

DELHI IN 1857

By

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PREFACE

The year 1857 is a landmark in the history of the country. It, at least for a time, shook the roots of the most powerful Empire that then existed in the world. It is therefore only proper that its centenary should be celebrated by appreciative remembrance. So far four books have appeared in the market and others may be in the offing. All these books have been for obvious reason written from an all-India angle. They could not naturally be expected to mention details of the movement in any one city, even if it be Delhi. Yet Delhi played the most important part in the movement. Before it started its organisers looked to Delhi for guidance. Once it started all eyes turned towards it, all feet marched thither. Even the British recognised its due importance by concentrating all their efforts for its capture, even at the expense of their other possessions in India. They were rightly convinced that once the city of Delhi fell to them, the movement was doomed and could not last long in other parts of the country.

Delhi, therefore, deserves a deal by itself. Moreover, I belong to Delhi. My grandfather and other members of the family had also suffered along with 1,80,000 of its people who inhabited it on the eve of 1857. I owe them all a debt which I am trying to discharge by reviving the memory of their sufferings through this book. In the words of Bismil who was hanged in the Kakori Conspiracy case, "*Shahidon ki chitaon per jurenge har baras mele,*

Watan per mitne walon ka yehi baqi nishan hoga", with the minor amendment of "*har sau baras*" because it is after one hundred years that we are remembering those martyrs.

Delhi has always held an important position in the political life of the country as it has in its culture. It has been the gate-way of India to those who chose to attack it from the north-west. And all of them, except the British, came from that side. Most of them were attracted by the fertile Gangetic plain but once they conquered Delhi, this city saw to it that they did not go beyond. It satisfied their hunger for wealth, lust for pleasure and need for strong men to work for them as slaves whom they carried back to their country. Thus the city of Delhi has throughout the ages worked as a buffer against attacks on India from the north-west. There were, however, some conquerors who were so bewitched by its beauty that they settled down here permanently. In due course the indigenous culture absorbed them thoroughly by giving them a coat of paint of its own. It softened their rough and uncouth manners with the help of love for art, music, dance, painting, etc.

The British had not entered this country through the Gate of India, that is Delhi. But when they found themselves virtual masters of a great part of the country they too realised that their victory would be incomplete so long as Delhi was not in their possession. They therefore turned their attention to this city and subjugated it in 1803 by defeating the Marathas. Emperor Shah Alam

of Delhi now became their virtual prisoner. He resented the terms they now offered which differed from those they had offered him earlier. But the English knew that they were now the masters of the situation and therefore adopted a firm attitude. The King knew that the alternative before him was still worse and he therefore satisfied his conscience by merely expressing his resentment. His son, Akbar Shah II, who succeeded him in 1806 could also do nothing. But he did send Raja Ram Mohan Roy to England as his emissary to fight out his case before the higher authorities but he had not known that the British character looks to the results and not the means adopted to attain them.

Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar had succeeded his father Akbar Shah II in 1837. He was grateful to the British, for his succession had taken place in opposition to the desire of his father who had wanted another of his sons to succeed him. He therefore did not express much resentment against the British. He did, however, want more money for his expenses as Rs. 1,00,000 allowed him for the purpose was not enough and he had been incurring debts. The British authorities were prepared to oblige him provided he gave up his and his successors' right to the throne and agreed to retire to Monghyr in Bihar. The King did not accept the offer and things continued as before. By the middle of the 19th century the King was too old to have any ambitions left. His conscience was eased if the British Resident and other officers removed their shoes and made obeisance to him by bowing low three times before they saw him in

the Diwan-i-Khas. No doubt he wanted his son by Zeenat Mahal Begam to succeed him but this request was made at the instance of the wily queen and was rejected by the British authorities and the King kept quiet.

But the people would not keep quiet. The language press that had come into existence in the 1830's had been ventilating people's grievances against the British rule. These grievances were many. The artisans had lost their trade with the introduction in India by the British of their mass-produced wares. The kisans were angry because they had lost their land and were reduced to the position of serfs. The aristocracy had lost its only source of employment, the Indian Courts. The common people had lost direct contact with the King who used to mete out justice to them which was quick and satisfactory to both the parties. In its place were now introduced courts which were full of corruption and no justice could be expected of them. Men of character and standing found it derogatory to attend the courts. A corrupt administration was forced on the people which they severely resented. And lastly, they simply did not like Christianity which was being forced upon them by the British rulers. To the Indians, whether Hindu or Mussalman, politics was synonymous with religion. Every action of theirs, whether social, political or economical, was weighed by them in the scales of religion. In the English policy they had seen Christianity in actual practice. It was certainly different from what was preached. A man is judged from what he does and not what he professes.

No doubt the English had enforced a few good reforms. They had abolished the Sati system. But this system had prevailed only in the higher class of the Hindu society where too it was not universally observed. The masses of the Hindus and the Muslims were not at all benefited by its abolition. The introduction of railways was certainly welcomed but they had not understood the telegraph system well enough to appreciate it. They might have liked the schools opened by the British had these schools not been made instruments of conversion. They would have certainly welcomed the hospitals run on Western lines had it not been accompanied by forced stoppage of Tibbi and Ayurvedic systems which had served the people for thousands of years. And why should Christianity deny the right to adopt a son in order to perpetuate the line ? All these actions of the British caused not only apprehensions in the minds of the Indians, they definitely created consternation. The people would at no cost accept Christianity. Those who did were looked down upon and were socially boycotted. In the Indian Christians, as in the English, they saw their permanent enemy and prepared for the day when they could wreak vengeance upon them.

The Indian soldiers serving the British had their own tale of woe. Their grievances have been mentioned in detail in the book.

In the 19th Century, as earlier, leaders of the Indian army came from the aristocracy and the feudal lords. There were occasions when common people did rise to high posts of captaincy but such opportunities were rare. The common people were

not only satisfied but they looked to the higher class to lead them in the field. Now also they looked to this class to lead them against the British.

