Monohar and overtaking him. In the engagement that followed at Manohar Kumar and his party came to be badly defeated. But the undaunted Rajput hero had not lost his aim. He had all the while kept in view his ultimate object of crossing the Ganges. He managed to collect a considnerable number of boats seven miles below Ballia at Seopur ghat wherefrom at night he crossed the Ganges, thus completely outwitting Colonel Cumberlege who with two regiments of Madras Cavalry was lying in wait for him at Ballia.

Kumar thus safely crossed the Ganges from Seopur ghat and found himself amidst the familiar surroundings of Jagadishpur where he was joined by several thousand armed villagers collected by his brother, Amar Singh.[40] Kumar reached Jagadishpur on 22nd April. On 23rd he had an encounter with Captain Le Grand who was completely defeated. The defeat of Le Grand required the presence in Sahabad of Brigadier Douglas to defeat and arrest Kumar Singh. But before his arrival the valiant Rajput no more able to bear the strains of war and the burden of anxieties came to die on 26th April 1858, leaving behind a name that would not perish in the dust.[41] As noted by Mr. Haliiday in his Minute on the mutinies in Lower

Provinces, his death was for some time carefully concealed by those around him, as his name was always a tower of strength to the rebels in his part of the country.[42] Kumar died leaving the legacy of prosecuting the crusade against the English to his brother Amar Singh and other surviving leaders of Sahabad. Ihe mutineers under Amar Singh and other leaders such as Harkishen Singh and Shewparshen Singh at Jagadishpur appeared to be about 1800 strong.[43] Amar came now to be confronted with a sea of trouble in view of the fact that Dougias got an accession of strength from Lugard in his campaign against Amar Singh and his followers. The valiant fighters of Jagadishpur and the neighbouring areas remained as lions as before and without the least betrayal of despondency or breakdown of morale persisted in presenting a bold and united front under the determined leadership of Amar Singh. The extensive jungles round Jagadishpur afforded them a safe refuge. The mutineers had even set up a temporary government at Jagadishpur in imitation of the British Government "in the appointment of Commissioners, Judges and Magistrates. They even copied the British revenue system to the letter and sold all the estates of the friends of Government for arrears of revenue with as much punctuality as the Collector himself could evince. Amar Singh hanged a rebel for the murder of a 'bania' which showed that the mutineers were compelled to conciliate the people by occasionally giving them justice, even when the offending party was one of themselves". But Amar Singh and his party were not destined to hold their own in the face of the overwhelming strength of the opponent. Lugard resigning his command from ill-health, Douglas suceeded him with an army, seven thousand strong under his control. Douglas determined to crush the enemy root and branch. He arranged his force into seven columns in such a way that 'four should move from Buxar driving the rebels before them towards Jagadishpur and with a fifth, which was in the neighbourhood of Sasaram should form a connected line from the Ganges to the Sone, and thus hem in the Western and Southern sides of the jungle, while two others should hem it in on the East. As the Ganges bounded it on the north, the rebels would be compassed in on every side and must surrender. On the 13th of October the columns began to move and every hour the ring within which the rebels were confined became smaller. On the 15th all the columns were within a short

distance of the jungle and Douglas issued orders to his commanders to close simultaneously on to it. But one column was delayed for some hours by a sudden inundation; and the rebels, promptly seizing the opportunity, rushed out of the jungle and struck eastwards with the object of crossing the Sone'.[44] The mutinesrs thus escaping the trap of Douglas came to be hotly chased by Douglas' forces who succeeded in killing a few hundreds of them in course of the chase. The main body, however, fled on. The villagers were very particular about not disclosing the route followed by the mutineers and thus not betraying them to Government. The mutineers escaped into the Kaimur hills,[45] where also they were not allowed to stay in peace for any length of time. Douglas pursued them even in this new asylum of theirs. Charged by his men the mutineers 'stole down the hills, entered the plains and tried to cross the Ganges. But the Captains of some Steamers which were patrolling the river opened fire upon them and sent them flying from the bank. Their spirit was now at last broken. They no longer attempted to preserve their organisation. The leaders fled for their lives. The rest skulled off by twos and threes to their homes and before the close of the year peace was restored to the land'.[46] The Jagadishpur jungle came to be cut down and cleared away by the British Army.

The Mutiny which spread from Dinapur to Sahabad had its repercussion on Gaya also. The officiating Magistrate of Gaya, Mr. Alonzo Money writing to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 28th July 1857 intimated thus: "The mutiny at Dinapur has thrown Gaya into a ferment. There is nothing to be apprehended from the townspeople. They are surrounded by a new and strong Police and have a wholesome dread of the 45 English and 100 sikhs. A town-row would be put down in ten minutes. The present causes of apprehension are two: the inroad of any large number of the Dinapur mutineers or the approach of the Monghyr and Deoghur 5th Irregulars, who are sure to the rise, I imagine, ... There is a treasury here.... The force guarding it is 45 English, 100 sikhs, and 150 Nujeebs. These last are scarcely to be trusted.... They are all Oudh men and the approach of their mutinous brethren would be a great trial of their staunchness".[47] It is evident, therefore, that the mutiny at Dinapur, the likelihood of the approach of Dinapur mutineers and of the Monghyr and Deoghur 5th Irregulars and the existence of a

treasury which was looked forward to as a target of attack for loot and plunder by certain sections of society fast prepared the way for mutinous outbreaks in Gaya. Besides, the presence in the city of a considerable number of bad characters, the existence in the heart of the place of a large jail filled with desperate ruffians under a guard of Nujeebs who were believed to be staunch and trustworthy only so long as the Dinapur sepoys remained quiet, further made the situation of Gaya tense.[48] The Gaya gaol contained some eight hundred persons, ready to commit any enormity. The general population also stood highly unsettled to hear of such rumours as the mixture of bone-dust or the blood of swine and oxen with the flour, sold in the market. The attitude of the zemindars was by no means friendly. There were plenty of them, ready to join the mutineers, if they once got the upper hand, though none of the zemindars, as the officiating District Magistrate of Gaya could study them, were likely to hazard life and property before that.[49] Factors such as these provoked mutinous feelings in Gaya. There was, however, no overt act of hostility before the abandonment of the station at the bidding of the commissioner, Mr. Tayler. Before an actual outbreak, however, Gaya was in a ferment. The arrival of 150 Sikhs in Gaya served to add to the uneasiness of the town to a considerable extent. The people of the town refused to sit or smoke with them, calling them christians. A carpenter was alleged to have reported to the sikhs that their food was mixed with pig's fat and ground bones of bullocks. The man was hanged by way of punishment. Evidently the mutiny at Gaya was preceded by a general feeling of disquiet and uneasiness which is the forerunner of all great convulsions, social and political. Things headed towards a crisis, when on 31st July the officiating District Magistrate, Mr. Money received an express letter from Mr. Tayler intimating to him the defeat of Dunbar's party in Arrah and ordering him to proceed at once with all force secretly and expeditiously to Patna, removing the treasure in the treasury, if possible, without, of course, endangering personal safety.[50]

In obedience to Mr. Tayler's orders Mr. Money and his party left Gaya at six that very evening leaving behind the treasure, as neither carts nor elephants were available for its transport. When at a distance of three miles from Gaya Mr. Money at a second thought

decided to return to Gaya and to remain at the station in the hope of maintaining order in the district and preserving the property in the station including the Government treasure to the amount of about 8 lacs of rupees and a gaol containing about 750 prisoners'.[51] So Mr. Money accompanied by Mr. C. Hollings, the sub-Deputy Opium Agent of Bihar returned to Gaya with the forces to find all quiet there. On 1st August news reached Gaya that mutineers from Dinapur had attacked and looted Arrah. On the 3rd August Mr. Money heard of the march of an overwhelming force of mutineers and insurgents towards Gaya. To stay or not to stay at Gaya in the face of the impending attack by the mutineers—that was now the question. A detachment of 80 men of Her Majesty's 64th Regiment under Captain Thompson had of course arrived at Gaya beforehand to relieve the officers there of the immediate personal peril in which they were placed. But with so small a party of Europeans as were present at Gaya it seemed doubtful in the opinion of Mr. Money as also of the civilians and the officers in command of the detachment whether they would be able to save the treasury, if pressed by so large a force as was on march towards Gaya. A council of war was held. It was resolved at all hazards to secure the treasure and to abandon the city. The entire party excepting Mr. Money left Gaya with the treasure. Having seen the party off Mr. Money returned to his house. As in other places, so in Gaya the removal of the treasure gave the signal to the disaffected to break out into open mutiny; and scarcely had the party left the station when the Nujeebs let loose the prisoners and joining with them pursued and attacked the party whom they overtook in the rocky pass on the Dobhi road. They were repulsed with some loss and the party proceeded unmolested down the Grand Trunk Road on the way to Calcutta via Raneeganj. Meanwhile Mr. Money managed to effect his escape and to join the party along the Grand Trunk Road. He deposited the treasure from Gaya in the General Treasury in Calcutta.

Gaya came to be reoccupied by Government on 16th August 1857. But Gaya was still open to further mutinous attacks. One such attack came from the side of Bhagalpur. The 5th Irregular Cavalry which mutinied there on the 14th August marched into Gaya evading the opposition of Mr. Rattray, broke open the jail, liberated the prisoners, murdered the munsiff of Bihar and rode off for Tikari

and the Sone. These events took place on the 8th and 9th September, 1857.[52] Gaya stood much disturbed in September. It is gathered from a correspondence[53] dated Gaya, 17th September 1857 between Mr. A Money and the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that tne forces against Government were quite strong. The mutineers were joined by some Bhojapore men, led by a leader, Judhar Singh by name. The disaffected of many villages on the Gaya side of the Sone also had shaken hands with them. A large portion of the district had passed out of the control of Government. The areas to the West, Parganas Arwal, Uncha, Goh Manowra and part of Seris were overrun by numbers of Bhojepore men as also by the disaffected elements from different villages. Many of the roads were in their possession and the zemindars were in consequence afraid of sending their revenue to the station. To the east the area near Nowada was most unsettled. Some of the rujwars and some zemindars collected a rabble of some hundreds, plundered one village and spread reports that the district was deserted by the authorities and that the irregulars were marching back. Evidently the forces of opposition in Gaya caused a serious headache to Mr. Money who was quite at a loss as to how to restore order in the district in the absence of an army, sufficient to cope with the situation. Towards the end of October 1857 a fresh alarm was caused by the advance of two companies of the 32nd Native Infantry which had mutinied at Bhagalpur. But the mutineers passed by Gaya without entering it. The activities of Judhar Singh caused no less consternation to the authorities of Gaya Making grants of lands to his followers and spreading a rumour that the British rule was at an end, Mr. Singh carried on a crusade against the Government and shook the British power round about Arwal. He carefully avoided counterattack by retreating to his strongly fortified house at Khamini.[54] The sweep of the mutineers over Gaya received a checkmate, when a number of mutineers came to be tried and executed, a body of European mounted Police was raised, an extra police force of 250 men was sent to Nawada and when in January 1856 Gaya itself was reinforced by 100 sailors and officers of the Indian Navy.[55] The month of June 1858 witnessed the plunder of villages near.Arwal by the Sahabad mutineers and the attack on Gaya jail and release of prisoners by two hundred mutineers. This was followed by a surprise attack on the Jahanabad thana, the burning

of Government buildings and the murder of the Daroga whose mangled body was hung up by heels on a tree opposite the thana. Judhar Singh seemed to carry everything before him till at last he came to be completely defeated by the army under Captain Rattray on 4th July 1858 at Kusma.[56] This victory rescued the whole district from the control of the mutineers.

The mutiny in the district of Gaya might have been crushed but the movement there was definitely widespread and in certain areas had assumed popular character under different leaders. Judhar Singh at the head of the Bhojepore men had enlisted the sympathy and support of numbers of villages on the Gaya side of the Sone. In the north-eastern portion of the district the leadership was supplied by Hyder Ali Khan who attempted to regain Rajgeer Pargana formerly belonging to his ancestors.[57] Mr. Curton, writer in the Collector's office at Gaya, was rewarded with two hundred rupees for capturing Hyder Ali Khan. He was hanged on charges of rebellion and plunder.[58] Wazeergunj in the neighbourhood of Gaya was widely affected and the movement there was broad based upon the support of villagers. There under the leadership of Kosheal Singh, a 'ticadar' of many villages, villagers were up in arms, and set up the flag of Kosheal Singh in defiance of the British Government. Referring to the cases of rebellion and plunder occurring in Wazeergunj the Assistant Magistrate of Bihar Mr. S. C. Bayley wrote to the Magistrate of Bihar on 4th January 1858 from Camp Saheea: "On my arrival here I found the village entirely deserted. The cattle and all moveable property have been taken away and little except the houses and grain remained. The state of the neighbouring villages is similar. ... I have as yet taken three separate cases of plunder and rebellion in Wazeergunj. There are in all fifteen villages implicated. Of these the lesser belong to the Mahal of Sukrodap of which Ranee of Tikaree is the 'malik' (owner). The other villages are owned by various people. It is clear that it has not been an assemblage of isolated 'badmashes' from these villages but there was a distinct organised attack made by all the villages in union. There were some 2000 men seen altogether. They surrounded the town of Wazeergunj in the night. These looted every house and shop in the place. The leaders, Khosheal Singh and Jumunoa Singh of Khoowra declared that the English 'raj' had gone, that they were now the rajas and made every 'dukandar' (shop-

keeper) and 'Bunnea' of the place sign a 'sarkhatt' to that effect agreeing not to pay them in future. They then set up a standard of their own in the town which was removed only when the 5th Irregulars passed through. They then inaugurated their reign by seizing everything they could lay their hands on and carrying them on bullocks which they plundered at that time. Of all the villages engaged in plunder Khoowra was the worst. That was the place whence Khoosheal Singh proclaimed his reign and whence he summoned his coadjutors of the neighbouring villages to establish it. It was from Khoowra that most of the loot was carried. I therefore beg to submit that Khoowra should be burnt. Men worthy of punishment are 'ticadars', 'Jet Raiyots' and 'Chowrey class'.[59]

Evidently the sepoy mutineers at Gaya were not divorced from peoples' sympathy and support. Still the Gaya mutiny had the same fate as the mutiny elsewhere in India. The British forces overpowered the mutineers in the long run. The defeat of the mutiny at Gaya is to be ascribed to the want of a strong leadership capable of organising the scattered mutinous forces into an efficient army and keeping alive the fighting spirit till the end.

As at Gaya, so at Muzaffarpur, the chief station of Tirhut, the situation was very tense on the eve of the mutiny of the regiments at Dinapur. Muzaffarpur stood undefended and was thus liable to be a scene of mutinous excesses in the event of an outbreak at Dinapur. It transpires from certain correspondences[60] of H. Richardson, Magistrate of Muzaffarpur with the Secretary to the Government of Bengal that considerable panic prevailed at Muzaffarpur as early as June 1857 among the residents of the station, specially among the 'banias' of the Bazar and the Indigo-planters. The 'banias' were panic-stricken apprehending that they might be compelled to supply 'rasad' at a low price, while the Indigo-planters stood highly unsettled for fear of their lives and 'resolved that in case of necessity all European inhabitants should meet in one particular house in the station ' The assembling of the planters of the district in the station in fact occasioned a great consternation among the people of some parts of the district who thought that some danger was imminent; but as the planters came to disperse, confidence came to be restored to them. About the attitude of the zemindars Mr. Richardson wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 29th June 1857

thus: 'The zemindars of the district seem generally well-wishers of Government—no doubt a few have talked seditiously. I have one at present on trial but by far the larger portion are well affected.[61] When on 25th July 1857 the Dinapur regiments broke into mutiny Mr. Tayler issued directions on 31st July 1857 to the officials at Muzaffarpur, as also at Gaya, as already noticed, to leave the stations and to retire upon the central position of Patna. The European officials and other European residents who hailed Tayler's order as 'an order which saved them from death and perhaps from something worse than death' lost no time in moving on to Patna leaving public money behind them. On the abandonment of the station a small detachment of the 12th Irregulars revolted. The mutineers robbed the Monghyr mail, plundered the judge's and Collector's houses, attacked the treasury and Government offices and finally decamped towards the district of Saran. The then Collector, Mr. Lautour who had left Muzaffarpur for Patna at the orders of Mr. Taylor returned soon of his own accord to Muzaffarpur to find everything quiet there.[62] The mutiny of the Sepoys in Muzaffarpur and for the matter of that in Tirhut could not proceed to any satisfactory length. This was due to the unfriendly attitude of the wealthy and influential Hindu traders and bankers of the district who had to depend upon Government for the protection of their property against the Sepoys in arms and largely to the unsympathetic attitude of the Tirhut zemindars, whose interests were bound up with those of Government. Such influential zemindars as Raghunandan, Bishnu Prosad Narayan Singh, Keerut Singh, Kooldeep were reported by the Magistrate of Tirhut to have rendered services to Government during the mutiny. Bishnu Prasad Narayan Singh, for instance, stood by Government and helped it with so large a contribution as Rs, 35,000/-.[63]

Though zemindars, traders and bankers of Tirhut went against the mutineers of the district, it would be far from truth to hold that the mutinous sepoys stood entirely divorced from popular support. There were many among the mutineers who belonged to civil ranks of different parganas of the district. The fate of the mutiny in Tirhut was finally the same as at Gaya and elsewhere in India. The mutineers came to be defeated and those who Were captured were punished. Many disguised as pilgrims found their way into Nepal.