Since feudal lords had their own grievances against the British they were not found wanting. They took up the organisation of the movement in their hands. Nana Sahib, accompanied by his able aide, Azimullah Khan, visited many towns and cities and established contacts. Maulvi Ahmed Shah of Fyzabad followed up their trail and expanded those contacts right up to Calcutta. Commander Nabi Bakhsh Khan of Bihar kept up correspondence with all the Chiefs and advanced the ground for a complete revolution. Successful contacts had been established between Delhi, the present United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal, Bombay, Satara and Punjab. The Indian troops serving the British were contacted in almost all the Cantonments. The troops were prepared for the revolution by wide-spread distribution of red lotus flowers which they accepted with a nod saying 'Everything will turn red.' And they did turn red many bungalows of the British Officers by firing them mysteriously throughout India. *Chapaties* containing secret messages were distributed among the common people who were asked to keep themselves ready for the appointed time. Maulvis, Pandits, Sadhus and Bards were employed to carry the message of revolt from door to door and village to village. Pandits and Maulvis had actually prophesied the fall of the British exactly one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey, that is, in June 1857. The leaders of the movement, keeping these prophecies in view had fixed May 31 for a general rising against the British throughout India.

The troops were instructed to kill their English Officers and then march to Delhi where they were to collect under the banner of the King of Delhi. Though the King was a Muslim, most of the feudal lords, the chief organisers of the movement, were Hindus, proving thereby that they were all of one mind, and communal feelings did not affect them at all. They had all combined to fight their common enemy, the English, the usurpers of their land and their kingdoms. The King was the natural choice as, though he was then just a nominal ruler, enjoying no powers and rights, yet he still commanded respect from the aristocracy and the common people alike.

Destiny, however, had willed otherwise. A premature rising took place in Meerut on May 10. It certainly upset all the arrangements of the leaders for a general revolt. The latter got so much upset that they simply could not adjust themselves to the new situation. But the movement had already started and it could not be stopped. It took an individual pattern and that concerted action which would have totally unnerved the British and precipitated their fall, was found lacking.

Even so the English could still be defeated. The people's enthusiasm was in mighty form; their desire to evict the English and take revenge on the Indian Christians was vehement. They only wanted a leader or leaders to properly canalise their energy and action. They would fight and gladly die for the cause which was dearer than life itself. But they must be led. The lead, however, never came. No wonder that when a man of the type of Mirza

Mughal who had never even handled a sword, was selected to be their leader things went awry and the result was a foregone conclusion.

Further, in the original scheme the rising had to be general and throughout India, but now it came to be confined to the city of Delhi. This considerably eased matters for the British because they were required to fight the battle at one front only where they could easily concentrate their forces. They indeed sent all their trained troops and experienced generals to Delhi. In the short period of four months they had four commanders-in-chief on the Delhi front. They got valuable support from the rulers of the Punjab, who betrayed the cause of the country, although they should have been the foreigners' most formidable enemy. Punjab was the last province which had been annexed by the British and that too only eight years back. And then they should not have forgotten the treatment the British had meted out to the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But the English were clever. They worked up the emotions of the Sikh rulers by saying that the time had come for them to take their revenge on the Mughal King of Delhi whose forefathers had maltreated and murdered their gurus. The Sikhs fell into the trap and helped them strengthen the chain of bondage on the country for another 90 years.

Thus the first battle of the people for turning the British out of India was lost, but not the cause. The united fight given by the Hindus and the Muslims proved that the two communities were one against any outsider who wanted to impose his

rule over them. They fought on a common platform, under one command and with a zeal and enthusiasm never witnessed before nor likely to be witnessed in future.

Delhi deserves a special tribute. Its people had realised that the eyes of the whole of India had turned towards them. That strengthened their determination to fight the enemy. And they kept the honour of the city intact when they fought the enemy from the house-tops and the streets, with swords and stones, unaided by the soldiers who had either died or fled the field. All glory to those 27,000 men, women and children who sowed the seed of freedom with their blood and all honour to those other thousands who suffered physically, mentally and economically when they were compelled to flee from the city and retire to the jungles where they passed six months in privation followed by death in thousands.

I should be failing in my duty if I do not convey my thanks to the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Shri A. D. Pandit, through whose kindness I have been permitted the use of the material collected by four research scholars under the guidance of the Committee for the History of the Freedom Movement in the Delhi State. I am also thankful to Shri Gopi Nath Aman, the Chairman, and Shri Ram Lal Verma, the Secretary, of the Committee, for their co-operation. Lastly I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Shri Sangat Singh Uppal, one of the research scholars who helped me in the preparation of the first chapter of this book.

N. K. NIGAM,

CONTENTS

	Page
I. The Gathering Storm :	
English oust the Marathas in Delhi —	
The magic role of Delhi in history—	
Peaceful co-existence of communities	
—Conversion strategy—The story of	
William Fraser—The Press — Justice	
and Police — Corruption in high	
places—Open letter by a 'Dishonest	
native'—Revenue affairs—The Indian	
soldiery—Planning the revolt	
II. Delhi as in 1857 : The Meerut revolt :	
Wheat one Re. a maund — Delhi's	
First College — Bahadur Shah—Out-	
break in Meerut	37
III. Battle of the Hindon River : of Badli	
ki Serai : and the Ridge :	
Indian Christians' role—Massacre of	
Europeans — Magazine blown up—	
Bahadur Shah's Firman — Refugee	
Christians massacred — Measures to	
restore order—British C.-in-C. orders	
mobilisation—Battle of Badli ki Serai	
— Battle of the Hindon River —	
Battle of the Ridge—Court hotbed of	
intrigues — Traitor merchants—The	
Soldiers' call—Salutary response—Gen.	
Bakht Khan — Mirza Mughal —	
Bahadur Shah's appeal to the British	
rejected—City in chaos—Hodson's	
espionage system—Rajab Ali, the per-	
fect spy—Recriminations—More court	
intrigues—The Karnal siege convoy—	
Battle of Najafgarh—situation in Sep-	
tember—Bahadur Shah's gesture of	
abdication	47

	Page
IV. The British Offensive : Fall of Delhi :	
Troops dispositions — Kashmeri Gate falls — Street battles on the 17th — Nicholson fatally wounded — The unknown amazon — Bahadur Shah a captive — Zeenat Begam — Mirza Elahi Baksh—A King's prison room—Why the revolt failed — Why the English succeeded — Some estimates	116
V. 'The City of the Dead' :	
The victors' vengeance—A lady's testimony — In villages too — Temples sacked—Return of the people — Jhajjar Nawab deposed and hanged—Fate of other feudal chiefs	148
VI. Bahadur Shah Zafar's Trial	172
Appendix : Queen Victoria's Proclamation	179
Bibliography	185

CHAPTER I

THE GATHERING STORM

English oust the Marathas in Delhi—the Magic role of Delhi in history—peaceful co-existence of communities—conversion strategy—the story of William Fraser—the Press—Justice and Police—corruption in high places—Open Letter by a ‘dishonest native’—Revenue affairs—the Indian soldiery—Planning the Revolt.

Early events connected with the advent of the English are sufficiently known to need narration in the present context, which is restricted to the history of events in Delhi, preceding and during the great upheaval.

The English landed in India in the first decade of the 17th century with a view to developing trade and commerce. Commodities such as cinnamon, cloves and ginger, besides ebony, pearls and precious stones produced by this country and her neighbours had, and still have, a large market in the western world.

In order to regularize the trade relations, in 1615, Sir Thomas Roe made his appearance before Emperor Jehangir and stayed there for three years during which he negotiated a commercial treaty with the king by virtue of which the English were permitted to instal some factories in Bengal and some other parts of the Mughal dominions. The first English settlers were immensely impressed with the high degree of civilisation that prevailed in India then and reported

about it to their kinsmen across the seas in glorious terms.

With the establishment of factories came the necessity to guard them against local marauders, particularly in the unsettled conditions of the 18th century. The guards were armed with the latest foreign arms, and their factories in due course became fortifications with a modernly equipped standing army. This gave the English a position of strength and tempted them to take a hand in the local political squabbles. In the beginning they lent the services of their army against cash payment or similar temporary benefits. The army consisted mostly of Indian mercenary soldiers but led by capable and experienced English officers. This army more often than not influenced the decisions of the feuds in favour of the party on behalf of which it fought and thus slowly came to acquire an importance that later weighed heavily with the local feudal chiefs. In view of the politically disturbed conditions, the English arms were almost always in demand, sometimes at more than one place; and as there was no dearth of money, the English went on increasing their force from time to time.

The decay of the Mughal Empire had already started during the last days of the reign of Aurangzeb who was the last of the mighty Mughals. After his death, there was no *de facto* Mughal emperor, perhaps with the exception of Bahadur Shah who ascended the throne in 1707 and died very early, who could prevent the tottering empire from dismemberment and complete moral and political bankruptcy. Men of enterprise had a

heyday and carved out little principalities for themselves from the Mughal empire. The Court at Delhi itself became a hotbed of intrigues and even the life of the king was not considered safe. He became a tool now in the hands of the Afghans, then of the Rohillas, and again in those of the Marathas.

The English who had by then come to possess a rather considerable army, were not mere passive spectators of the scenes at Delhi. They took full advantage of the turmoils in the Court and legalised their position in 1717 through a *firman* from the then ruling Mughal Emperor which Orme afterwards declared as the Magna Carta of the East India Company. The wars of successions of the forties in the south of India invited interference of Europeans and slowly but steadily, quite unnoticed, the English came to assume power in the land which could no more be ignored.

Prince Ali Gohar, son and heir-apparent of the titular Emperor Alamgir II, fearing for the safety of his life, had fled to Lucknow in 1758 and on the death of his father, had declared himself successor as Shah Alam. He was still staying with Shuja-ud-Daula, Nawab Vizier of Oudh, when the English came into conflict with the Nawab. Shah Alam fought but was betrayed and the English snatched from him the Diwani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa and consolidated their power in the area by obtaining the Nizamat of the region from the Subedar of Bengal. They fixed a pension for the Mughal Shah Alam.

But the conditions in the Court of Delhi once again changed; and after some time, while the English were still thinking of making some move,

the Marathas forestalled them and were appointed Vakil-i-Mutlaq (Regent of the Empire) at the Delhi Court. In fact, the Mughal king became a dependant of the Marathas who actually ruled the empire, or whatever was left of it, in the name of the king. The English who had been using Mir Jafars and Amin Chands for increasing their dominion in India, thus found themselves baulked of the prize of Indian empire, and they sensed that the ambition would be unachievable so long as they did not control the destiny of the king at Delhi, for that name still roused the imagination of the people of India.

True the king had power but in name and no loyalty attached to his person, yet all respect was shown to the dynasty as the Imperial name was still an important political asset. The Marathas who governed his empire in his name called themselves as *Fidvis*, or servants. Coins in various parts of India were issued in his name, and even the East India Company had embossed his name on its coins. Princes and persons of the highest rank and family still wore the titles and displayed the insignias of rank which they or their ancestors had obtained from the throne of Delhi. The Mughal emperor continued to be acknowledged as the only legitimate fountain of similar honours.

ENGLISH OUST THE MARATHAS

This was the time, the beginning of the 18th century, when the British were engaged in Europe with their crucial struggle with the Napoleonic France. The French in India had also been taking part in the local strifes and intrigues though not on

the scale on which the English were. Yet they did constitute a danger which the English had to reckon with. This fact was realised by the Indian princes too, who had no liking for the English and in whom they saw their future doom. The Mughal king was not an exception.

The Delhi king, as stated before, was at this time under the domination of the Marathas who appointed Perron, a Frenchman, as the commandant of the Delhi Fortress. In fact, Lord Wellesley was quite apprehensive about him and had spoken with exaggeration about the "French state erected by M. Perron on the banks of the Jumna." Consequently the English found an excuse, in which they were past masters, and attacked Delhi and won the battle against the Marathas at Parbatpore, near Delhi, on September 11, 1803, under the leadership of Lord Lake. This was made possible paradoxically by the defection of Perron to the English. Lake then lost no time in presenting himself before the king and announcing his victory. While doing so, he observed all the forms that ruled the Court then. He delivered presents to the king as the Liege Lord of the Honourable Company. The king in return bestowed upon him the second title of the Empire, thereby signifying his acceptance of the English as his subjects. The title ran, "Sumsam uddaula, Ashghah-ul-Mulk, Khan Dowran Khan, General Gerard Lake Bahadur, Fateh Jung" (Sword of the State, the hero of the Land, the Lord of the Age, and the Victorious in war").