The mutiny in Bihar, as in the North Western area was not a localised affair. As in Dinapur, Arrah, Gaya and Tirhut, so in Champaran the mutiny broke out. Major Holmes was at this time in command of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Segowlee in Champaran. Banking upon the loyalty of this single native regiment he had kept the whole area between Patna and Gorakhpur under Martial Law. On the evening of 23rd July 1857 this regiment, so much trusted by him, rose into mutiny. It is learnt from the letter dated 25th July 1857 from Maharaja Rajendra Krishna Singh, Bahadur of Bettiah to Mr. C. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of India that 'the sowars at Segowlee having on 23rd instant (July) at about 8 O'clock in the night, mutinied, murdered Major Holmes, his wife, the surgeon and his wife and children and then bolted with the treasure in their keeping towards Chaprah or Allegunge Sewan.[64] This mutiny of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Segowlee gave the signal for a serious disturbance in the district. At this crisis the joint Magistrate, Mr. Raikas left Matihari, capital of Champaran for a certain place (Cheragia indigo factory) of safety near Motihari and transacted business in his retreat.[65] But the Magistrate soon returned to Matihari to resume the civil administration of the district. The Maharaja of Bettiah acted the part of a loyal subject of the British Government in endeavouring to keep the district in order and in taking measures to pacify the inhabitants and preserve the property of the state from injury.[66] Even before the actual outbreak of the mutiny he had written to Mr. Tayler a letter expressive of his loyalty and promise to remain constant in his devotion to Government. "... I observe," he wrote in that letter dated 9th June 1857, "that some evil-minded men have studiously given out unfavourable reports that Government have a design to convert their subjects to Christianity which has produced a panic among the people who have actually begun to revolt. I deny their assertions and most truthfully declare that Government have no such designs. The stories are mere inventions of bad men to serve their ends. Now nearly a hundred years the British are the paramount rulers of India; they have in no instance interfered with the religion of our forefathers; on the contrary, they have allowed us a free exercise of our religious functions and they have further enacted a law that whoever scoffs at one's religion or molests one in his religious duties should be severely punished." Continuing further the

maharaja wrote in this connection, "I have proclaimed to my people through my several tessildars the purport of the first paragraph of this letter and have assured them that they must soften their anxiety and fears, as Government has already taken prompt steps to punish the disturbers of the public peace by strong hands and the disturbance created by the insurgents will soon be settled."[67] The Maharaja was true to his words. He stood by Government and worked for peace and order, when mutiny actually broke out, as noticed above. Though the Maharaja and his people remained attached to Government, the situation tended to be difficult of control due to the incursions of the leader of the Oudh mutineers, Muhammad Husain who had been active also in Muzaffarpur and Chapra. The arrival in August of two Gurkha regiments from Nepal came. however, to arrest the mutiny. "Towards the end of December Jaung Bahadur with his Nepalese army arrived at Bettiah and on the 26th a fight took place at Sahibganj, 5 miles from Pipra between the two regiments sent by Jang Bahadur and a party of rebels who were completely defeated. On the same day a successful action was fought by Col. Rowcroft at Sohanpur on the Gorakhpur frontier and these successes had the effect of clearing the districts north of the Ganges".[68]

The mutiny of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Segowlee on 26th July 1857 caused a great consternation in Saran which constituted one district with Champaran at that time.[69] The fears of an outbreak in Saran were not unnatural in consideration of the fact that as many as 10,000 sepoys in the employ of Government were natives of the district. The property to the value of a crore of rupees belonging to the Raja of Hathwa was another temptation to the mutinous Sepoys to rush into Saran for loot and plunder.[70] On the news of the Segowlee outbreak the European residents in anticipation of a sympathetic rising in Saran left the district Head Quarters, Chapra for Dinapur on 28th July. "But they returned on I2th August to find everything in a tranquil and orderly state, with the jail and treasury untouched and the detachment of Najibs still loyal, order having been preserved during their absence by a Muhamedan gentleman named Kazi Ramzan Ali."[71] But the tranquillity was subsequently disturbed for some time by the incursions of the leader of the Oudh mutineers, Muhammad Husain who declared himself "Chakladar" of Gorakhpur under the King of Oudh, as also by the plundering of two factories,

one near Darauli belonging to a native Babu Ram and the other at Gangua belonging to Mr. Macleod, by a party of 500 mutineers from Gorakhpur entering Saran.[72] But this was merely a temporary phase of disturbance which came soon to be arrested. "The Sonpur fair was held as usual and passed off quietly" The posting of a Gurkha regiment together with Captain Sotheby's Naval Brigade at Siwan (the Head Quarters of the Sub-Division of the same name), the assistance rendered by Jang Bahadur and his Nepalese army, the defeat of a mutinous force 6000 or 7000 strong by Col. Rowcroft on 26th December 1857 at Sohanpur on the Gorakhpur frontiers and last but not the least the loyalty of Kazi Ramzan Ali and of the Raja of Hathwa ruined the cause of the mutineers in Saran, kept the mutiny confined to the military class and brought the ultimate victory to Government. The Raja of Hathwa (in Siwan sub-division) presented an 'urgee' to the commissioner of Patna, Mr. Tayler on 20th June 1857 for submission to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in token of his loyalty to Government.[73] The Raja of Hathwa true to his words came forward with offers of assistance, placed men and elephants at the disposal of Government and gave aid and support to Government during the whole progress of the rebellion.[74]

II

THE flood of mutiny which inundated the Patna division also dashed against the Bhagalpur division. The Bhagalpur division was not so widely affected as the Patna division; nonetheless it had to weather a crisis during the period of the mutiny. As the mutiny of Meerut had given the signal for rising in many districts in the North-west, so the revolt of the three regiments at Dinapur served to provoke mutiny not only in the Patna division but also in the Bhagalpur division. On the eve of the mutiny the Bhagalpur division was garrisoned by the troops of the 5th Irregular Cavalry with their Head Quarters at Bhagalpur and by the detachments of the 32nd and 63rd Native Infantry.[75] Soon after the mutiny at Dinapur the 5th Irregular Cavalry mutinied on the 14th of August at midnight. "They moved off to Rohini (in the Sonthal Parganas) and thence, having extorted Rs. 12,000/- from the inhabitants, to Bausi. The 32nd Native Infantry refused to aid them and by their fidelity saved the stations of Bausi

and Deoghar."[76] The mutinous regiment got no response from the Zemindars also who on the contrary helped the Government in maintaining order in the district. The commissioner of the division, Mr. Yule had also taken prompt steps to ensure peace in the district. He stopped a detachment of 150 men of the Fifth Fusiliers who happened to be passing up the Ganges and posted 100 of them at Bhagalpur and sent 50 to Monghyr.[77] The Panic, caused, was allayed. Bhagalpur was left practically untouched by the mutiny.

Monghyr like Bhagalpur remained practically immune from any mutinous rising. This was due principally to the prompt steps taken by Mr. Yule, as stated above. The distribution of 150 men of the Fifth Fusiliers in Bhagalpur and Monghyr made the important highway of the Ganges secure against any attack of the mutineers. By the end of 1857 the condition of Monghyr eventually permitted the withdrawal of the 50 men therefore. There was a certain amount of uneasiness prevailing in the district because of the scarcity of food but it remained otherwise quiet. Referring to this state of things in Monghyr during the days of the mutiny Mr. W. Tucker, the magistrate of the district wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 25th July 1857 thus: '... There has been no disturbance in this district. In consequence of the extraordinary high price of grain, dacoities, burglaries, and thefts appear to be on the increase. A great number of the offenders confess and state that they committed the offence in consequence of hunger. This ... is likely to increase, as the rain crop has failed, in consequence of the dry heat in June, and the excessive and continual rain in July, I am not aware of any unusual excitement or bad feeling in the district....'[78]

The district of Purnea lying midway between Bhagalpur and Jalpaiguri had been unlike Monghyr or Bhagalpur affected by a mutinous rising. The mutiny of the 73rd Regiment of Native infantry and of a detachment of the 11th Irregular Cavalry, stationed at Jalpaiguri, spread alarm in Purnea, which eventually came to be a scene of some disturbance, when the mutinous regiments of Jalpaiguri made for Purnea to encounter an opposition of Mr. Yule and his army there. Mr. Yule saved Purnea by his timely arrival there with the detachment of 50 men of the 5th Fusiliers, withdrawn from Bhagalpur and by driving the mutineers into Nepal. Eventually they made their way into Oudh.[79]

The lately tranquillised Sonthal Parganas were not also free from unrest and excitement at the commencement of the mutiny. In July 1855 the Sonthals had risen in arms in protest against the extension in their district of the Railway system, they distrusted, against the extortion of 'mahajans', the corruption of the 'amlas' and the oppression of the Police. Some offence was also alleged to have been offered to one of their women,[80] It was duc to the negligence of the 'Sihibs' (i.e., the Europeans), it was held by the Sonthals, that they were subjected to such unjust treatment at the hands of tax-gatherers, money lenders and Bengalee zemindars. 'Fanaticism mixed itself up with these feelings; one of their leaders announced to a great concourse that he had seen the Godhead descend in the shape of a cartwheel ; after which two pieces of paper had fallen on his head, ordering the extermination of the offending classes."[81] The insurrection that began came to be quelled by General Lloyd by the end of 1855. Closely following to the heels of the Sonthal insurrection came the sepoy mutiny casting its shadow on the Sonthal Parganas. But the Sonthals of the Sonthal Parganas did not appear to have been aggressive at this stage. In a letter to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on the affairs of Sonthal Parganas on 21st June 1857 the officiating Deputy Commissioner, Sonthal Parganas wrote thus: '...as far as the Sonthals are concerned there are not in my opinion any grounds for apprehensions.... I am constantly conversing with the Sonthals themselves and I do not believe that they have any other wish than a good season for their crops. In what state the sonthals about Runeegunj and towards Pachete and Hazaribagh are, I cannot state, as I know nothing of them but at present I do not see any cause to fear a disturbance either in the Damunikoh (Dumka) or any other portion of the Sonthal Parganas....'[82] But it was not all quiet on the Sonthal Pargana front. The activities of the 5th Irregular Cavalry caused a great disturbance in the district. Reporting[83] on the intriguing activities of the 5th Irregular Cavalry the Commissioner of the Sonthal Parganas wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 16th July 1857 that about half past eight on the night of the 12th ultimo while Major Macdonald, Sir Norman Leslie and Dr. Grant of the 5th Irregular Cavalry, stationed at Rohini, in the Sonthal Parganas were sitting together in front of the mess bungalow, a sudden rush was made at them by three men with naked swords.

Sir Leslie was disabled at the first blow and he died very shortly. Major Macdonald and Dr. Grant escaped with serious wounds on their person. These three men were definitely ascertained to have belonged to the 5th Irregular Cavalry, were caught hold of and sentenced to be hanged. The incident was indicative of an organised conspiracy in the regiment. There was a temporary full which came to be broken when the 5th Irregular Cavalry mutinied at Bhagalpur in August 1857. The mutineers marched on to Rohini where they were joined by their comrades of the regiment and after having extorted 12,000 rupees from the rich inhabitants of the place marched in a body towards Deoghur and Bausi, the Head Quarters of the 32nd Native Infantry. From both of these places the mutineers were kept off by the loyalty of the 32nd Native Infantry. This Regiment rejecting all advances and promises of increased pay and promotion in the service of the King of Delhi stood firm and was much appreciated by Government.[84] Moreover the military authorities of Bausi as also of Deoghar could learn of the approach of the mutineers beforehand and kept themselves in readiness to meet them. The inevitable happened. The mutiny of the 5th Irregulars came to be arrested. 'The Deoghar mutineers after advancing as far as Wazeerganj in the direction of Gaya suddenly turned to the north, entered Thannah Atta Serai in the district of Patna and thence moved rapidly to the west, crossed the Trunk Road to the south of Jahanabad and the Sone at Mahatullupore near Urwul. Thence they proceeded by the neighbourhood of Puroo, by Rupsagar and Dhunsolee, towards the Karummassa.[85] Their destination was known to have been Rewah. This body of mutineers was led across the country by Goodhar Sing who had formerly acted as a guide to the 5th Irregular Cavalry in their passage through Behar.[86] As in other cases the rising of the Deoghar mutineers, away from their station, came to be finally crushed. A cavalry-troop of the 5th Irregulars was posted at Dumka but the precautionary measures of Mr. Shyamalananda Mookerji sub-assistant Commissioner at Nya Doomka saved the area from any mutinous outbreak. Having good reasons to suspect the fidelity of the troopers of the 5th Irregular Cavalry at that station the officer sent the treasure amounting to Rs. 4,000/- and the few prisoners in the jail to Suri. The judgment, coolness and discretion exhibited by him in somewhat trying circumstances were much appreciated by

Government.[87] The Sonthal Parganas came to be freed from mutineers in course of time. The departure of the 5th Irregular Cavalry from the Sonthal Parganas left the district all quiet and peaceful. In consideration of the honesty, courage and fidelity of the sonthals Government made a plan of raising a corps for police work in their own district from that tribe. Their hardihood, activity, capability of withstanding the influence of climate, simplicity of habits and other qualities rendered them, in the opinion of Government, excellent materials for such an experiment. But their caprices and impatience of control made it necessary in the considered judgment of Government to commence the experiment with caution and to conduct it through the agency of an officer known to, and confided in by the sonthals. Their pay was decided to be not less than five rupees a month and no deductions were to be made from it on any account. They were to be enlisted for short periods in the beginning and were to be armed with a light rifle and their own battle axe. It was proposed at first to raise a small force of about three companies from among the sonthals of the 'Damuni Koh' (Dumka) and to ascertain which of the same tribe in the Chota Nagpur Agency promised to be most eligible for enlistment.'[88] Two hundred sonthals[89] were initially enlisted for military service, as authorised and sanctioned by the Government of India.