Wellesley had, prior to this event, proposed terms to Shah Alam, which were to govern his relations with the English. But now that the king was

almost a prisoner in their hands, he changed those terms and the following terms were imposed upon the king :

1. That a specified portion of the territories in the vicinity of Delhi, situated on the right bank of the river Jumna, should be assigned in lieu of provisions for the maintenance of the royal family.

2. That those lands should remain under the charge of the Resident at Delhi.

3. That revenues should be collected and justice should be administered in the name of His Majesty Shah Alam, under regulations to be fixed by the British Government.

4. That His Majesty should be permitted to appoint a Diwan and other inferior officers to attend at the office of the Collector for the purpose of ascertaining and reporting to His Majesty the amount of the revenue which should be received and the charges of collection, and of satisfying His Majesty that no part of the produce of the assigned territory was misappropriated.

5. That two Courts of Justice should be established for the administration of civil and criminal justice according to the Mohammedan Law, to the inhabitants of the city of Delhi and of the assigned territory.

6. That no sentence by the criminal courts extending to death should be carried into execution without the express sanction of His Majesty to whom all trial proceedings of this description should be reported, and that sentence of mutilation should be commuted.

7. That to provide for the immediate requirements of His Majesty and the royal household, the

following sums should be paid monthly in cash from the treasury of the Resident at Delhi:—

To His Majesty for private expenses	... Rs. 60,000
To Heir-Apparent inclusive of jagirs	... Rs. 10,000
To the favourite son of the king	... Rs. 5,000
To two other sons of the king	... Rs. 1,500
To his 50 younger sons and daughters...	Rs. 10,000
To the King's treasurer	... Rs. 2,500
To the British Agent at the Court	... Rs. 1,000
	Rs. 90,000

8. That if the produce of the revenue of the assigned territory should hereafter admit of it, the monthly sum to be advanced to His Majesty for private expenses, might be increased to one lakh of rupees.

9. That in addition to the above specified sums, the sum of Rs. 10,000 should annually be paid to His Majesty on certain festivals, agreeably to certain usage.

Thus the assigned district—which was nothing other than the Delhi territory—was placed under the charge of an officer styled as Resident and Chief Commissioner of Delhi. The king retained exclusive civil and criminal jurisdiction within the palace while throughout the territory justice was to be administered in the name of the Emperor. The fiscal arrangements were under the control of the Resident. The authority of the Emperor was to be a harmless fiction.

The new arrangements certainly inflicted a grave injury to the royal family. Nevertheless Lake continued to address the king in the style of a sovereign, acknowledging the position of the

British Government as the *Fidvi*, the servant of the king.

Thereafter followed insidious attempts by the English to curtail even the meagre powers of the king. Their one object was to remove him altogether from Delhi so that they might be considered supreme rulers of India, which they were unable to do so long as the feudal lords and chieftains looked to the king at Delhi for favours. They declared their attitude towards the king as "complimentary recognition of a nominal sovereignty."

Lord Hastings, however, did not like even this and emphatically urged the need for declaring that "the pretensions of British sovereignty should be unveiled." He did not want the notion of the paramountcy of the king of Delhi to prevail as it was "dangerous to uphold for the Mussalmans rallying point sanctioned by our acknowledgment that a just title to supremacy exists in the king of Delhi." Even the promised stipend was not paid to the king. Hastings further refused to follow the ceremonial procedure of the Court while visiting him. His successor, Lord Amherst, even changed the style of address hitherto in vogue. The *nazars* (presents) which the Company's representatives had been presenting to the king were stopped. This last shocked king Bahadur Shah so much that he stopped the annual *jashan*, the ceremony commemorating his accession to the throne.

A news item which appeared in the *Delhi Gazette* of March 17, 1849, will be found of interest to show the working of the English mind at that time vis-à-vis the king of Delhi. It reads :

“It is asserted by the native papers, and we believe on the whole with correctness, that the king having applied to Government for a sum sufficient to relieve him of his debts, and for the increase of stipend, sanctioned by the Home Authorities, has been told in reply, by the Lieut.-Governor, N. W. P., that such increase can be paid to him, and his debts be discharged (they are said to be $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs) on certain conditions of which the following are some :—

“That the king and all members of the royal family shall give up for ever all rights and titles in the lands, villages, houses, he and they may respectively possess in and about Delhi, including the Channey Choke (Chandni Chowk) garden (a very hotbed of malaria in the town), Kote Kassim and other places.

“That the pensions of the individual members of the family shall cease on their demise.

“That a specified number of the present inhabitants of the palace (including all collateral branches, but not the immediate descendants of Shah Alam) shall quit its precincts and reside elsewhere.

“That the king shall send quarterly to the Agent, a return of the deaths that may have occurred among the pensioners.

“That a school shall be established in the palace at the expense of the king for the benefit of the children.

“That the palace shall be repaired under the superintendence of the Agent, at the expense of the king.

“That the pensions of all the members of the

family shall be disbursed by the Agent or his assistant, and lastly,

“That the king shall defray the expenses of the Palace Guard.

“His Majesty is understood to have declined compliance with these ‘very reasonable’ terms.”

MAGIC ROLE OF DELHI

The English occupation of Delhi, it may be noted, has a significance well worth recalling in its ancient historic background.

Beginning from the Epic age, when Indraprastha and Hastinapura were both situated about the region comprising the modern city and its suburbs the locality has been, as it were, the mystic fulcrum of power and authority. In one name or the other, it has been the starting point of many a glorious, powerful and extensive empire and in turn it has suffered destruction, plunder, rapine and even total annihilation. It has been on the one hand a seat of culture, art, music and civilisation, while on the other hand, it has been governed by mad kings, jealous rulers and vicious men. It has, however, assumed a sort of immortality. Seven times in the recorded history it has been destroyed so far only to give birth to a New Delhi which finds an honoured place in the map of the world today.

Delhi's immortality is derived from the fact that in relation to the rest of India and particularly the bewitching fertile Gangetic plain which has tempted many a soldier of fortune, it occupies a position of fundamental strategic importance. All the invasions from the north-west have been made

fowards Delhi. While many invaders after conquering it, returned to their country full of looted wealth, sturdy men and beautiful women, some could not withstand its charms and settled down here as rulers. They had come to conquer it but were conquered by it. They adopted India as their own and became its citizens.