The hilly division of Chota Nagpur was widely stricken with mutiny. In his statement on "The mutinies as they affected the lower provinces under the Government of Bengal, 1858'. Mr. Frederick Halliday recorded that 'during the whole period of the outbreak the division of Chota Nagpur had been a source of anxiety and uneasiness and from time to time of embarrassment and difficulty and even of actual danger. In fact no division in the whole of Bengal had been subject to such continued disturbance as this Province.'[90] The division contained several petty states which were once independent. the rulers of these states 'were glad to try to profit from the existing turmoil. As a consequence the rebellion throughout this division was almost general.'[91]

The military position of the Chota Nagpur division at the commencement of the mutiny was such as to invite troubles at an early opportunity. Various stations of Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Purulia, Chaibassa and Sambalpur, as already stated, were occupied by

detachments of the Ramghar battalion which was formed of native recruitment, and was composed of all the three branches of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery men. Its loyalty was supposed to depend on the fidelity of the regiments at Dinapur. Besides the detachments of the Ramgarh battalion, detachments of the 7th and 8th Native Infantry were stationed at Ranchi and Hazaribagh respectively. Though Ranchi came to be cleared of the detachment of the 7th Native Infantry even before any outbreak occurred, the artillery portion of the Ramghar battalion there, distrusted even by the Commanding Officer, continued to be a source of trouble and anxiety to Government.[92] Hazaribagh was a more dangerous zone for Government than Ranchi. Garrisoned by detachments of the Ramgarh Battalion and of the 8th Native Infantry Hazaribagh contained a treasury with upwards of a lakh of rupees in it and two jails containing 900 prisoners.[93] Troubles began at Hazaribagh in the wake of the mutiny at Dinapur. The two companies of the 8th N.I. on duty at Hazaribagh knew nothing of the Dinapur mutiny until it was communicated to them by Captain Drew through the Native officers.[94] The intelligence of the occurrence of a mutiny at Dinapur produced a sympathetic mutinous fever among the two detachments of the 8th N.I. at the station. They broke into revolt apparently at about 1 P.M. of 30th July 1857 shortly after which the station was abandoned by all the officers in it.[95] The mutineers at once busied themselves with works of destruction. They knocked off the irons of the prisoners and incited them to escape. They burnt some bungalows and plundered the treasury. The activities of the mutineers disturbed the minds of the people much. The mutineers and convicts after plundering Hazaribagh proceeded in the direction of Ranchi by the Pittoria (Pithauria) Road.[96] They thus avoided meeting Lt. Graham who was sent from Ranchi with a detachment of the Ramgarh Light Infantry with two guns to disarm the two Companies of the 8th N.I. at Hazaribagh. The Hazaribagh mutineers turned off from the Pittoria ghat, finding it well guarded by the Pergunnait, Jugut Pall Singh who had been directed to watch it carefully and proceeded to another ghat to the West. It might be they intended to proceed to Sambalpur under the guidance of 'Sorunda Suhoe' (Surendra Saha?), who was sentenced to imprisonment for life for rebellion in Sambalpur.[97] The detachment of the Ramgarh battalion under the command of Lt. Graham

proceeding to Hazaribagh also mutinied on the road on hearing of the rising of the detachments of the 8th N.I. and joined the latter, then on their way to Ranchi, at Burmu. The combined forces then marched towards Ranchi "with the avowed hostile intentions against the British Officers there".[98] Captain Dalton meanwhile reoccupied Hazaribagh and busied himself with restoring normalcy there. After the stay of a month or so in Ranchi the mutineers moved westward to meet Kumar Singh near Rohtasgarh. Though opposed by loyal zemindars they marched through Chandwa and Balumath in Palamau to the town of Chatra. At Chatra the mutineers suffered a serious defeat at the hands of a small force of 320 men and had to escape in the direction of Sherghati.[99]

A significant episode of the mutiny at Hazaribagh was a rising of the Sonthals. Unlike the Sonthals of the Sonthal Parganas those of Hazaribagh availed themselves of the mutiny of the Sepoys at the station to rise against the oppressive money-lenders and incidentally against the Government too. Joined by the local bad characters, they took to plundering such areas as Kuju on the Ramgarh road and Jharpo near Bagodar. At Mandu they were instigated by three local landholders to commit murder and to plunder the village.

It is learnt from a letter dated 16-9-1857 from the officiating Commissioner of Chota Nagpur to the address of the Secretary, Government of Bengal that early in September 1857 'a large body of Sonthals had after plundering several villagers surrounded the house of a relative of Ramgarh Raja at Jharpo, 14 miles from Hazaribagh on the road to Bagodar. Lt. Graham was sent out with a party of his sowar and 16 sikhs. He found the plunderers about 200 or 300 encamped on a rising ground near Jharpo, cooking. They immediately discharged a flight of arrows at Lt. Graham's party and wounded some of his men. The sikhs and Cavalry then charged and dispersed them, killing some ten or eleven and wounding more and taking three prisoners and restoring to the villagers a quantity of grain etc. that had been plundered. Lt. Graham then returned to Hazaribagh. The prisoners freely confessed that under the orders of Roopoo Manji they had been for some time engaged in plundering.[100] The Sonthals were not properly organised and Were accordingly easily defeated into submission. There was besides another class of people, the dispossessed 'Bhuiya tikaits' (Chiefs) who also rose into mutiny in

the wake of the Sepoy rising for recovering their lands from the purchasers, then occupying them."[101] This rising also was early controlled.

It does not appear that the Sonthals or the 'Bhuiya tikaits' (Chiefs) had collaborated with the Sepoys in arms. The non-military classes in Hazaribagh excepting the sonthals, the dispossed Bhuiya tikaits and a very small number of local Zemindars like those of Mandu were generally speaking favourably disposed towards Government during the mutiny. Such Warlike races in and around Hazaribagh as 'Chowars', 'Coormies' (Kurmis), 'Coles' (Kols) and others joined the Indian army' and fought for Government. These races possessed the peculiar virtue of never siding with the enemy of those to whom they once swore allegiance. When the Hazaribagh mutiny was in progress and the mutineers came into the temporary possession of the Grand Trunk Road and the Jhonklumdie Road passing through the district a suggestion was made to Government by the then Additional Principal Sudder Ameen of the 24 Parganas, Rai Taraknath Sen for raising some forces from among the warlike races of Chotanagpur.[102] In fact shortly after the suppression of the mutiny at Hazaribagh it was decided to raise a levy of Kols and Sonthals for Military police and a body of 500 of the more ardent aboriginals was enlisted for this work.[103] Besides this the Government had in its service from Katulpore, a thana in West Burdwan, to Hazaribagh nearly 10,000 fighting men, recruited from amongst the Ghatwals, Taleedars, Jagheedars and others who were paid by land both by Government and the Zemindars for rendering services to the state, whenever required.[104] The Zemindars were on the whole loyal. "I learn", wrote Capt. Dalton in his letter from Hazaribagh on 6th August 1857 to the Secretary, Government of Bengal "that the mutineers have not as yet been successful in inducing any influential persons of the district to join them. They invited Fhakoor Bisnath Sirkar of Barkurghur to be their leader but he refused; they next offered the post to Lall Oopundernath Sirkar, the nephew and heir presumptive of the Maharaja of Chota Nagpur, but he declined to act, referring them to his uncle. Of all the landholders of Chotanagpur these two were the most likely to have joined them and it is said the mutineers are much discouraged at their invitations to them having been rejected and much puzzled and dividied in opinion as to their

future plans."[105] It is however gathered from other sources[106] that "Thakur Bishnath Sahi of Barkagarh who had long been regarded as disaffected openly joined the mutineers and was reported to sit daily in one of the Cantonment .bungalows, administering justice. He also assisted the mutineers by cutting several breaches in the road over Ramgarh ghat with the obvious intention of making it difficult for troops advancing against Doranda,... Thakur Bisnath Sahi was hanged in April 1858." It might have been that Thakur Bisnath's mutinous turn was a subsequent development.

Like Hazaribagh Ranchi had been a centre of disturbance during the mutiny. At the commencement of the mutiny Ranchi was the Head Quarters of the Ramgarh Battalion which consisted of a full infantry battalion, with Cavalry and Artillery attached. The battalion was composed of recruits from Chotanagpur, Bihar, and other parts of India. Two companies of the Ramgarh Infantry with thirty horsemen and two guns had been sent under Lt. Graham to disarm the mutinous Sepoys at Hazaribagh. But on the way to Hazaribagh they themselves rose in arms on receipt of the news of the actual mutiny of the Hazaribagh Sepoys, took possession of the guns, ammunition and carriage including four elephants, Graham's private property and in defiance of the lieutenant's orders marched back to Ranchi along with the Hazaribagh troops whom they met at Burmu, twenty miles north of Ranchi. The Cavalry, however, remained loyal and proceeded with Lt. Graham to Hazaribagh. Capt. Dalton and a few other European Officers who were then at Ranchi left for Hazaribagh, when they felt unsafe to continue staying in Ranchi. While Dalton reoccupied Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Doranda[107] temporarily passed under the control of the mutineers. In restoring order in Hazaribagh Capt. Dalton obtained valued assistance from the Raja of Ramgarh. The Raja placed at his disposal some 40 or 50 armed men. 'Of the Ramgarh Raja's loyalty there could be no question.'[108] Meanwhile the mutineers after a short stay in Ranchi for a month or so left the station and, as already stated, proceeded towards Rohtasgarh to meet Kumar Singh there. Finally they marched through Chandwa and Balumath in Palamau to the town of Chatra.[109] Before leaving Ranchi they behaved in the most brutal manner to the townspeople, plundering, torturing and violating their women.... They burnt all the officers' bungalows, the lines etc. A bungalow belonging

to Dr. Brougham was the only one left standing. The Principal assistant's cutcherry (court) and jail were also burnt by the Sepoys, and the records destroyed. They left 50 sick in hospital and this building was in consequence left standing.'[110] The mutineers also beheaded an old native doctor, Boodoo, attached to the jail. The departure of the mutineers paved the way for a return to normalcy at Ranchi. Order was soon restored at that station to which Dalton returned on 23rd September 1857.

The mutineers received very little support from the civil population in Ranchi. Most of the leading Zemindars stood by the Government. Among the few Zemindars who stood against Government mention may be made of Ganpat Rai of Bhaunro, an ex-Dewan of the Maharaja of Chotanagpur. He was formally installed by the mutineers as their Commander-in-Chief.[111]

Closely connected with the mutiny at Hazaribagh and Ranchi was the mutiny at Palamau through which the mutineers of the former stations passed on their way to join Amar Singh. The mutiny at Palamau assumed a serious character. Nilambar and Pitambar, the two sons of the deceased Chief of the tribe inhabiting the territority between the high lands of Sirguja and the low country of Palamau were given the estates of their father in Jagir with a nominal quit rent. The mutiny at Hazaribagh and. Ranchi encouraged them to strike a blow for complete independence. In alliance with the chero Zemindars they openly declared themselves against Government and against the loyal Rajput Jaigirdars, Thakurai Raghubar Dayal Singh and Thakurai Kishun Dayal Singh, the former's Cousin. Late in October, 1857 a force of about 500 Bhogtas along with others of Kharwar class and a body of Cheros under the leadership of Nilambar and Pitambar made an attack on Chainpur, Shabpur and Lesliganj.[112] Towards the end of October disturbances of a serious nature were reported by the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur to have broken out in Palamau. A large number of cheros and Kharwars plundered the towns of Shahpur and Chainpur and the body 500 Bhogtas pillaged Lesliganj and other villages and committed some murders. At the attack on Chainpur the insurgents who were about 2,000 strong were dispersed by Thakur Raghubar Dayal Singh against whom their movement was stated to have been mainly directed on account of old enmities. At Lesliganj the Government 'thana' (Police station),

'Abkaree Cutcherry' (Excise Office) and a few houses belonging to private individuals were burnt, but on hearing of the advance of Lt. Graham, then officiating as junior Assistant Commissioner in the district, with a small party of troops the insurgents retreated into the jungles and hills of Sirguja. The various Zemindars according to the statement of Lt. Graham had to all appearance kept entirely aloof from these outrages.[113] The Commissioner of Patna intimated to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in a letter dated Patna Nov. 12, 1857 that the tribes called 'Cheeroo' (Chero) and 'Kharwar' were said to be in arms to the number of 5,000 or 6,000 and to be attacking the Zemindars. They were burning and pillaging in all directions.[114]

By the end of November and the first week of December 1857 nearly the whole of the district of Palamau was apparently up in arms. Lt. Graham was besieged by a large body of the insurgents at Chainpur.[115] One of the principal insurgents was Debi Baksh Rai who came to be captured by the force, sent under Major Cottor to relieve Graham. Graham was relieved and the mutineers had to withdraw from Chainpur consequent on the capture of Debi Baksh Rai. Their attack on Ranka fort proved unsuccessful because of the opposition of Kishun Dayal ; but they burnt the village of Manka, near Palamau fort. By the first week of January 1858 affairs in Palamau were reported to have taken a favourable turn for Government. The withdrawal of the principal Chero Zemindars from the insurrection tended to diminish and dishearten the insurgents who were reported to be deserting in numbers.[116] The Palamau fort came to be rescued from the mutineers by Dalton and Graham together, the former having personally started for Palamau on 16th January 1858. The mutineers left the Palamau fort leaving guns, ammunitions, cattle, supplies and baggages behind them.[117] The baggages left behind contained letters to Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi and Naklaut Manjhi as also communications from Amar Singh, promising immediate assistance from Kumar Singh.[118] Besides Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi and Naklaut Manjhi there were some other leading insurgents such as Tikait Unaras Singh and his Dewan Sheikh Bhikhari. The Tikait Singh and his Dewan were executed.[119] Capt. Dalton and. Lt. Graham followed up this victory by occupying the Bhogta Country and the village of Chemu on the banks of the Koli, the principal residence of

the insurgent brothers. This village as also a fortified house of theirs situated in it were afterwards destroyed, as was destroyed Sunnya, the residence of the insurgent Bhogtahs; but Nilambar and Pitambar could not immediately be captured. Meanwhile there was a fresh flare-up of mutinous activities in the middle of March 1858 under the leadership of Ganpat Rai and Bishnath Sahi both of whom, however. came eventually to be executed. Even Nilambar and Pitambar Sahi came to be captured and hanged to death. With their execution the district was tranquillised. Jagirs came to be granted to Thakurai Raghubar Doyal Singh of Chainpur, Thakurai Kishun Dayal Singh of Ranka and Bhikhari Singh of Mankah in recognition of the services, rendered by them to Government during the mutiny.[120]

If the mutiny at Hazaribagh and Ranchi had its shadow cast on Palamau, it had its repercussions felt on Singhbhum also. The chief town and administrative Head Quarters of the district of Singhbhum was Chaibasa, which like other stations in Chota Nagpur was garrisoned by a detachment of the Ramgarh battalion. The news of the mutiny at Hazaribagh and of the sympathetic revolt of thc two detachments of the Ramgarh battalion, sent from Ranchi under Lt. Graham to disarm the Hazaribagh mutineers, threw Chaibasa into a state of excitement. The Principal Assistant Commissioner, Captain Sissmore, in charge of the station thereupon left it and took shelter with the Raja of Saraikela,[121] Chakradhari Singh. After the abandonment of Chaibasa by Capt. Sissimore the detachment of the Ramgarh Infantry, stationed there, mutinied. Persuaded in the beginning of September 1857 that the British Raj was at an end, the mutineers plundered the Government treasury, broke open the jail and attempted to join their comrades at Dorunda. Their escape, however, was rendered almost impossible by the exertions of the neighbouring zemindars who had caused all the 'Ghats' in their zemindaries to be closely watched. A large body of Coles had also assembled and kept them in check.[122] The mutineers' march towards Dorunda was arrested also by the flood of the river Sanjai and by the Hos (a caste in Singhbhum) 'who gathered in thousands, cut off all stragglers and harassed them continually'.[123] The baffled mutineers of Chaibasa came to be assisted by Arjun Singh, the Zemindar of Porahat in the district of Singhbhum who considering the opportunity favourable to gaining an ascendancy in the district entered into negotiations with the Chaibasa mutineers and gave them

shelter against Government resistance. He was even reported to have proclaimed himself Ruler of the country.[124] On 16th September 1857 Lt. Birch who had been appointed in place of the Principal Assistant Commissioner reached Chaibasa with the Rajas of Saraikella and Kharsawan. Lt. Birch's arrival at Chaibasa at this time was most opportune, for he found the Coles on the eve of swearing allegiance to the Porahat zemindar under the impression that the British had abandoned the country. At first they could hardly be persuaded that Lt. Birch was an accredited officer of Government. Lt. Birch ascertained that large numbers of Coles, well armed, were on the way to Porahat to join Arjun Singh to deliver an attack on the Seraikella estate. On 22nd September 1857 the advanced guard of this besieging force of the Coles had actually established themselves at Ajoodia, a village on the Colehan, held as 'lakhraj', by the Porahat Zemindars. An arrow, said to be the signal of insurrection among the Coles and supposed to have come from the Porahat side of the Colehan, was about the same time intercepted and brought to Lt. Birch, it was also ascertained by him that Arjun Singh had sent a messenger to Dorunda for the purpose of inviting Thakur Bishnath Shahi to reinforce him with men and guns.[125] For some time Arjun Singh appeared to have taken no notice of the presence of Col. Birch at the Sadar Station. Col. Birch took to coercive methods against him. He declared him to be a rebel and sought to cause defection amongst his followers in his Porahat Zemindary. He also succeeded by proper representations in conciliating and resettling the minds of the Coles. Under the pressure of Government brought to bear upon him for restoring the Government treasury and making over the mutinous sepoys Arjun Singh at length marched off to Ranchi to restore the Government treasure. He paid into the Lohardagga treasury a sum of Rs. 19,578-8-9, recovered from the mutineers and also promised to credit to Government a further sum of Rupees 5,956-8-8½ together with the proceeds of gold and silver ornaments of some value, found on the persons of the mutineers.[126] The mutineers were also delivered up with their arms and booty to the Authorities at Ranchi. They were tried and punished, some by execution and the rest by long periods of imprisonment. As to Arjun Singh, he was ordered to return at once from Ranchi to Chaibasa to surrender to Lt. Birch for trial. 'The Raja (Arjun Singh), however, appeared to have been completely in the hands of his Dewan,

a man named jagu for whose apprehension a reward had already been offered by Government. This man was reported to be doing his best to excite the Kols to rise and using all his influence with the Raja to prevent his submitting to Lt. Birch. Whatever may have been the cause the Raja did not give himself up but continued to make professions of loyalty and to promise that he would keep his pledges.[127] The attitude of the Porahat Raja induced Lt. Birch to undertake a campaign against him. This resulted in the capture and execution of Jagu Dewan and a successful attack on the Raja's stronghold. The Raja, however, managed to effect his escape. This happened towards the end of November 1857. So long as Arjun Singh was at large, excitement among the Kols and other tribes in Singhbhum was kept alive. In fact by the end of December 1857 Mr. Lushmgton who had been temporarily appointed special commissioner for Manbhum and Singhbhum reported the existence of a widespread insurrection among the various tribes in Singhbhum.[128] What was reported was not unfounded. By the middle of January 1858, 3,000 or 4,000 of the mutineers made a serious attack on a body of 50 Sikhs in the employ of Government near the Mogra river, and on such officers as Captain Hale, commanding the Sikhs, Lt. Birch, Dr. Hayes and others. Not an officer escaped unhurt. The mutineers had also to suffer much in the fight near the Mogra river. This induced many of them to give up the fight against Government. The insurrection came gradually to be confined to those Kols who had been the retainers of the Raja of Porahat. Meanwhile on 17th January 1858 a Shakhawati Battalion arrived at Chaibasa under Colonel Foster. He destroyed the stronghold of Arjun Singh, the village of Chakradharpur and defeated the Kols who had gathered together in the southern part of the district. But the Raja of Porahat and his followers, the Kols, still persisted in their hostility. Between March 1858 and June 1858 several battles were fought between them and the Government forces, headed by such officers as Mr. Welden, the first officer of the Naval Brigade at Chakradharpur and Mr. Scot, the Second Officer. The mutineers were forced to take shelter in the mountain fastnesses in which Singhbhum abounds. By 15th February 1859 Arjun Singh and his surviving followers had at long last to surrender to the Commissioner. The mutiny at Singhbhum received a quietus.[129]

Singhbhum thus stood highly unsettled during the days of Mutiny. The spirit of crusade was kept alive mainly by Arjun Singh of Porahat and his followers, the Kols. At times tribes other than the Kols had been up in arms. Capt. Dalton wrote in 1858 that Chota Nagpur was full of 'tribes whose predatory habits were notorious long ago and whom recent disturbances had snown that they had not forgotten their hereditary renown.' He also believed that they were 'not impelled by feelings hostile to the British Government but they could not resist the temptation of following any chief who would lead them on plundering expeditions.[130] There was Arjun Singh to lead the Kols to plundering expeditions during the mutiny. The temptation offered by his leadership might have induced them to fight for him. Arjun Singh played the role of a Kumar Sing during the period of mutiny in Singhbhum. The landlords and petty chiefs generally speaking maintained a friendly attitude towards Government. The Raja of Saraikella was a staunch supporter of Government while the mutiny was in progress. In his report on the mutiny in Chota Nagpur the Commissioner, Capt. Dalton, stated that one of the relatives and feudatories of the Saraikella Rajah in Singhbhum informed him (Dalton) that the Chaibasa Cantonment had been invited to plunder the treasury here and to join the mutineers at Dorunda. The relative assured that if the sepoys at Chaibasa were to make the attempt, they would be over-powered and plundered in their turn and that none would escape. "I believe this" wrote Dalton in his report "to be the feeling of the Singhbhum chiefs.'"

Not so shaky and agitated as Singhbhum was Manbhum. Still Manbhum stood disturbed during the mutiny. This was due to the presence in the district of the 64 sepoys from the Ramgarh Battalion which along with 12 Sowars composed the local garrison, as also to the excitement prevailing among the local Sonthals. Purulia was the principal town and administrative Head Quarters of Manbhum district. On 5th August, 1857 the sepoys of Ramgarh Battalion stationed there mutinied. They plundered the treasury, released the prisoners in jail and then proceeded towards Ranchi 'without apparently creating any serious disturbance either in Purulia or en route'.[131] The Deputy Commissioner Capt. Bakes in charge of Purulia had meanwhile sought shelter at Raniganj. With the departure of the mutineers the district was therefore left at the mercy of the jail-birds and miscreants who 'committed various outrages in the town and

on the roads towards Raghunathpur". The sonthals of the district stood highly agitated. They made an attack on the zemindar of Jaypur, but were beaten off. The Raja of Panchet estate, Nilmoni Singh stood against Government. He was arrested and sent in custody to Calcutta. He was not released until March 1859.[132] The departure of the mutineers from the district and the timely arrest of the Raja of Panchet brought the mutiny at Manbhum to an early end.

The spirit of insurrection had travelled also to the Sambalpur district, then forming a part of Chota Nagpur Division. Sambalpur was then garrisoned by a detachment (150 foot and 12 horse) of the Ramgarh Battalion.[133] The news of the mutiny of their comrades at Hazaribagh produced a mutinous feeling among the sepoys at Sambalpur. They came to be led by Surendra Sai, the claimant of the Sambalpur Raj, and by his brother, Udwant Sai both of whom entered the town of Sambalpur on their forcible release from jail, with a force of 1,400 or 1,600 men by the middle of September 1857.[134] Captain Leigh, the Senior Assistant Commissioner in charge of the district sought to disarm the hostility of Surendra Sai but in vain. The situation gradually tended to be tense. 'Many of the principal Zemindars were collecting their paiks for the purpose of resisting Government and the whole country in the neighbourhood of Sambalpur was temporarily in the hands of the insurgents. . . . By the beginning of December the dak road to Bombay was obstructed; two of the dak stations had been burnt down while large bodies were collecting in various directions, and committing excesses of all sorts.'[135] The Commissioner of Chota Nagpur felt so much hard pressed with the conduct of the mutiny that it was decided to transfer Sambalpur temporarily to the Orissa division.[136] The arrival of Major Bates early in January 1858 at Sambalpur as the commander-in-chief in the district brought a turn in the tide. He defeated Udwant Sai at the Jharghati pass and destroyed the village of Kolabira 'which had been a nest of rebels'. The activities of Capt. Leigh and of such other officers as Capts. Shakespear, Wood, Woodbridge and Nicholls went a great way in paralysing the advance of the mutiny. Towards the end of February 1858 restoration of tranquillity was in sight. The mutineers were hunted down in all directions. Among those captured were some of the Zemindars who had been principally concerned in closing the roads to Cuttack and Calcutta. To induce Surendra Sai to surrender—he was still at large—

the Government adopted the policy of bringing about a defection among his followers by offering to pardon them and to restore to them their confiscated property. In fact Major Impey who was placed in charge of Sambalpur subject to the control of the Commissioner of Orissa in 1861 granted an amnesty and the restitution of confiscated property to all the mutineers excepting 'to Surendra Sai, his son Mitra Bhanu Sai and his brother Udwant Sai. This policy had its desired effect. Many a Chief of the mutineers surrendered to Government. But the soul of the opposition in Sambalpur, Surendra Sai and a few of his chosen followers such as Hathi Singh of 'Ghes',[137] Kamal Singh Dao and Khageswar Dao, and Khageswzr Dao, descendants of Balbhadra Dao, the mutinous Zeminder of Lakhanpur[138] remained still unsubdued. Surendra Sai at long last surrendered to Government in May 1862 but his chief followers Kunjal Singh, Kamal Singh and others did not follow suit. For sometime after the surrender of Surendra Sai the district of Sambalpur remained quiet. But there was a recrudescence of trouble after the incorporation of the district with the Central Provinces. Early in 1863 when the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces R. Temple paid his visit to Sambalpur, a petition was submitted to him for the restoration of the Native rule in Sambalpur under the authority of Surendra Sai as the king. The petition was turned down with the result that Kamal Singh and others with whom Surendra Sai was still in alliance again appeared on the scene and began committing savage outrages in the 'Khalsa' villages. Surendra Sai and his adherents were finally arrested by January 1864. Of those arrested Lokhnath Panda of Rampela and Mritunjaya Panigrahi of Arda died in the jail, while Padnath Guru was acquitted on appeal. After acquittal he retuned to Sombalpur. Surendra Sai and his brother Udwant Sai were released on condition that they remained at Raipur. Udwant Sai died at Raipur while Surendra Sai turned blind. Mitra Bhanu Sai, son of Surendra Sai was also released under orders of Government. Peace and order came at last to reign, in Sambalpur.[139]

The facts about the mutiny in Bihar, as stated above, lead to the conclusion that the province was widely affected by the Sepoy movement of 1857-58 and that in certain areas of it the movement had assumed a popular character. Situated close to the widely affected North-Western area, inhabited by peoples akin to the inhabitants of

that area in manners, language, sympathy and race, and above al!, garrisoned by locally recruited Sepoys, forming a part of the mutinous Bengal Army, the province of Bihar easily caught the contagion of mutiny which gradually tended to be serious and wide-spread there. As the mutiny spread, it came to enlist the sympathy of different-sections of civil population in more areas than one. In other words, in many a region in Bihar the mutiny had a popular basis. In Sahabad the native warlike Rajput population fought under the leadership of Kumar Singh and his brother on the side of the Sepoy mutineers against Government and held their own even against heavy odds for a pretty long time. Kumar Singh's presence in Ghazipur district in the Beneras Division, as stated before, caused a tremendous popular agitation against Government among the chiefs, landowners, and villagers. Referring to the attitude of the Zemindars of Shahabad the officiating Magistrate of Shahabad, H. C. Wake wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 19th February 1857 as follows:—"The influential Zaminders (of Sahabad) unlike those of neighbouring districts have not given me the slightest assistance, but while they endeavour to keep up appearances by sending numbers of Sepoys on leave not one deserter has been apprehended by them, nor has any information of the arrival or presence of such been given by them. I have hitherto refrained from noticing in my reports the conduct of the Raja of Dumraon and Babu Koersingh in this respect, because I was in hopes that they would yet by zealous co-operation and assistance redeem their good names; their influence throughout their very large estates is so great that if they chose, they could, be of the greatest assistance."[140] Bui. the Zemindars of Sahabad under the leadership of Kumar Singh chose rather to head a rebellion against Government than to support them. The Raja of Dumraon had every sympathy with the mutineers but at the same time he wanted to pose as a loyal subject of Government touring the mutiny. In a letter dated 8-9-1857,[141] to A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, E.A. Samuells, Commissioner of Patna wrote about the Dumraon Raja as follows. ".... He (The Dumraon Raja) has furnished an explanation of his conduct during the late rebellion in Sahabad.... He positively denies any previous knowledge of Kumar Singh's intention to rebel and. alludes to the enmity between Kumar Singh and himself as negativing the possibility

of such knowledge on the irruption of Sepoys into Arrah. About Kumar Singh's rebellion, he says, he sent information to the Commissioner first by means of a Sowar and then by water but both his messengers were compelled to return. He then, he says, hid himself from fear first in one village and then in another but directed his people to keep quiet and support Government. He than enters at great length into the assistance which he rendered to the Magistrate and Collector previous to the outbreak, the number of men he furnished for various services and so on.... Since the restoration of order, he says, he has given Mr. Wake 24 horses for his mounted, police and has advanced a lakh of rupees to the opium agent on his requisition." But the Commissioner of Patna could not take him as a sincere friend of Government and held in the same correspondence that 'the Rajah of Dumraon was a time-server. He was not sure which side would prove victorious, and wished to offend neither. It was at one time reported that he had paid a large sum to Koer Singh and had even had an interview with him but I have been unable to obtain any confirmation of these rumours. His conduct, however, if not actively hostile, undoubtedly amounted to gross dereliction of duty. As a Zemindar he was bound under the Regulations to give the authorities early notice of the incursion of armed rebels into his estates but during the whole continuance of the rebellion no Government officer received any communication from him whatever and he entirely failed to restrain his own villagers from plundering and destroying the property of Europeans The aid he afforded to Major Eyre's detachment was of the most niggardly character, and it was not until Koer Singh was driven out of the district and victory had declared itself unmistakably on our side that he made his appearance again as a landholder and a British subject, bound to support the Government.' What stands deduced from the commissioner's correspondence is that the Dumraon Raja had natural leanings towards the mutineers. So the fact remains that the rise of Rajput villages and of the influential Zemindars made Sahabad a centre of popular agitation during the period of the mutiny. The mutineers in Gaya were strengthened by large numbers of disaffected villagers and Bhojepore men under the leadership of Judhar Singh, and Hyder Ali Khan. The attitude of the Zemindars of Gaya district was by no means friendly. Wageergunj in the neighbourhood of Gaya was widely

affected. The villagers there under the leadership of Kosheal Singh were up in arms against Government. In Hazaribag the sonthals unlike those of Sonthal Parganas as well as some local landholders and the dispossed 'Bhuiya Tikaits' rose against Government without perhaps any collaboration with the sepoys. The activities of Nilambar and Pitambar in alliance with the chero Zemindars made Palamau a centre of a serious popular agitation during the period of the mutiny. Singbhum had witnessed a popular struggle of the Sepoys in conjunction with the Coles and other tribes under the leadership of Arjun Singh. In Manbhum the Sepoys were not the only force opposed to Government. There the Sonthals and the Raja of Panchet Estate, Nilmoni Singh stood in opposition to Government. In Sambalpur the Sepoy mutineers in their struggle against Government were led by non-military leaders such as Surendra Sai and Udwant Sai who along with other leaders from the civil ranks measured their strength against Government. This had the result of clothing the mutiny at Sambalpur with a popular garb.