This had happened with the Aryans who were later followed by many other races—Scythians, Huns, Kushans and lastly the Muslims.

All these people had come to conquer India, pushed the original inhabitants further south and settled down here permanently making India their home. With the exception of the last named, the Muslims, all the newcomers had been absorbed in the society of the land, and had in return adopted the religion that was prevalent in this country. In fact, many of them went so far as to date back their origin to Sun and Moon and called themselves as Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi.

But the Muslims had a different notion about their religion. At the time of their advent in India the Hindus had already developed a watertight caste system which would not permit admission to outsiders. Thus the Muslims, who were not very staunch in the beginning and who might have followed the example of their predecessors, did not get an opportunity of mixing freely with the Hindus and perforce developed their own ways.

Having settled down in India as rulers, they enjoyed a kind of superiority over the Hindus at least for some time and this superiority helped them in augmenting their number at the

expense of caste-ridden Hindus whose religion had permeated every aspect of their life. Nevertheless even these Muslims adopted India as their country, so much so that even when their co-religionists invaded India, they combined with the Hindus to repel their attacks. To them, their existence in India weighed more than their religion. Thus, for example, Ibrahim Lodi had joined forces with Rana Sanga to fight against the attack of Babar although the latter was a Muslim as was Ibrahim Lodi. No doubt there were local struggles between Hindu rulers and Muslim rulers but they were fought for either increasing dominion or for possession of beautiful women. Such fights took place not always between the two communities only. They were waged between followers of the same religion as well. And in most of these, the Muslims of India never thought of inviting their co-religionists from beyond the borders of Hindustan. They, on the other hand, often sought the help of local Hindu rulers to oppose Muslim invaders. However, there were instances of Hindu rulers inviting Muslims from outside India against other Hindu rulers. Jai Chand had thus invited Shahabuddin Ghorī to join him to fight his kinsman, Prithviraj.

PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF COMMUNITIES

Before the English came to have a deciding influence on the politics of India, the Hindus and Muslims had almost reached a mutual adjustment in political, social, economic and religious matters. There were no communal strifes between the two communities. There used to be discourses on religion but without bitterness or acrimony.

Holi, Dewali, Dussehra, Idd and Moharram were observed by men of both communities. In the court of the Mughals, there were many Hindus occupying high posts and the army had as many Hindus as Muslims. The Muslims similarly occupied high posts in the courts of Hindu Rajas and Maharajas. In short, merited honours were awarded to the worthy, irrespective of caste or community. Various kingdoms were carved out for wealth and power but religion did not play any part in them. Foreigners who chose to serve the Indian masters did so on equal grounds and did not possess or at least display any feelings of superiority of race, religion, colour or custom. This was true of the 18th and the 19th centuries when many of them had adopted India as their home and had settled down here permanently.

This attitude may have been true of the English in the earlier stages but when they had assumed effective political importance it changed drastically. They now openly started asserting their superiority. Perhaps they too might have behaved conformably with the other foreigners had their destiny not been controlled from thousands of miles away. The Board of Directors of the East India Company as well as the Board of Control were making appointments in England which were made for a certain specified years and every Englishman who came in their service to India knew that he had to return to his country after the contracted period. Thus, he mostly kept himself isolated from the people of India. This isolation turned into haughtiness and even boorishness when circumstances had

given him importance in the politics of India much beyond his expectation.

This unwholesome psychological attitude could not be stemmed, despite a despatch by the Board of Directors to the East India Company stating : "True policy prescribes that we should rest satisfied with the degree of respect, submission and attachment which our strength and skill in arms, our wisdom and beneficence in governing may prove for us. Our pre-eminence over the natives on these qualities is, we trust, sufficiently conspicuous and acknowledged."

Their decidedly better arms, their experience of battles acquired in their wars with France, and the Machiavellian tactics in which they were past masters, had enabled them to win a victory over the Marathas in Delhi, ostensibly with a view to exhibiting a proof of sincerity and friendliness and holding out a pledge to defend the rights of the king such as they were. But no sooner did they come out victorious they forgot their promises and protests of loyalty ; for, after all, the control of the king's aspirations lay in the strings of the purse which were in their hands and which they tightened whenever they wanted to bring pressure on the king. Truly did Canning say on the question of succession of Bahadur Shah in 1837, "..... The last few years had seen not only an extension but a remarkable consolidation of the British power in India." That consolidation was made at the expense of the king of Delhi who had been losing his status slowly but surely, so much so that he was left with no right to chose his successor to the nominal throne of Delhi. Akbar

Shah II did not want Bahadur Shah, the English nominee, to succeed him but he was forced to acquiesce. The story was repeated when Bahadur Shah wanted his son by Zeenat Mahal Begam, Jawan Bakht, to succeed him but his wishes were not respected and he was definitely told that he could not have any choice in the selection of his successor which rested with the British only.

CONVERSION STRATEGY

The English had been changing their attitude in another respect also. This was in connection with their attitude in respect of religion.

The English had by now assumed so much political power and status in India that they gave thought to permanent consolidation of their rule. But that was not possible so long as there were Hindus and Muslims who had known them to be the usurpers of their land. Perhaps another idea had entered their mind and that was of their superiority of race, religion, and customs over the indigenous population. They thought they were God's good men sent to India to civilise the pagans of India with the help of the Christian religion.

Wrote Queen Victoria to Lord Dalhousie on November 24, 1854:

"The progress of railroad will make an immense difference in India and tend more than anything else to bring about civilisation and will in the end facilitate the spread of Christianity which has hitherto made but very slow progress."

Thus through the propagation of Christianity, they would not only serve the cause of religion but would also ensure for themselves permanency as

rulers of India. They did not expect any opposition to their rule from the local population provided they were Christians as the latter would then have a community of faith and feelings, hence loyalty. At best they would ask for home rule or self-government which it would be possible to grant as in the case of their other dominions, of course, in due time.