Everywhere in the province of Bihar, however, the mutiny could not assume a popular character, though almost the entire province was affected by mutinous occurrences. There were areas where the movement remained confined to the military class alone and was easily crushed. At Sassaram the Sepoys rose without any support from the civil population. Bhagalpur and Monghyr were left practically untouched by the mutiny. Purnea was only slightly affected by mutinous risings of the Sepoys. The mutiny at Saran remained confined to the military class alone. The Raja of Hathwa stood by Government and helped the arrest of the mutiny in the district. Though the 12th Irregular Cavalry mutinied at Segowlee at Champaran, the Maharaja of Bettiah arrested the progress of the mutiny and in collaboration with Jang Bahadur of Nepal helped Government to crush it early. At Muzzaffarpur the mutineers some of whom were of course from civil ranks got practically no support from the Zemindars and thus unsupported, they had to wage a losing battle against Government. In the Sonthal Parganas, while the 5th Irregular Cavalry mutinied, the Sonthals themselves remained indifferent to the mutineers. The Muhammadan villages of Southern Bihar generally remained quiet, while the Rajput and Brahmin villages rose around them. In Patna the opposition to Government remained confined mainly to the muslims of the Wahab School. It does not

appear that the entire muslim community in Patna stood committed to hostility to Government during the mutiny. The rural population in Patna did not rise in revolt. On 6th October 1857 the Commissioner of Patna wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to intimate that the attempt of a few fanatics to excite a popular rising in the city of Patna proved unsuccessful. Many a respectable native resident of Patna, both Muslim and Hindu, rendered services to the Commissioner of Patna during the days of trouble. Among such residents of Patna mention may be made specially of Wilayut Ali Khan, Shaikh Ruza Hossain, Altaf Hossain, Maharaj Bhoop Singh, Roy Hari Kishan, and Babu Chunilal.[142] Wilayut Ali Khan had cast his lot on the side of Government from the commencement of the disturbance. In a correspondence dated July 21, 1857 to the Secretary, Government of Bengal the Commissioner of Patna wrote about Wilayut Ali Khan thus:—"A few days after the news of the mutiny reached Patna, he (Wilayut Ali Khan) presented to him (Commissioner of Patna) a petition, stating that he was ready to devote life and property to the service of the state and from that day he incessantly exerted himself in the cause of Government seeking for information, ferreting out bad characters, watching the city and obtaining good information through emissaries, employed at his expense, from the neighbouring villages. Both he and Dewan Moula Buksh incurred the deadly hatred of many in the city for the services they performed and their lives were in danger."[143] The munsiff of Jehanabad in Patna, Muhammad Fureed-ood-deen espoused the cause of government, when the Rajput villages in that neighbourhood broke out into rebellion and made common cause with Kumar Singh.[144] Elsewhere also in the province of Bihar there were other muslim and Hindu gentlemen who espoused the cause of government during the period of mutiny. Among them were Shah Kabiruddin Ahmad of Sassaram, Kazi Ramzan Ali of Chapra, Muhammad Wajid, Munsiff of Sewan, Nundeput Mahtoe, a wealthy 'mahajan' at Muzzaffarpur, Hydar Buksh, the Nazir of the Fouzdari Court at Muzzaffarpur, Mahesh Lall, the jail daroga at Muzzaffarpur, Enayut Hossain, Daroga in Sewan, Shah Khyrat Hossain and his brother Shah Ahmad Hossain. These last two gentlemen were members of an old mahomedan family which suffered much under the operation of the resumption laws of government. Still they stood attached to government and saved the life and property of English Officers from the agitated

villagers and the alienated neighbouring zemindars.[145] There was also the Maharaja of Chotanagpur who was a strong supporter of Government during the mutiny. It is gathered from a correspondence from Capt. Dalton, Officiating Commissioner of Chotanagpur to A.R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal that 'the maharaja's jaghirdars and followers were all prepared to oppose the mutineers in co-operation with the Government troops' and that he 'expressed his anxiety for the speedy reoccupation of Chota Nagpur by the latter (Government troops) and by the civil officers'.[146]

Thus while in some parts of the province of Bihar the mutiny had a popular basis, in other parts this popular character was lacking. Another noticeable feature of the mutiny in Bihar is that the same causes had not been at work everywhere in the province to produce the conflagration of 1857-59. While in Sahabad the Rajputs rose into revolt out of their allegiance to and sympathy with Kumar Singh who was goaded to mutiny by the treatment he received at the hands of the Sadar Board of Revenue, in Patna the mutiny had assumed a religious tinge and was the work of the muslims of the Wahab sect. The presence of the native regiments at Dinapur made the station mutinous. The news of the mutiny of the Dinapur regiments together with the spread of various rumours about the attacks on the caste and religion of the native population instigated Gaya to revolt. The rise of the Dinapur regiments caused mutiny at Muzzaffarpur also. The rise of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Segowlee produced mutiny at Champaran and Saran. Purnea rose under the influence of the Jalpaiguri mutineers. The mutiny at Sonthal Parganas was caused by the rise of the 5th Irregular Cavalry. While the contagion of the Dinapur mutiny and the provocation of the detachments of the Ramgarh Battalion made Hazaribagh mutinous, Ranchi and Sambalpur rose in revolt at the news of the mutiny at Hazaribagh. The news of the mutiny at Hazaribagh and Ranchi led Palamau and Singhbhum to take up arms. What with the excitement among the local Sonthals and what with the presence of a portion of the Ramgarh Battalion Manbhum broke into revolt. Thus different areas were provoked into mutiny under the spell of different sets of causes. In this sense the mutiny of the province of Bihar may be considered as having a regional character.

(*Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. 75; 1956)

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2. Statement of the mutinies as they affected the lower provinces under the Government of Bengal (1858)—by Frederick Halliday. Quoter In Buckland, Vol. I, page 65.
3. District Gazetteer—Sahabad, compiled by L. S. S. O'Malley. Page 39.
4. Frederick Halliday's statement, quoted in Buckland, Vol. I, page 99.
5. Holmes—-A History of the Indian Mutiny, page 196.
6. Kaye's History of the Sepoy War in India. Vol. III, page 100 (footnote).
7. Explaining the reasons for Kumar's mutiny Mr. Herwald C. Wake officiating magistrate of Sahabad wrote to Government on 19th July, 1857 as follows: "He (Kumar) is nominally the owner of vast estates, while in reality he is a ruined man and can hardly pay money to pay the interests of his debts. As long as, therefore, law and order exist, his position cannot improve. take them away and he well knows that he would become supreme in this district (Sahabad). I do not think he will openly oppose the Government as long as he thinks that Government will stand. but I do think that should these, districts be ever the scene of a serious outbreak, he may take it into his head that it is time to strike a blow for his own interests, and his feudal influence is such as to render him exceedingly dangerous in such an event." —Paliamentary Paper (House of Commons) Vol. 44. Part II of 1857-58. Paper No. 79. pages 27-28.
8. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons) Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58. Paper No 363, page 38.
9. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons) Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58. Paper No. 383, page 3.
10. Kaye's History of the Sepoy War, Vol. III, page 78.
11. Ibid, Vol. I, page 304.
12. Kaye in his History of the Sepoy War in India. Vol. I, page 308 notes that a Scroll, many cubits long, was found containing the names of some hundreds of respectable inhabitants of Patna, Hindus and Mahomedans who were pledged to a solemn oath to die in defence of their religion.
13. Halliday's statement, quoted in Buckland, I, page 69.
14. The Commissioner of Patna to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Patna, July 14, 1857. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part II of 1857-58, Paper No. 79, page 16.
15. Dist. Gazetteer—Patna. Compiled by L, S. S. O'Maliey, page 37.
16. Home Public Consultations, 31st July 1857, No. 65.
17. Mutiny of the Bengal Army, page 176.
18. Ibid; page 177.
19. Mutiny of the Bengal Army, page 177.
20. District Gazetteer—Patna, page 36.

21. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part II For 1857-58, Paper No. 72, page 72.
22. Ibid, page 147.
23. Mutiny of the Bengal Army, page 182.
24. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No. 363, pages 20-21.
25. Hallidays statement, quoted in Buckland, 1, page 72.
26. Edward Lockwood—The Early Days of Marlborough College Page 171. The author was much impressed with this view when he had to pass two days in a boat on the river Gundak in order to move all the boats from one side of the river to the other, to prevent certain native regiments from crossing the river and to keep a sharp watch on the mutineers. The author spent most of his time reading the "Vanity Fair' inside the boat, taking a stroll only in the evening. He always found the villagers most oolite and humble. None of them offered to molest him. though he was quite alone.
27. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part I for 1857-58, Paper No. 364, page 50.
28. Home Public Consultations, 21st August 1857, No. 41.
29. Home Public Consultations, 21 st August 1857. No. 41.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid
32. District Gazetteer—Sahabad, page 27.
33. Quoted in Kaye's A History of the Sepoy War in India. Vol. III, page 146 (footnote).
34. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part II of 1857-58, Paper No. 79, page 6.
35. Halliday's statement, quoted in Buckland, 1, page 74.
36. Kaye and Malleson, Vol. IV, page 330.
37. Holmes—A History of the Indian Mutiny, page 461.
38. Kaye and MaSleson, Vol. IV, page 330.
39. Charles Ball—History of the Indian Mutiny, Vol. II, page 287.
40. Charles Ball—History of the Indian Mutiny, Vol. II, page 287.
41. According to Kaye and Malleson the circumstances in which Kumar Singh died were as follows:

    "Whether Kumar Singh was wounded at the action fought at Manohar or whether, as some of his followers aver, as he war crossing the Ganges, this is certain that immediately on his arrival at Jagdishpur he underwent amputation of the wrist. He was an old man and the shock was too much for him. He died three days after he had defeated Le Grand "—Vol. IV, page 336.
42. Quoted in Backland, I, page 88.
43. Home Public Consultations, 9th July 1858, No. 28.
44. District Gazetteer—Sahabad, pages 28-29.

45. The Kaimur range extending for about 70 or 80 miles and having an elevation of about 2000 feet divides the valley of the South-Western Tons, Jabalpur district from that of the Sone Sahabad district.—Kaye and Malleeon, Vol. IV, page 344 (footnote).
46. Dist. Gazetteer—Sahabad, page 35.
47. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44, Part II of 57-58, Paper No. 79. pages 154-155.
48. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44, Part I of 57-58, Paper No. 363, page 2.
49. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44. Part II, of 57-58, Paper No. 79, page 155.
50. This order of Tayler directing the abandonment not only of Gaya but also of all out-stations in the Patna division was considered ill-advised by Mr. F. Halliday, the Lt. Governor of Bengal. He accordingly decided to remove Mr. Taylor from the commissionership of Patna.
According to Kaye and MaJleson 'the purport of Mr. Tayler's orders could not be mistaken, It was clear that in the presence of danger of an attack from an overwhelming body with which their small force should be unable to cope, Mr. Tayler took upon himself the responsibility of saving the lives of his subordinates, even at the risk of abandoning the money, if the attack should take place, or if, in the opinion of his subordinates, it should be so imminent as not to admit of their taking the usual measures for removing the treasure. In a word, he relieved his subordinates of the responsibility of uselessly sacrificing their lives in attempting to defend money-bags which they could not save.—Vol. Ill, page 71 (footnote).
51. The Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Secretary to the Govt. of India. Fort William, Aug. 13, 1857.—Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons). Vol. 44. Part II, of 1857-58, Paper No. 79, page 410.
52. F. Hslliday's statement, quoted in Buckland, Vol. I, pages 74-75.
53. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part III of 1857-58. Further Papers No. 7 (in continuation of No. 5) relative to the Mutinies in the East Indies, pages 105-106.
54. District Gazetteer—Gaya. Compiled by L.S.S. O'Malley, page 29.
55. Ibid.
56. Letter from the Secretary to the Govt. of India (Mr. C. Beadon) to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal (Mr. A. R. Young), preserved in the District Magistrate's office, Gaya.
57. District Gazetteer—Gaya, page 38.
58. Letter from the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Commissioner of Patna, dated 4th March 1858 kept in the office of the District Magistrate. Gaya (Gaya Collectorate).
59. Letter from the Asst. Magistrate of Bihar to the Dist. Magistrate of Bihar preserved in the office of the District Magistrate, Gaya.
60. Quoted in pages 1-3 of the Annual Report of the Ad Hoc Records Regional Survey Committee, Bihar (1952-53).

61. Annual Report of the Ad Hoc Records Regional Survey Committee, Bihar (1952-53), page 3.
62. Dist. Gazetteer—Muzaffarpur compiled by Mr. O'Malley, page 24.
63. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No. 363, page 51.
64. Home Pub. Cons., 7th August 1857, No. 11.
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66. Home Pub. Cons 7th August 1857, No. 13.
67. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No. 364, page 7.
68. District Gazetteer—Champaran, compiled by L.S. O'Malley, I.C.S., page 34.
69. In 1866 Champaran and Saran were formed into separate districts—District Gazetteer—Saran, compiled by Mr. O'Malley, page 31.
70. District Gazette—Saran, page 29.
71. District Gazetteer—Saran, page 28.
72. Ibid, 28—29.
73. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol 44, Part I of 1857-58, Paper No. 364, page 80.
74. District Gazetteer—Saran, page 30
75. Kaye and Malleson, Vol. IV, page 92.
76. Frdrick Halliday's statement, quoted, in Buckland, Vol. I, p. 125.
77. Ibid, page 124.
78. Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons), Vol. 44, Part II of 1857-58 paper No. 79, page 95. It is learnt from the narrative of events for weeks ending on 24th and 31st October 1857, submitted by the Govt. of Bengal to the Court of Directors of the E. I. Co., through the Governor-General of India that the price of rice was still very high in the districts of the Bhagalpur division and was expected to rise still higher to the great suffering of poor classes unless rail and ferry fund works were carried on, on an extensive scale, so as to give them remunerative employment.—Parliamentary Paper (House of Commons) Vol. 44, part III of 1857-58. Further papers No. 7 in continuation of No. 5 relative to the minutes of east Indies, page 26.
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80. Ludlow, Vol. II, page 205.
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91. Kaye and Malleson, Vol. VI, page 35.
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94. Home Public Consultations, 14th August 1857, No. 25.
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96. Home Pub. Cons., 14th August 1857, No. 22.
97. Home Pub. Cons., 14th August 1857, No. 22.
98. Dist. Gazetteer—Hazaribagh, page 68.
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100. Home Pub. Cons., 25th Sept. 1857, No. 95.
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102. Home Pub. Cons., I4th August 1857, Nos. 28, 29.
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104. Home Pub. Cons., 14th August 1857, No. 29.
105. Parliamentary Paper, Vol. 44, Part II of paper 79, page 241.
106. District Gazetteer—Ranchi compiled b1y Mr. G. Hallett. I.C.S., pages 42 and 43.
107. While Ranchi was the civil station, Doranda was the military Cantonment. The one was separated From the other by a distance of 3 or 4 miles.
108. Capt. E. T. Dalton's Report on the Mutiny in Chotanagpur.
109. District Gazetteer—Hazaribagh, page 68.
110. Letter from Capt. Dalton to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, Home Public Consultations, 25th September 1857, No. 94.
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112. District Gazetteer—Palamau, edited by L.S.S. O'malley, I.C.S. (revised by P.C. Tafllents), page 36. Cheros and Kharwars were the two tribes of which the population of Palamau was mainly composed. The Kharwars again were divided into several classes of which the principal one were the Bhogtas. Ibid, page 35.
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121. Head Quarters of the Saraikella State, situated on the Kharkai river and Chaibassa-Purulia Road, six miles south of Sini. Dist. Gazetteer, Singhbhum. Saraikella and Kharsawan, edited by L. S. S. O'Malley, page 248.
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123. District Gazetteer, Singbhum, Saraikelia and Kharsawan, edited by L.S.S. O'Malley, page 38.
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128. Dist. Gazetteer—Singhbhum, page 39.
129. Dist. Gazetteer, Singhbhum, pages 40-42.
130. Dist. Gazetteer, Manbhum—edited by H. Coupland, I.C S., page 66.
131. Dist. Gazetteer—Manbhum, page 65.
132 Dist. Gazetteer, Manbhum, page 66.
133. Dist. Gazetteer, Sambalpur compiled by O'Malley, page 31.
134. Ibid.
135. District Gazetteer, Sambalpur, pages 32, 33.
136. Ibid, page 33. In 1860 Sambalpur was transferred to the Orissa Division of Bengal. By a notification of 30th April 1862 it was made over to the newly constituted Central Provinces. In October 1905 the bulk of the district was retransferred to the Province of Bengal. Ibid, page 37.
137. A zemindari in the Bargarh sub-division- Dist. Gazetteer- Sambalpur, page 203.
138. A village and Police outpost in the North-West of the Bargarh sub-division. Ibid, p. 207.
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22

THE 1857 REVOLUTION IN ASSAM

(SUMMARY)

By

K.N. Dutt

IN 1857 Assam was administered as a Division of Bengal and was in the charge of a Commissioner Colonel Jenkins was at this time the Commissioner of Assam. When the great conflagration of the mutiny of native troops spread from station to station, in Upper and Central India and shook the foundations of the E.I. Company's rule in India, comparatively quieter conditions prevailed in this part of India. But all was not quiet on the eastern front, although Jenkins reported to the Supreme Government at Calcutta from time to time that there was not much cause for anxiety. There is no doubt that this eastern-most province of Assam, a late acquisition of the British in India—it having come to their possession only in 1826—situated as it was at a great distance from the nerve-centre of the Company's power and domination in India, did not provide an immediate cause for alarm to the authorities of the Company. But even here a situation arose towards the close of 1857 which, but for the unfortunate leakage of information regarding a well-planned and carefully organised plot to overthrow the Company's rule in Assam and re-instate a scion of the old Ahom royal family on the throne, could have assumed serious proportions endangering the British hold on the whole Eastern Frontier.