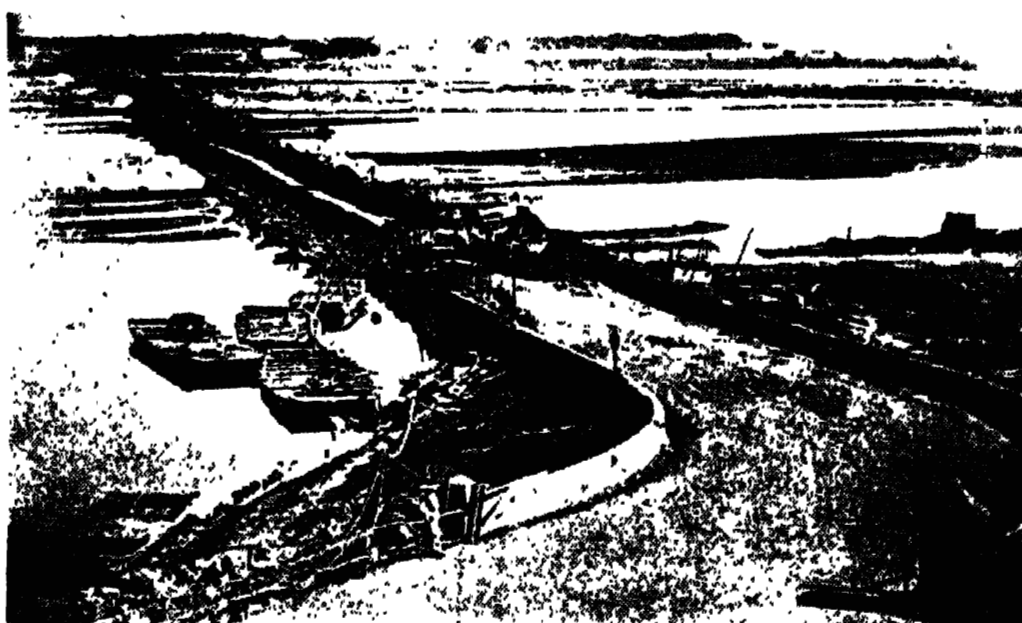
They put their idea of turning the Indians into Christians in practice by giving inducements to the people at large. Schools were opened where not only English was introduced but Bible class was made compulsory. Girls were encouraged to discard *purdah* and they too were given all sorts of temptations to become Christians. Hospitals were started where those versed in the alien system of treatment were put in charge and practice by local *vaids* and *hakims* was totally banned. Missionaries were given full freedom and were even enthusiastically encouraged to preach Christianity.

Convertes to Christianity were offered high posts in civil and military departments. The English promised to make every sepoy who accepted Christianity a *havildar* and every *havildar* a *subedar*, and so on. The people did not relish such temptations and those who did give up the religion of their forefathers to become superior officers were looked down upon by other Indian soldiers. These converted soldiers were despised by their own relatives even and stood ostracised by the society.

The Muslims found themselves particularly hard hit. Not only had they lost their political power; even their morals and culture were affected. It was at this time that a great reformer arose



Delhi College, which was stormed by Indians on May 11, 1857.



The Boat Bridge at Jamna.

among them—Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi. He stood for purification of Islam and preached for weeding out all malpractices that had entered Islam during its political ascendancy. Apparently what had started as a religious reform, in course of time turned into a political movement.

On Wali Ullah's death his son Shah Abdul Aziz took up the cause and wrote and preached against not only the Jats, the Marathas and the Sikhs but he took up cudgels against the English as well. He called them foreign capitalists who had created in India a lot of mischief. Influenced by his preaching, Sayed Ahmad Bareilvi took up the cause of liberation of India from the English. He toured the country, addressed thousands of Muslims and showed them the danger to which they were exposed by the advent of the English. Openly, however, he preached against the Sikhs only but the Muslims of that time knew well that all his tirades were meant against the English. The conversion of people through the medium of Delhi College and mission schools was making its impact on their susceptible mind.

The conversion of Ram Chandra of Delhi, a Kayastha belonging to a respectable family, had caused consternation throughout India. Maulvis and Pandits flocked to his house from all over the country and there was a lot of religious controversy. Chamanlal, another Hindu, was also converted. Even the king Bahadur Shah did not like their conversion and offered to convert them to Islam if they were not satisfied with their own religion. Both of them lost caste with their relations and friends. The wife of Ram Chandra, all

his relations and even his servants ceased to have anything to do with him. He even lost his patrimony which was later restored to him by the English by changing the law in his favour.

Naturally, the Hindus and the Muslims united against the English in their common suffering. Their indignation was publicly displayed at the murder of William Fraser in Delhi.

THE STORY OF WILLAM FRASER

William Fraser had been at Delhi for quite a long time. He was a handsome young man and an agreeable companion but was quite unprincipled and known for his licentious character. He was removed from the Residency previously for lack of integrity. His sternness in revenue collections had depopulated a number of villages, renowned for their self-sufficiency and good behaviour. He had earned a fair degree of notoriety among the people. He was regarded as typical of British oppression—rightly or wrongly.

In 1832, there was a nominal change in the States of Delhi Agency. Delhi, now, came under the newly constituted North Western Province with headquarters at Agra. The man at the helm of affairs at Delhi was to be known as Agent. William Fraser was appointed to act as Political Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General. The new appointment was a god-sent opportunity which, however, lured him to death. Honour of no woman with a fair face was safe from him. For once, he overstepped all limits when he seduced the beautiful cousin of Nawab Shamsuddin of Loharu, a very

close friend of Fraser, treated almost as a brother by the Nawab.

The Nawab regarded Fraser's treachery as a personal insult and a dishonour to his family. He is said to have conspired against him which resulted in Fraser's being shot dead by one Karim Khan. At his death, the people of Delhi did not conceal their joy which turned into sorrow when their hero, the Nawab, was arrested, tried at Delhi and hanged.

The proceedings of his case were fully reported by *Sultan-ul-Akhbar* of Calcutta which strongly criticised the court proceedings and praised Nawab Shamsuddin as a true patriot. Eight thousand people attended the last rites of the Nawab—so popular had he become among the people of Delhi. His servant Karim Khan who had murdered Fraser, and who was also hanged, was given by the people the title of Gul Shahid; a *mazar* was built by the people over his grave which was daily visited by thousands of people. The native press, which had recently come into existence, utilised this occasion to impress upon the people ideas of self-respect and charms of liberty.