Maniram Dutt Dewan, a great Assamese of those times, a man with a keen sense of the evils of alien rule imposed on Assam which he had exposed already in a document of searching analysis in 1853, was the engineer of this plot.

The object of the plot was to do away with all Company's Officers in Assam on a particular day during the Durga Puja of 1857 according to a preconcerted plan and instal Kandarpeswar Singha, Saring Raja, grandson of Raja Purandar Singha of Upper Assam who was deposed by the British in 1838, on the throne of Assam. Disaffection against the British which incited native armies to revolt elsewhere in Behar and Upper India had spread also to the troops of the Assam Light Infantry stationed at Dibrugarh, not far from Jorhat, the residence of Kandarpeswar Singha and native officers of this army were lending secret support to the plot. Maniram was at Calcutta early in 1857, representing the case of the disinherited prince Kandarpeswar before the Supreme Government of the Company when the standard of rebellion was raised by the native troops at Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Jagdispur and other places. Maniram saw his chance, and wrote letters to the Saring Raja and his supporters in Assam exhorting them to make preparations for a revolt in Assam. Accordingly preparations were made on a scale that had every chance of success. But some of these letters were intercepted by the local officers of the Company, and they revealed the plot before it could mature. The officers took immediate steps to arrest Kandarpeswar Singha and his other supporters in Assam. Maniram Dewan was arrested in Calcutta and brought to Assam under a guard of a hundred European naval troops for trial.

A mockery of a trial was held at Sibsagar by Capt. Holroyd, District Magistrate of Sibsagar, on 23rd February 1858 under Act XIV of 1857 and Maniram was condemned to death by hanging on charges of treason and conspiracy to wage war against the constituted authority of the Company. The Dewan was publicly hanged at Jorhat on the 26th February 1858 along with his principal associate Mahesh Chandra Barua alias Peali Barua who had been earlier tried and sentenced to death on similar charges. Holroyd himself executed the sentences. Thus Maniram and Peali became martyrs to the cause of freedom in Assam in the great upheaval of

1857 which has been called India's First War of Independence. Severe punishments including transportation for life to the Andamans were meted out to a good number of other supporters and sympathisers and Kandarpeswar Singha was interned for a long time at Calcutta and Burdwan and later at Gauhati. Those suspected of treason in the army were court-martialled and the Hindusthani troops were broken up into small detachments and sent to distant outposts substituting Gurkhas in their place at Dibrugarh. Besides hundreds of rebel soldiers of the 34th and 37th N.I. Regiments who had entered Assam from Dacca and Chittagong were mercilessly shot down. Thus it would appear that Assam played no mean part in this First War of Independence of India.

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23

THE ECHOES OF THE MUTINY IN UPPER ASSAM (1857)

By

H.K. Barpujari

UNTIL the middle of 1857, the placid atmosphere of the valley of the Brahmaputra remained unruffled by the convulsions of the Sepoys in Meerut, Delhi and Kanpur, nor their back eddies had much repercussions on the local regiments; although, the harrowing tales of the massacres reached their ears from the very outset. The number of Hindustanees in the Regiment were, in fact, not many; their demand for higher battas, caste prejudices and particularly susceptibilities to the hostile climate, actuated the Government to entrust, more and more, the defence of the North-East Frontier on the local corps, who could stand on their own resources in an emergency and were inured to the rigours of the climate. The hetcrogenous nature of the regiment—consisting as it did of the Nepalees, the Manipurees, the Rabhas, the Jarrowas and the Doaneahs—combined with comparatively settled and peaceful life enjoyed by them, made even the Western Sepoys to be rather indifferent, if not loathful, to the occurrences in Northern India. Major Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam, therefore, flattered himself to report[1] that inspite of "pressing invitations of the rebels" the two local Regiments in Assam have not only expressed their attachment and loyalty to the Government, but some of them even volunteercd their services for employment against the rebels, wherever they may be.

The situation, however, changed towards the close of July, 1857. The defaetion of Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, and the Mutiny of the Danapur Regiments, in Bihar, produced a spirit of restlessness amongst the Sepoys of the First Assam Light Infantry Battalion, in Upper Assam They were persuaded to believe the current notion that the British rule which was to last for only one hundred years had actually come to an end; that the Sepoys had reinstated the Emperor on the throne of Delhi and that the latter had already occupied the greater part of Hindustan. That the English would soon quit Bengal and Assam too;[2] Could they not swim in the troubled waters? At this psycholgical moment, there arrived at the military lines of the detachment at Golaghat, in the District of Sibsagar, Nirmal Hazari and Peali alias Mohesh Chandra Barua, two confidential agents on the part of the disaffected Ahom Prince Kandarpeswar Singha[3] alias the Saring Raja, with tempting baits: 'The Raja would double the pay of the Sepoys and give the Native Officers pay like " Jongie Paltan " if all the Sepoys would join and get him the Country.' Saikh Vikoon, the Subadar of the regiment, readily agreed and accepted the proffered offer. The Sahibs will be killed and the Raja will be placed on the Guddi; he will have to furnish rasud, ball and powder.[4] Negotiations were carried on, under similar terms, by Raja's agents with the Sardars of the Regimental Headquarters at Dibrugarh; and the latter, through their messages and personal interviews with Kandarpeswar Singha confirmed the agreement that was reached at Golaghat.

The Sepoys were, thus, spurred into activity by the intrigues at Jorhat, where the Spring Raja was maturing plans to unfurl the standard of revolt against the British. The guiding spirit of the whole plot was, however, his Dewan, Maniram Dutta Barua, then residing in Calcutta. Through his numerous letters couched in most seditious terms, Maniram goaded the Young Prince to plunge headlong into the daring project; and through his friends, mainly Madhu Mallick, the Bengalee Mokhteer, he prepared the ground for the insurrection. Peali Barua, Senchoa Barua, Nowbaisha Phykan, Gandhia Barua, Saru Gohain, Ugrasen Gohain, Kamala Barua and several others responded to the call of Maniram.[5] The Amolahs of the Local Courts blessed, if not actively participated; while a number of Mouzadars of the district promised to supply the rasud and volunteers required for the purpose.[6] The preparation made by the rebels and the alarm, thereof, soon spread far

and wide. The European Planters of Upper Assam left their gardens and took shelter at Gauhati. 'The Keyas (Marwari merchants), the Beparis, and the villagers buried their property in daily dread of Sepoys looting the place."[7]

Major Jenkins, The Commissioner of Assam, was rudly awakened, about the middle of August, 1857, on the receipt of a communique from Captain Holroyd, the Principal Assistant of Sibsagar to the effect, that 'two or three native officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, of the First Assam Light Infantry, on duty, with a detachment at Golaghat, proceeding on leave through Jorhat, had coming and going, interviews with the Young Saring Rajah Kandarpeswar Singh and offered the assistance of the men of both the Regiments to reinstate him on his throne and maintain the country for him."[8] In his message of 20 August, 1857, Major Hannay, the Commandant of the A.L.I. further reported, "at this station (Dibrugarh) what I have all along expected has taken place (*viz*).....an intended rise of the Muttocks and their intrigues also to get adherants."[9]

The time was, indeed, highly inopportune. To protect the lives and properties of the Englishmen, there was not a single European soldier, at this juncture, in the whole of the North-East Frontier. Even, if the authorities in Calcutta could spare some troops, it would be a question of time before they could reach and meet any emergency in Upper Assam. A sudden and concerted move on the part of the Sepoys of both the Regiments of Assam Light Infantry at Gauhati and Dibrugarh would have doubtless rendered the position of the few European officers and Planters in Assam extremely precarious.

Fortunately, most of the Jarrowas and the Nepalees of the Second Battalian at Gauhati remained passive and loyal, in spite of the pressure and persuations of the Hindustanees.[10] At Dibrugarh, the situation was far from being serious. To tide over the crisis, Major Hannay, the Commandant of the A.L.I., called on Captain Lowther, the Second in Command from Sadiya, and summoned the Rabhas, the Manipurees, the Nepalees and other non-Hindustanees or whom he would rely, from the outlying detachments, to guard the regimental lines at the Headquarter. Pickets were posted at strategic positions, and to prevent subversive act on the part of the mutinurs, Gurkas were mixed up in the military lines and particularly in the artillary wing, which had so long been a monopoly of the Hindustanees.[11]

Major Jenkins considered these measures rather inadequate to afford security in the event of an outbreak. While reporting these events and the general alarm prevailing throughout the valley, in his despatch of 29 August 1857, the Commissioner drew the attention of the Government of Bengal to the seriousness of the situation in Assam and urged them to despatch, as hurridly as possible, an European Force ' to save the province from the (impending) revoluton.'[12] Even the appearance of a Steamer, it was fondly hoped, 'would instill confidence in all parties, secure the allegiance of any who might be wavering and repress any hidden feeling of disaffection.'

These new developments in the North-East Frontier, naturally, caused some anxiety in the Governor-General-in-Council. A small European Force under Lieutenant Davis was immediately ordered to be despatched for services in Assam. The party consisting of 104 men, one Sergent, and two officers left on 11 September 1857, on board the ghatta' with supplies in arms, and ammunitions including a couple of 12 Pounder Guns.[13]

The precautionary measures, referred to, impressed on the rebels that the English were frightfully afraid of their activities and that they would leave Assam at the earliest favourable opportunity. To finalise their schemes, meetings were now held almost every day at the Rajbari of the Soring Raja, which were largely attended by the rebels and occasionally by some of the Sepoys of the Regiment. The target date was fixed on the ensuing pujas, when it was expected that Maniram would also reach Jorhat with the ' ball and Powder'. The Sepoys, it was planned, would rise up simultaneously at the headquarter towns; they would seize the magazine and the treasury, kill the Europeans, burn their houses and then march on Jorhat to proclaim the Saring Raja as the King of Assam.[14]

On 29 August, 1857, the Subadar of the detachment at Golaghat was directed to withdraw the guards from the Naga Outposts at Jamuguri and Borpathar and to despatch hurriedly fifty Sepoys to Sibsagar.[15] It was already in the air that a Steamer was on the way, and that the Sahibs were preparing to depart. About this time, on an urgent call, Mr. Masters, the Sub-Assistant of Golaghat, had also to leave for the Sadar Station. The Sepoys believed that distrbances had already broken out at the headquarters, and that the Sahibs will

escape by the Steamer before they could kill them.[16] They would be failing in their duty, some of them felt, unless they march on immediately. At about 9 p.m. on the same day, there was a bugle call. The Sepoys thronged at the residence of Shaikh Vikoon, the Subadar of the Regiment. Keramutallee, the native doctor, who was an eye-witness of the event, narrated the procceedings, as follows:

"On arriving, I saw a number of men collected in front of Subadar's house; in the midst the Subadar Shaikh Bhcekun, Chunder Sing, Jamadar of Police and Ramtohol Sing, Kote Havildar were seated in morahs: the rest being on the ground.....Jelladar Misser, Bhola Panday Havildar and Swesehai Sing, (one after another) addressed the gathering—

'Hear brothers, if you are desirous of our own good and favour with the Rajan, you will listen to what we say and do what we tell you without drawing back; and *whoever draws back or reveals anything shall be killed; and if he be a Mussalman, he will eat pig; and if a Hindu, he will eat cow, this shall be the curse on him*. What, are we not born of men, that we should desert the cause.....Let us sound that bugle and each man taking five Ghullali with him *let us go this night to Jorhat*; first cut Hurronath Burroahrs[16a] head off. It is said that Raghoobeer Sing Jamadar is there with 20 Sepoys and is loyal to the Government, if we can make him join us, well; if not, then we can kill him; We will then go and put the Rajah on the throne and proclaim him.... We will go at once on Sibsagar and first set fire to Holroyd Sahib's house and the rest of the houses and kill all the Europeans there. We will make the Sepoys join us and take the Magazine and treasury. We can leave some men there to keep charge and go on with the rest to Debrooghur; there set fire at the houses and kill all the Europeans....."[17]

'I will go out at once' so saying, Jelladur stood up; and several Sepoys agreed to what he had proposed. Some wanted to wait till the morning; while a few others demurred and left the place. The Subadar, who had been reticent so long, desired to postpone the march till the arrival of the men from the Naga outposts. The Sepoys could not arrive at a decision. The altercation and the alarm, thereof, continued till late at night.[18]

Two days later, it was found Raghunath Singh had taken over the Command of the detachment. The new Subadar introduced,

forthwith, vigorous measurres of discipline, banned unauthorized gatherings and stopped outsiders from entering into the military lines.[19] Had the mutineers acted according to their original plan or even the Sepoys of Golaghat marched on in a body on that night or on the day following to Sibsagar, which was then in an absolutely defenceless State, confusion might have ensued and the infection, might have spread to the Headquarters at Dibrugarh. But the Sepoys were divided in their opinion, which ruined their cause and the cause championed by Maniram.

Major Hannay, immediately on receipt of the intelligence of the occurrence at Golaghat, secured the arrest of Shaikh Vikoon, Jelladar Misser, Chander Sing and other mutineers of the whole Battalian and removed them to Dibrugarh to stand for trial before a Court-Martial.[20] About the same time, Captain Holroyd intercepted a bundle of letters, alleged to be written by Maniram or under his direction, which proved the complicity of the Raja and the Dewan in a plot to overthrow the British Government in Assam.[21] On the midnight of September 7, 1857, the Saring Raja was arrested at his own residence at Jorhat.[22] This was followed by the seizure of Maniram in Calcutta and apprehension in Upper Assam of Peali Barua, Madhu Mallick, Senchoa Barua, Kamala Barua, Dutiram Barua, Bahadur Gaon Bura and several others who were supposed to be involved, directly or indirectly, in the plot. Had there been a Neil or Taylor, perhaps, few of the rebels would have been spared the rope of the hangman, and the situation, too, would have drifted, become critical before long. Major Hannay and even Captain Holroyd, supposed! to be the arch-enemy of the rebels, handled the situation so cautiously and tactfully that not a voice of protest was heard from the Regiment, nor was there much commotion in the civil population. When the arrest of the Raja was made known to them the Sepoys believed[23] that 'he would be kept either (at) Debru, Tezpur, Seebsagar or Gauhati ....wherever they took him, still he would be in their hands; for everywhere there are Sepoys (Hindustanees).' They vainly hoped, that Jung Bahadur of Nepal with a force of 10,000 would be coming soon to their succour. Their hopes, however, were doomed to bitter disappointment on the evening of the 2nd October, 1857, when the Naval Brigade on board the Capital 'Haroonghatta' disembarked at Dibrugarh.[24] The punishment subsequently inflicted on the 'prime movers 'of plot, including the Dewan Maniram, and the

transportation of the rebel Leaders and mutinous Sepoys to the Andamands, wiped out effectively 'any lurking spirit of rebellion.' The abortive Mutiny of the Sepoys in Upper Assam strengthened the belief of the common men in the unbounded power of the British to preserve the law and order in the country.

(*Indian History Congress Proceedings*, 1957)

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14. *Ibid.*, 1958; 14 January, no. 155, vide deposition of Trilochan, 13 November 1857.
15. *Ibid.*, 1857; 14 January, no. 159, vide deposition of Keramutullee.
16. *Ibid.*, 1858; 14 January, no. 155; deposition of Trilochan.

16a. He was the Daroga at the Station of Jorhat and was the Principal informant of the activities of the rebels to Captain Horoyd, the Principal Assistant of Sibsagar.