THE PRESS

Round about this time, in 1835, liberty of press was announced by Sir Charles Metcalfe through Act XI. It caused a furore among the British politicians. But it did give an opportunity to the Indian mind to ventilate its grievances through a number of papers which came to be established immediately thereafter. These grievances were mostly against the English and were freely ventilated in various papers everywhere. They demanded political

rights, opposed the activities of the Christian missionaries in converting Hindus and Muslims with material inducements. They expressed in unmixed terms their resentment at the criticism which the English press was then making of Indian social and religious beliefs and practices.

The English press in those days used to criticise the Government of the day with a view to improving the administration but the Indian press translated these and quoted them against the government, pointing them out as so many shortcomings of the government, thereby broadening and deepening popular discontent. As a matter of fact, they were preparing an intellectual background for the people to rise against the English. They are reported to have put deliberately perverted interpretations of administrative facts, emphasising with exaggeration official omissions and commissions. Durand very aptly summed up their attitude in one of his minutes : "The ill disposed were thus able to excite the race antipathies of the masses and fanned their hatred by appeals to prejudice and passion which could intensify disgust at a foreign race and rule." *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar* specially carried propaganda against the British openly and fearlessly. Maj.-Gen. Sir John Malcolm remarks in *The Political History of India* : "It may be affirmed from the most authentic documents that for the last 35 years, there has been in different parts of India a most active circulation of inflammatory papers, in the form of proclamations, letters, prophecies, etc., directed to the subversion of the British power, all directed to the native troops."

These newspapers were owned by common men

and were not supported by the feudal class. They were read by common men, They indeed had much influence upon the strata of Indian society below that of the chiefs and perhaps had the greatest influence among the intelligentsia with national aspirations.

The Hawking publications, half-an-anna brochures, also played not an insignificant part in increasing discontent against the English. They were different from the newspaper class as they provided half a dozen extracts from religious books, provocative accounts from the campaigns in Sind, Punjab, Afghanistan, also a considerable veneer of theology, forms of prayers, etc. They also contained passages inculcating patriotism.

Thus, the feelings of discontent against the English which were dormant before or which might have passed on from mouth to mouth or which may have been ventilated from mosques and temples, schools or other social or religious gatherings, came to be expressed publicly immediately they found a medium. For, it cannot be said that the papers took to the ideas of freedom only from the English press. On the other hand, they used the writings of the English press in their own favour, turning the facts against the government. The moment freedom was granted to express their views freely, they came out with wholesale condemnation of the English rule, giving all the causes of their resentment and opposition. The English press of the time as also English authors have blamed them for distorting facts. That may or may not be true. Even if we agree with this criticism it has to be conceded that they did not like the English rule even if it

was good as was claimed by the rulers. They wanted their own government and were not satisfied with good government only. Even papers owned by converted Indians, such as Ram Chandra, viz., *Fawaid-ul-Nazarin*, and *Mahboob-i-Hind*, were preaching ideas of self-assertion and patriotism whereas papers like *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, *Sad-ul-Akhbar*, *Nur-e-Mashriqui*, *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, etc., openly condemned the English rule. And they became more popular than those which confined their activities to scientific and cultural developments, because they gave expression to the feelings of the people at large.

What was resented most, however, both by the Hindus and Muslims, was that with the abolition of *purdah* the English had started enticing beautiful women of both communities whom they kept as their mistresses or sometimes married. This practice of open conversion of the local population by all possible means had generated among the people the utmost hatred.

JUSTICE AND POLICE

Not less loathsome was the administration of justice that they had introduced wherever they had authority. The Indian form of administration of justice, before their entry in this field, may have been barbarous in their opinion. But it was certainly better than what prevailed in the United Kingdom a few years before.

The indigenous system was swift and certainly appreciated by the people. The English introduced their system here which the people did not relish. It was imposed upon them from above much against

their will. Charles Metcalfe thus wrote about it : "We should deceive ourselves if we were to suppose that the system of justice which we have introduced is acknowledged to be such a blessing as we conceive it to be. That it performs considerable good there can be no doubt ; but like most human institutions it has its attendant evils. These are felt more than its benefits and our courts of justice are generally spoken of with disgust, with ridicule or with fear, and seldom if ever, with cordial approbation and respect...."

He further recorded that the courts were not only unpopular but seats of corruption. A man with a bad case would resort to court more often than one with a good case. Perfidy by witnesses was so prevalent that "it is disgraceful for a respectable man to give evidence in the courts." The courts were considered as sources of litigation and disturbance of peace in families. They were spoken of with horror by those who had suffered and with derision by those who had not. They were regarded as mere lotteries from which any decision could be expected but not justice.

Administration of police was as bad as that of justice. William Bentinck wrote about it : "The police is universally condemned as a source of general oppression....The police management is beyond measure oppressive ; everyone in or out of authority admits fully the extent of their exactions and tormenting and exacting conduct. The police would exact hush-money to proceeding with a case." In fact the pages of judicial records of the times are full of animadversion. Corruption simply made a mockery of their judicial decisions.

CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES

And then, it was not only confined to the courts or the police. It had sunk deep down in the civil administration as well. Even the highest officers were involved in corruption which they justified on grounds of their predecessors in the office having done so. The case of Sir Edward Colebrook who was Resident at Delhi is a glaring example. A local account described the affair thus: "In his time Ram Gopal and others of his dependants made bribe run high (*rishwat ka bazar garam kiya*).” In less than two years Colebrook sent to Calcutta Rs. 2 lakhs—surely not all that was saved from his salary. He was suspended from the office and William Fraser was appointed in his place. Fraser openly took the side of Colebrook and allowed him to continue to perform certain functions except those of the political office, so that "the prestige of an Englishman might not suffer in the eyes of the Indians." Colebrook when charged with the offence of corruption and bribery replied that he had, after all, followed the custom practised by his predecessors Charles Metcalfe, Ochterlony and Seton. The effect his dismissal was supposed to exercise on the Indian mind was described by Colebrook himself thus: "So disgraceful to the British rule, so injurious to our native subjects and calculated to render us so unpopular and contemptible in the eyes of our neighbours that I consider it my duty to the State which I have served for half a century to warn the public of the fatal consequences to be expected."