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THE SIEGE OF DHAR (Oct. 1857)

By

B.N. Luniya

DHAR was a small Maratha State in Central India, now Madhya Bharat. In 1857 a child of nearly thirteen years was the ruler of Dhar State. Consequently the affairs of the State were looked after by the Dewan and the Queen-mother. The fearful convulsions of the Mutiny of 1857 had affected the states of Central India like other capital towns of Northern India and the powerful contingent of the Indian Sepoys under the British had broken from their allegiance and revolted against the British in Neemuch, Gwalior, Indore, Mhow, Nowgaon Bhopawar, Agar, Mahidpur and other places in Central India. The strong military stations of the British in C.I. had fallen temporarily into the hands of the Mutineers. Dhar about 40 miles from Indore could not escape the conflagration. The Indian sepoys of Dhar attacked the British cantonment at Bhopawar, a few miles away from Dhar, and later on he occupied the strong fort of Dhar, once the seat of the renowned Parmars of Malwa. In their attempt to strike at the power of the Mutineers the British besieged the Dhar fortress in Oct. 1857 and captured it with great difficulty.

When the Govt. of Madhya Bharat set up a state committee to collect the material for writing the History of Freedom Movement I had the opportunity to go through the Govt. records of the Holkar State with a view to fish out material for the Mutiny of 1857 in Southern Madhya Bharat. Fortunately more than a thousand Govt.

letters and reports by the State Vakeels and district officials have been discovered throwing light on the events of the Mutiny. Among these are some letters written by the then Vakeel of the Holkar Darbar stationed at Mhow, a strong military station of the British 14 miles away from Indore. He accompanied the British force which set off from Mhow to capture Dhar. He was an eye witness to the siege of Dhar. With the help of his letters as well as other material discovered in the Govt. records and the Foreign Office Library of the Holkar State, Indore a detailed account of the British siege of Dhar can easily be constructed. I summarise it here.

The fort of Dhar, situated outside the town of Dhar, is a very-old and strong fort with massive stone walls constructed on considerable raised ground. Near the fort existed a few huts of the poor people in 1857 and the main road to the town passed by the fort. In Oct. 1857 the Indian Sepoys who took up arms against the British in Dhar and Bhopawar occupied the fort of Dhar It was a grave danger to the British position in C.I. The Dewan of the Dhar State had sympathised with the mutineers and offered arms and ammunition to them. Therefore the British decided to crush the rising power of the Mutineers in Dhar.

On the 20th Oct. 1857 at 6.30 A. M. the Bombay company, some Madras Sappers, under Major Keane, Woolcomb's battery and the troopers of the 3rd Cavalry of Hyderabad Contingent and a squadron of dragoons marched from Mhow to Dhar under Brigadier Stuart and this British force arrived at Dhar on Thursday Oct. 22nd and pitched their camp about one mile and a half from the fort on the southern side. When the mutinied sepoys had noticed the British soldiers they marched out of the fort to check their advance. They had planted three brass guns on a hill south of the fort and arranged themselves along the eastern side of the fort. A skirmish followed in the morning and continued till 12 noon. Shri Ganesh Sitaram Holkar's Vakeel with the British force at Dhar, gives an account of this battle in his letter No. 4793 dated 23rd Oct. 1857. The British troopers and dragoons charged on the guns of the enemy which were discharging shells on them. The Valayatis who formed the largest number of the Mutinied sepoys made a move to get round to the British baggage and their rear but were frustrated. By noon the English succeeded in capturing three guns of the enemy. About 20

Valayatis were killed, three British dragoons wounded by Sabre cuts, one Jamadar and one Sawar of the Hyderabad Contingent killed and two wounded in this undecisive skirmish. The Mutineers retired in the fort.

Now the British surrounded the fort. On the 23rd Oct. they raised a wall of sand bags on the Khande Rao hill some two thousand yards south of the fort and placing their battery behind the wall constantly threw shells in the fort. On the eastern and northern sides of the fort the British placed strong cavalry units, Irregulars and infantry of the 25th N. I. and H. M. 86th. To the west of the fort was a lake and so no soldiers were posted there. Thus, the British had arranged a trap from which there was no escape for the Mutineers. Besides this, the British reconnoitring parties were sent out and, as Holkar's Vakeel mentions, they shot down many innocent persons suspecting them to be the spies of the besieged Mutineers. The British placed strong guards on the gates of the walled town of Dhar to prevent regular supplies being carried to the mutineers besieged in the fort. But the rebel force had little to fear from the besiegers. They were too safe behind the solid stone walls of the fort and obtained ammunition and gun-powder from the Dhar Government authorities. It was believed that the brother-in-law of the Raja of Dhar was associating himself secretly with the Mutineers.

On Friday the 23rd of Oct. again there was a sharp engagement between the Valayatis and the British soldiers and the former lost four guns to the latter. Suspecting people's sympathy for the Mutineers the Agent to the Governor-General went into the town of Dhar on Oct. 24th. He paid a visit to the Maharaja and addressed a small gathering of the shop-keepers saying—"No harm will come to you, you should bring Ata and Dal to our camp and live without any worry."

Firing from both sides continued on the 24th of Oct. The Valayatis, with the help of the Qiledar of the Fort, recovered from the celler of the fort, four hundred shots and a good deal of gun-powder for their use. But as they did not get much help from the Dewan of the state they commenced firing on the town of Dhar. Whereupon the Dewan sent his agent Laxman Baxi to the Valayatis into the fort to reassure the Valayatis of the Dewan's support and sympathy.

Inspite of the continuous firing for three days the British failed to make any impression on the enemy, 4000 strong besieged in the fort. On the 24th of Oct. they mounted some of their guns on two or three places to try to find out whether they could five their shots into the fort. But they noticed that their shells did not go even as far as the fort. So they now decided to breach the walls of the fort by establishing position for their battery as practicable and near the fort as possible. The south east and north faces of the fort were quite inapproachable and the approaches on all these sides were almost perpendicular, while the walls and the bastions were equally strong, and considerably higher due to the fall of the hill on these sides. Therefore, the British decided to place their heavy guns on the mound facing the western part of the fort nearly four hundred yards from the fort. The place was selected by Major Boilen of the Madras Engineers and on the morning of the 25th of Oct. the cavalry and infantry soldiers took up position on this side and the heavy siege-guns brought from Mhow for the purpose on the 24th were carried on the mound slowly and ponderously by the bulky elephants. The inhabitants of this area were compelled by the besiegers to desert their houses. The Mutineers, besieged in the fort, were not idle. They also placed their guns on the left flank near the palace in the fort and the heavy guns of each side opened the lire on the opposite side. Every time the English fired, the besieged Mutineers replied with the shower of bullets and balls. By this time in the battle, according to the letter of the Holkar's Vakeel, 50 Bhils, 150 Pindaris and 200 others were killed on the side of the Mutineers and their dead bodies were cremated while the English lost 100 including Europeans, Natives, camp-followers and others.

As the fort could not be stormed and occupied easily by the British, they began to create a considerable trouble in the city of Dhar. They plundered the houses of the Kamawasdar (Dhar Govt. Official), Motisingh Thakur and the Zamindar. They picked quarrels with the local merchants, attacked them, looted the Pindarwadi and Bundelwadi localities and committed outrages on the women, killed a large number of men, women and children and thus created a panic in the town. Now the Europeans started patrolling around the town guarding all gates and preventing the entry of persons in the town. Later they posted their guards inside the town at the State palace

and main police Station of the city. They did not hesitate to shoot a person if he was suspected. To appease the British the Dewan of the Dhar State encamped himself in a tent near the British Resident's quarters.

On the 26th Oct. the British commenced the cannonade before dawn taking their 'morcha' on a rising ground at Jaitpura and tried to get into the fort by means of ladders, but failed. As a result of the heavy bombardment the southern bastion of the fort was destroyed together with one of the heaviest guns of the Valayatis called Laxmi. The Vaiayatis could, not fire their suns and rifles effectively because their damp gunpowder was not serviceable.

As their ranks were getting thinner everyday the besieged Valayatis sent fervent appeals to the Govt. officials at Indore that as the standard of "Deen" was hoisted at Dhar all Muslims should be sent to Dhar to fight against the British but in vain.

To terrorise the people and make the storming of the fortress easier, the British set fire to the village at the foot of the fort in the night on the 26th and 27th of Oct. They were helped here by a native guide. The conflagration spread very fast and the whole town was enveloped in flames flickering high and broad. Soon the village was one huge burning pile overshadowed by curling clouds of smoke. Now the British moved their guns all around the fort and placed their heavy guns including eighteen-pounders and twenty-four pound howitzer on the top of the Khanderao hill near the fort and tightened their siege. As a result of this a breach in the wall of the fort was widened considerably and in the evening of the 29th Oct. the British Brigadier received a letter from the besieged Mutineers in the fort requesting to know upon what terms a surrender would be granted. An unconditional surrender was the British reply. On the morning of the 30th the Mutineers hoisted the white flag. Consequently 'cease-fire' was ordered and a British Vakeel was sent to the gate of the fort to hear what the Mutineers had to say. While the conference between the British Vakeel and the representatives of the besieged was going on the leaders of the Mutineers thoroughly examined the breach and decided to take certain precautionery measures. Then they cooly told the British Vakeel that had one of the officers of the Rajah of Dhar been sent, they would have conferred with him and

soon the Vakeel was driven away. This annoyed the British and they resumed the breaching and shelling with greater vigour. Consequently shells dropped in every part of the fort including the palace within. In the battle thus commenced the Mutineers shot dead with others Lieut. Christie, an artillery officer of the British. The battle continued even on the 31st but the Mutineers' firing was not kept up unremittingly. Realising that breaches were very wide, the Mutineers deserted the fort unnoticed by the British. Then the British entered the fort in the night but not a soul was there to welcome them. Overjoyed at their victory the British military officers went about in the palace rooms in the fort with lighted cheroots and this set fire to heaps of loose gunpowder left by the Mutineers and these enormous heaps were exploded forthwith. Consequently Dr. Butler of the Bombay Artillery, Lieut. Thane, Commissary and Lieut. Giles were blown up.

In the fort the British found about thirty brass guns of various sizes and heaps of gunpowder and cannon balls of all sizes lying about upon the various bastions. In some buildings within the fort they found little heaps of grain, powder flasks, belts, shoes, hats, drums, spears, matchlocks, muskets, bayonets, talwars, carpets, tents, linen, copper pots, etc. But the most valuable thing that they found was the enormous chest in the palace. It contained huge silver basins, dishes, plates, cups, lamps, vases and bags of gold muhars. and silver coins, each bag contained 2500 Rupees. In one of the rooms of the palace they found a large four-post silver bedstead with all its trapping in silver. The silver rails, steps, and bells belonging to the bed were all lying in a heap upon the floor. The booty that the English force captured in the fort was 'something less than nine lacs, and this was sent under an European guard to the fort of Mhow.

After acquiring the booty the British force partially destroyed the bastions and walls of the fort and on Sunday the 8th Nov. 1857 at 5 P.M. left Dhar for Mandsour. They left "once stately fort behind them as a heap of ruins, the palace and gates burping piles."

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THE LAST EMBERS OF THE REVOLT

By

G.B. Malleson

IN Haidarabad, throughout the Mutiny, the loyalty of the Nizam and of his able minister, Salar Jung, had been the surest guarantees of peace. In the early days of July 1857 the turbulence of the foreign troops in the service of the Nizam had caused an attack upon the Residency. But the able representative of British authority in that territory, Major Cuthbert Davidson, warned by Salar Jung, had time to make preparations which terminated not only in the discomfiture of the rebels, but in the capture and punishment of the leaders. Of the necessity of disarming one of the cavalry regiments at Aurangabad I have spoken in its place. But the aberration of the mutineers was but temporary. The men returned to their duty, and rendered, with their comrades in the contingent of the three arms, excellent service to the State. A little later, the Raja of Shorapur, a Hindu tributary of the Nizam, broke out into treacherous revolt. But Major Davidson, acting in concert with Lord Elphinstone, called up from the Southern Maratha country the column serving under Colonel Malcolm, whilst the Governor of Madras, Lord Harris, despatched to the spot a force under Major Hughes. The troops of the Haidarabad contingent, under Captain Wyndham, proceeded likewise to aid in the coercion of the deluded prince. The latter, after a vain attempt to lure Wyndham to his destruction, surrendered himself as a prisoner. There can be little doubt but that his mind was affected, for he committed suicide when it was announced to him that, after four years of detention, he would be allowed to resume his position.[1]

Meanwhile, Sir Hope Grant, under orders from Sir Colin Campbell, had proceeded in carrying out his plan for the pacification of Oudh. I last quitted him near Lakhnao, on the 16lh of May. From that date to the end of August he continued his operations, beating the rebels in every encounter, and finally halting at Sultanpur. There he thought it wise to suspend operations till the close of the rainy season. He resumed them in the middle of October, meanwhile, there had been some fighting in Rohilkhand. At Philibhit it became known that the rebels were concentrated in force at Nuriah. Thence they were dislodged by a force commanded by Captain Sam Browne, under circumstances of great gallantry, which gained for that officer the coveted cross. In the turbulent district of Azamgarh, too, the rebels had again raised their heads. They were, however, cleared from the district by a force under Brigadier Berkeley, who, pushing his success, recovered Eastern Oudh as far as Sultanpur, where he touched Hope Grant's force. Rowcroft, meanwhile, with his own troops and the sailors of the *Pearl* brigade, had defeated the rebels at Amorha and Harha; Eveleigh had punished them between Husenganj and Mohan; Dawson had captured Sandela. The British forces rested during two months of the rainy season, but that period was employed by sending Sikhs in steamers up the Ganges to clear the banks of that river.

In October operations were resumed. The rebels began by attacking Sandela. They were held in check by Dawson until, first, Major Maynard. then Brigadier Barker, arrived and inflicted upon them a crushing defeat. In the same month Evcleigh defeated them at Mianganj, and Seator near Shahjahanpur, whilst the Raja of Powain repulsed an attack made upon his fortified town. Sir Colin Campbell, now become Lord Clyde, then resolved to clear the entire province of rebels by acting by columns in all its districts simultaneously. Whilst one column, drawn from Rohilkhand, should clear the north-west of Oudh, and, sweeping all before it, should establish itself at Sitapur, four columns should clear the Baiswara country, another column should guard the Duab, another the Kanhpur road, whilst smaller columns, radiating from Lakhnao, Nuwabganj, Daryabad, and Faizabad should clear the districts around them.

This plan was acted upon with complete success. On the 3rd of November, Wetherall, marching to join Hope Grant, stormed

Rampur Kasia. Hope Grant, joining him there, moved against Amethi on one side, whilst Lord Clyde attacked it on another. The place surrendered on the 8th. The strong fort of Shankarpur was evacuated by Beni Madhu, a noted rebel, on the night of the 10th, and occupied the next day. Eveleigh, following Beni Madhu, caught him two days later at Dundia Khera, and defeated him, taking three of his guns. On the 24th that rebel was again encountered, this time by Lord Clyde, and completely defeated. In the meanwhile the strong places in Eastern Oudh had fallen in succession, and by the end of November that part of the province was completely subdued. Nor had the columns sweeping the northwestern districts been less successful. Troup had cleared the ground as far as Sitapur; Gordon, Carmichael, and Horsford had done the same in the districts south of the Gogra, whilst Hope Grant, catching the rebels beaten by Rowcroft at Tulsipur, had swept them into Nipal. Then Lord Clyde, moving on Sikrora, and in touch with Grant on the one side and Rowcroft covering Gorakhpur on the other, drove the Begum and Nana Sahib before him from Bondi and Bahraitch, cleared the country between Nanpara and the Gogra, then marching on Banki, close to the Nipal frontier, surprised and defeated the rebels, and swept the survivors into Nipal. Jang Bahadur, loyal to the core, informed the rebels who crossed that they must not look to him for protection. He even permitted British troops to come over and disarm any considerable body of rebels who might have sought refuge there.

Lord Clyde, rightly regarding the pacification of Oudh as completed, quitted the province, leaving it to Hope Grant to carry out such operations as might be necessary. What little remained to be done was then done thoroughly. Whilst Colonel Walker crushed, at Bangaon, the more hardened rebels, the survivors of the regiments which had perpetrated the Kanhpur massacre, Grant himself pursued the terrified remnant across the hills into Nipal. Dislodgment alone was necessary, for they had neither arms, nor. money, nor food. Contenting himself with locating troops to prevent their return, Grant reported (May 1859) that Oudh was at last at peace. Thanks to the generous policy pursued by Lord Canning, in confiscating that he might restore with a clear title, Oudh has ever since remained a bulwark of British supremacy.

The pacification of Oudh was the closing act of the drama the curtain of which had been raised in 1857. In the interval Sir John Lawrence had, with characteristic energy, put down an attempted rising in the Gughaira district, turbulent even in the time of Akbar; his brother, George Lawrence, had dispersed the few malcontents in Rajputana; the rebels had been crushed, though after a tedious and desultory warfare, in the Chota Nagpur districts; whilst Western Bihar had, as related, been pacified by the dispersion of the last adherents of the family of Kunwar Singh. When Sir Hope Grant finally cleared Oudh of the last remnants of the rebels,[2] in May 1859, then, and then only, could it be said that the Mutiny had been absolutely stamped out.

Conclusion

On the 27th of January 1858 the King of Dehli had been brought to trial in the Privy Council chamber of his palace, charged with making war against the British Government, with abetting rebellion, with proclaiming himself as reigning sovereign of India. with causing, or being accessory to, the deaths of forty-nine people of British blood or British descent; and with having subsequently abetted others in murdering Europeans and others. After a patient trial, extending over forty days, the King was declared to be guilty of the main points of the charges, and sentenced to be transported for life. Ultimately he was sent to Pegu, where he ended his days in peace.

Meanwhile, in England, it had been found necessary, as usual, to find a scapegoat for the disasters which had fallen upon India. With a singular agreement of opinion the scapegoat was declared to be the Company which had won for England that splendid appanage. Inconsequence it was decreed to transfer the administration of India from the Company to the Crown. An Act carrying out this transfer was signed by the Queen on the 2nd of August 1858.

Her Majesty thought it right, as soon as possible after the transfer had been thus effected., to issue to her Indian subjects a proclamation declaratory of the principles under which she intended thenceforth to administer their country. To the native princes of India she announced then, in that proclamation, that all treaties in force with them would be accepted and scrupulously maintained; that she would respect their rights, their dignity, and their honour as her own; that

she would sanction no encroachments on the rights of any one of them; that the same obligations of duty which bound her to her other subjects would bind her also to them. To the natives of India generally Her Majesty promised not only complete toleration in matters of religion, but admission to office, without question of religion, to all such persons as might be qualified for the same by their education, ability, and integrity. The Queen declared, further, that she would direct that, in administering the law, due attention should be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India; that clemency should be extended to all offenders (in the matter of the Mutiny) save to those who had been or should be convicted of having taken part in the murder of British subjects; that full consideration should he given to men who had thrown off their allegiance, or who had been moved to action by a too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men; that to all others who would submit before the 1st of January 1859 unconditional pardon should be granted.

This proclamation virtually conceded the right the denial of which had so greatly unsettled the minds of native princes, the right of adoption. It was hailed everywhere as a binding charter. In the large centres of India natives of every religion and creed, Hindus, Muhammadans, and Parsis, met in numbers to draw up loyal addresses expressive of their deep sense of the beneficent feelings which had prompted the proclamation, of their gratitude for its contents, and of their loyalty to the person of the illustrious lady to whose direct rule they had been transferred.

Published on the 1st of November 1858, this proclamation immediately followed the complete collapse of the Mutiny. Practically there remained only the capture of Tantia Topi and the expulsion of the remnant of the rebels from Oudh. How these ends were accomplished I have told in the two chapters immediately preceding. In both these cases the conclusion was foregone. It was but a question of a brief time. The rebels in Central India and in Oudh, as well as those few still remaining in Western Bihar and in Chota Nagpur, represented the dying embers of a fire which had been extinguished. It now remains for me to sum up in a few words the moral of the Mutiny, the lessons which it taught us, and its warnings.

But before I proceed to this summing up, I am anxious to say a word or two to disabuse the minds of those who may have been influenced by rumours current at the period as to the nature of the retaliation dealt out to the rebels by the British soldiers in the hour of their triumph. I have examined all those rumours—I have searched out the details attending the storming of Dehli, of Lakhnao, and of Jhansi—and I can emphatically declare that, not only was the retaliation not excessive, it did not exceed the bounds necessary to ensure the safety of the conquerors. Unfortunately war is war. It is the meeting in contact of two bodies of men exasperated against each other, alike convinced that victory can only be gained by the destruction of the opponent. Under such circumstances it is impossible to give quarter. The granting of quarter would mean, as was proved over and over and over again, the placing in the hands of an enemy the power to take life treacherously. It was well understood, then, by both sides at the storming of the cities I have mentioned, that no quarter would be granted. It was a necessity of war. But beyond the deaths he inflicted in fair fight, the British soldier perpetrated no unnecessary slaughter. He merited to the full the character given to his predecessor in the Peninsular War by Sir William Napier. He proved by his conduct that, 'whilst no physical military qualification was wanting, the fount of honour was still full and fresh within him.'

It has been said that, in certain cases, a new kind of death was invented for convicted rebels, and that the punishment of blowing away from guns was intended to deprive the victim of those rites, the want of which doomed him, according to his view, to eternal perdition. Again, I assert that there is absolutely no foundation for this statement. The punishment itself was no new one in India. It was authorised by courts-martial, the members of which were native officers. Its infliction did not necessarily deprive the victim of all hope of happiness in a future life. The fact, moreover, that the Government of India, jealously careful never to interfere with the religious beliefs of the natives, sanctioned it, is quite sufficient to dispel the notion I have mentioned. The blowing away of criminals from guns was a punishment which was resorted to. only when it was necessary to strike a terror which should act as a deterrent. It was in this sense that Colonel Sherer had recourse to it at Jalpaiguri;[3]

and it is indisputable that he thus saved thousands of lives, and, possibly, staved off a great catastrophe.

Whilst on the question of punishments, I am desirous to disprove an assertion so often repeated that it has been accepted as true—that the term 'Clemency Canning' was invented in Calcutta by the men who opposed the policy of the Government of India. The term 'Clemency Canning' had Its origin in a phrasc, 'the Clemency of Canning,' applied by the *Times* newspaper of October 17, 1857, to a circular issued by the Government of India, dated the 31st July of that year, and intended to restrain, prematurely, as the *Times* considered, the hands of its officers. The phrase was not intended to denounce clemency in the abstract, but the offer of clemency to men who believed they were triumphing, who had still possession of the North-west Provinces, and of Oudh. In that sense, and in no other, was it applied. The argument of those who alike in India and in England, denounced the circular may be expressed in these words: 'Put down the Mutiny first, that you may exercise clemency afterwards.'

I proceed now to deal with the two questions I have indicated in. a preceding page—The lessons which the Mutiny has taught us, and its warnings.

The gradual conquest of India by a company of merchants inhabiting a small island in the Atlantic has ever been regarded as one of the most marvellous achievements of which history makes mention. The dream of Dupleix was realised by the very islanders who prevented its fulfilment by his countrymen. But great, marvellous even, as was that achievement, it sinks into insignificance when compared with the reconquest, with small means, of that magnificent empire in 1857-58. In 1857 the English garrison in India was surprised. There were not a dozen men in the country who on the 1st of May of that year, believed that a catastrophe was impending which would shake British rule to its foundations. The explosion which took place at Mirath ten days later was followed, within five weeks, by similar explosions all over the North-west Provinces and in Oudh, not only on the part of the sipahis, but likewise on the part of the people. The rebel sipahis were strong in the possession of many fortified places, of a numerous artillery, of several arsenals

and magazines. In trained soldiers they preponderated over the island garrison in the proportion of at least five to one. They inaugurated their revolt by successes which appealed to the imagination of an impulsive people. At Dehli, at Kanhpur, at Jhansi, in many parts of Oudh, and in the districts around Agra, they proved to them the possibility of expelling the foreign master. Then, too, the majority of the population in those districts, landowners and cultivators alike, displayed a marked sympathy with the revolted sipahis. For the English, in those first five weeks, the situation was bristling with danger. A false move might have temporarily lost India. In a strictly military sense they were too few in numbers, and too scattered, to attempt an offensive defence. It is to their glory that, disregarding the strictly scientific view, they did attempt it. The men who administered British India, recognised at a glance that a merely passive defence would ruin them. They displayed, then, the truest forecast when they insisted that the resources still available in the North-west and in the Panjab should be employed in an offensive movement against Dehli. That offensive movement saved them Though Dehli offered a resistance spreading over four months, yet the penning within her walls of the main army of the rebels gave to the surprised English the time necessary to improvise resources, to receive reinforcements, to straighten matters in other portions of the empire.

The secret of the success of the British in the stupendous conflict which was ushered in by the Mutiny at Mirath and the surprise of Dehli, lay in the fact that they never, even in the darkest hour, despaired. When the news of the massacre of Kanhpur reached Calcutta, early in July, and the chattering Bengali's, who would have fainted at the sight of a sword drawn in anger, were discussing which man amongst them was the fittest to be Chancellor of the Exchequer under the King of Dehli,[4] there was not an Englishman in that city who did not feel the most absolute confidence that the cruel deed would be avenged. There was not one cry of despair—not one voice to declare that the star of Great Britain was about to set. In the deepest distress there was confidence that the sons of Britain would triumph. The same spirit was apparent in every corner of India where dwelt an English man or an English woman. It lived in the camp before Dehli, it was strong in the Residency of Lakhnao, it prevailed

in every isolated station where the few Europeans were in hourly dangers of attack from rebels who gave no quarter. Nowhere did one of them shrink from the seemingly unequal struggle. As occasion demanded, they held out, they persevered, they pressed forward, and, with enormous odds against them, they wore down their enemies, and they won. The spirit which had sustained Great Britain in her long contest against Napoleon was a living force in India in 1857-58, and produced similar results.

How did they accomplish the impossible? The answer must spring at once to the lips of those who have witnessed the action of our countrymen in every part of the world. The energy and resolution which gave the Britain which Caesar had conquered to the Anglian race; which almost immediately brought that Britain to a preponderant position in Europe; which, on the discovery of a new world, sent forth its sons to conquer and to colonise; which, in the course of a brief time, gained North America, the islands of the Pacific, and Australasia; which, entering only as third on the field, expelled its European rivals from India; that energy and that resolution, far from giving evidence of deterioration in 1857, never appeared more conspicuously. It was a question of race. This race of ours has been gifted by Providence with the qualities of manliness, of endurance, of a resolution which never flags. It has been its destiny to conquer and to maintain. It never willingly lets go. Its presence in England is a justification of its action all over the world. Wherever it has conquered, it has planted principles of order, of justice, of good government. And the Providence which inspired the race to plant these great principles, endowed it with the qualities necessary to maintain them wherever they had been planted. Those principles stood them in good stead in 1857. It was the sense of the justice of England which, in the most terrible crisis of her history in India, brought her the support of the Sikhs, conquered but eight years before; of the princes and people of Rajputana, rescued from oppression but twenty-nine years before; of that Sindhia, whose great ancestor was England's deadliest enemy; of the Nizam, our ally since the time of Clive; of Maisur, restored by Marquess Wellesley to its ancient ruler; of Nipal, our nearest independent neighbour. But for the consequences of that sense of the justice of England, we might have been temporarily overwhelmed. Supported by it, the race did

the rest. It showed itself equal to difficulties which, I believe, no other created race would have successfully encountered.

So much for the moral of the story. Mistakes doubtless were made, especially in certain details at the outset of the rebellion. Some injustices were committed, mainly by the men who made the mistakes. But, taking it as a whole, there is no epoch in the history of Great Britain in which the men and women of these islands shone with greater lustre than throughout this period of 1857-59. From the moment he quitted the pernicious air of Calcutta Lord Canning stood in the van, the far-seeing, courageous, resolute Englishman. Lords Elphinstone and Harris, at Bombay and Madras, were in all respects wortiiy of their chief. The three Lawrences in the Panjab, at Lakhnao, and in Rajputana, upheld the glory of that sister island irrevocably united to Great Britain. Scotland contributed Sir Colin Campbell, Sir Robert Napier, Adrian Hope, Lumsden, killed at the Sikandarabagh, Charles MacGregor, and hosts of kindred warriors. Frere in Sind, William Tayler at Patna, Wynyard at Gorakhpur, Spankie and Dunlop in the Mirath districts, showed what great things Englishmen, untrained to arms, left to their own resources, could accomplish. Their action prevailed all over India. There was scarcely one exception to it. To name every man and his achievements would require a volume exceeding in bulk the present record.

So much, I repeat, for the moral of the Mutiny. One word now regarding its lessons and its warnings. The determining cause of the Mutiny of 1857 was the attempt to force Western ideas upon an Eastern people, This was especially the case in the North-western Provinces, where the introduction of the Thomasonian system unsettled the minds of noble and peasant. It was the case in Oudh, where the same system suddenly superseded the congenial rule of the ex-King. Nowhere else in India was the rebellion more rampant and more persistent than in those provinces. Three hundred years previously the great Akbar had attempted to interfere with the village system, but, after a short experience, he had recoiled. He recognised in good time that custom is nowhere so strong as in India, and that interference with that system would uproot customs as dear as their lives to the children of the soil. The English, rushing in where Akbar had feared to tread, met their reward in a general uprising. It is

scarcely too much to assert that in the provinces I have mentioned the hand of almost every man was against us.

More than thirty years have elapsed since the Mutiny was crushed, and again we witness a persistent attempt to force Western ideas upon an Eastern people. The demands made by the new-fangled congresses for the introduction into India of representative institutions is a demand coming from the noisy and unwarlike races which hope to profit by the general corruption which such a. system would engender. To the manly races of India, to the forty millions of Muhammadans, to the Sikhs of the Panjab, to the warlike tribes on the frontier, to the Rohilas of Rohilkhand, to the Rajputs and Jats of Rajputana and Central India, such a system is utterly abhorrent. It is advocated by the adventurers and crochet-mongers of the two peoples. Started by the noisy Bengalis, a race which, under Muhammadan rule, was content to crouch and serve, it is encouraged by a class in this country, ignorant for the most part of the real people of India, whilst professing to be in their absolute confidence. The agitation would be worthy of contempt but for the element of danger which it contains. I would impress upon the rulers of India the necessity, whilst there is yet time, of profiting by the experience of the Mutiny. I would implore them to decline to yield to an agitation which is not countenanced by the real people of India. I entreat them to realise that the Western system of representation is hateful to the Eastern races which inhabit the continent of India; that it is foreign to their traditions, their habits, their modes of thought The people of India are content with the system which Akbar founded, and on the principles of which the English have hitherto mainly governed. Our Western institutions, not an absolute success in Europe, are based upon principles with which they have no sympathy. The millions of Hindustan desire a master who will carry out the principles of the Queen's proclamation of 1858. Sovereigns and nobles, merchants and traders, landlords and tenants prefer the tried, even-handed justice of their European overlord to a justice which would be the outcome of popular elections. India is inhabited not by one race alone, but by many races. Those races are subdivided into many castes, completely separated from each other in the inner social life. If the higher castes are the more influential, the lower are the more numerous. The attempt to give representation to mere numbers would

then, before long, provoke religious jealousies and antipathies which would inevitably find a solution in blood. A rising caused by such an innovation on prevailing customs would be infinitely more dangerous than the Mutiny of 1857. Concession to noisy agitation on the part of the ruling power would place the lives, the fortunes, the interests of the loyal classes of India at the mercy of the noisiest, most corrupt, and most despised race in India. Against such concession—the inevitable forerunner of another rising—and equally against fussy interference with the Hindu marriage-law—I, intimately associated on the most friendly terms, for thirty-five years, with the manlier races of India, make here on their behalf, my earnest protest.

(From author's *The Indian Mutiny of 1857*)

References

1. Of tins episode Colonel Meadows Taylot has written a most in lores liny account: *Story of My Life.*
2. It is believed that amongst these was Nana Sahib, It was always a matter of regret that this man's fate was never certainly known. Many reports regarding him were circulated afterwards: that he had died in Nipal; later, that he had been seen in Gwaharo. But the uncertainty regarding his fate has remained to this day.
3. Page 348.
4. I can personally testify to this fact.