But Sir Colebrook was wrong. Had he been allowed to continue in office the Indian mind would

not have suffered less. It had already measured the Englishmen in more than one respect and had found hiM much inferior to himself. Metcalfe was right when he wrote: "It is proper to consider what would be the effect of such a system on the attachment of our subjects. It is evident that we do not at present possess their hearty affections. There is no reason why we should. There is necessarily a wide separation between them and us, arising out of our being foreigners and conquerors and the difference in colour, country, religion, language, dress, manners, habits, tastes and ideas." This was written in 1815.

The conditions had not changed a whit in 1836 when William Sleeman passed through India. He wrote: "Wherever we go, we find the reign of a great government passed away...—a reign that must tend to keep alive the recollections and exalt the ideas of it in the minds of the people. Beyond the boundaries of our military and civil stations we find as yet few indications of our reign or character to link us with the affection of the people. *There is hardly anything to indicate our existence as a people or as a government in this country* and it is melancholy to think that in the wide extent of the country over which I have travelled there should be so few signs of that superiority in science and arts which we boast of and really do possess and ought to make conducive to the welfare and happiness of the people in every part of the dominion. *The people and the face of the country are just what they might have been had they been governed by police officers and tax-gatherers....*"

OPEN LETTER BY A "DISHONEST NATIVE"

In fact, the taxation was very heavy and the administrative machinery both inefficient and insufficient. Holt Mackenzie said about it in his famous minute: "Instead of taking the people as they existed, we forced them into all incongruous positions to meet inapplicable laws, and their properties were necessarily thrown into a state of indescribable confusion from a system of revenue management conducted without judicial investigation and of judicial decision without revenue knowledge."

The common public reaction to the Englishman in India was very correctly and properly expressed by an Indian in a letter to the Editor of the *Delhi Gazette* of July 10, 1847. It read:

"Hon. Sir, I am a *dishonest native*. You may put me in the Commissariat Department, if you wish. I require to know why you cry out so much against us? Why do you call the 'State' or 'Sirkar' that we rob? What I understand is this: 'my forefathers were the possessors of this country, and everything in it.' How comes it that you and the 'State' and the 'Sirkar' are here? You must have robbed all that we possessed and if we take back a portion of it, we only take our own. Is there any great fault in doing this? Say what you wish about your own caste and colour but you cannot justly complain of us as being rogues."

The Industrial Revolution in England, in the meanwhile, had been changing the structure of economy there and it was bound to have repercus-

sions in India. India before the Industrial Revolution in Europe had been known for its manufactures which were exported by the English in large quantities all over Europe. But with mass production in their own country they wanted markets for their produce. Which could be a better market than India where, with the help of their political hegemony, they could dump their surplus? The handloom products of India thus gave way to the imported cloth from England. Spinning wheel was relegated to the background and the Indians were simply compelled to wear the imported cloth.

People thus found themselves more miserable than ever before. Famines occurred very frequently. During the British times, India had scarcity years in 1770, 1783-4, 1803-4, 1813-14, 1819, 1825-26, 1827-28, 1832-34, and 1837-38. Previous to their coming in, famines were few and far between. These oft-recurring famines left the people, mostly the peasants, in grinding poverty. And the peasants felt that the English were responsible for their misery.

REVENUE AFFAIRS

The administration of Delhi territory is linked with the name of Charles Metcalfe who in various capacities had remained here for over twenty years. To him the sturdy village zamindars were all robbers, the village republics and the panchayats were robber bands, and every village was a den of thieves. He had toured the region in 1807 and had made revenue settlement that year. Thereafter settlements were made every three years and even for longer durations.

Two changes were made by Metcalfe. One was the payment in cash instead of in kind and the second was the total elimination of the Delhi bankers as middlemen. These changes were unpopular, as they had adversely affected them. The Government had made sure of its revenue while the kisans were not sure of their crops. Formerly, the *lagan* was always collected in kind, depending upon the crop from year to year. The kisan had no occasion to suffer from want in any lean year, nor did he have necessity of going in for loans from the mahajans.

The English had from the start over-assessed the holdings and no wonder Metcalfe boasted in 1815 that the revenue of the territory of Delhi had increased in six years (1806—1814) from Rs. 4 lakhs to Rs. 15 lakhs. The mode of collection was very often short-sighted and oppressive. The kisan had no incentive left to till his soil. He had hardly any resources left to meet the unjust demands of the Government. His land from time immemorial had belonged to him which no government before the English had alienated from him. Now the British changed the law, of course under the influence of the mahajans, so that the land of kisans who had failed to pay the tax, could be confiscated and then auctioned to the highest bidder who was invariably of the mahajan class. A perusal of contemporary records shows that the villagers deserted their homes *en masse* rather than face a settlement officer. Not unoften against the settlements concluded the word 'deserter' was written. After all that notorious Fraser was the revenue assistant for over twenty years.

The system of *begar* (forced labour) was also employed on a very large scale. *Begar* was more prevalent in the villages situated on the road-side. People even tended to desert their villages and settle down elsewhere, away from the main road, so that they may not be called for *begar*.

The country groaned under the shackles of an overpowering demon that brought nothing but misunderstanding, sickness, hate and misery. (Theodore King.)

To sum up the conditions that existed on the eve of 1857 : The feudal lords, the various princes and the king of Delhi were opposed to the English because they had lost their power and authority, being usurped by the English.

The aristocracy, whose fortunes were bound up with those of the feudal lords, found themselves deprived of their only source of income, status and respect. The future of their sons was now absolutely bleak.

The common people had come to hate the English because their religion was being daily undermined. They too had lost opportunities of finding useful service. The *kisans* were opposed to them because they had lost their land and had incurred heavy debts.

The artisan class had its own tale of woe. Their workmanship was known wherever India was known from the dim days of Egypt. They had developed their art in hundreds of years and had reached a perfection that was unrivalled at that time. But that did not suit the English. They sought to introduce their own machine wares in India. They therefore took steps which hit the

artisan class directly. Their art thus died out and they were left with no alternative vocation. Their number was not small, and if they cursed the English for their misfortune it was no wonder.

THE INDIAN SOLDIERY

Then there was that class among, Hindus and Muslims, who used to sell their services for money. It were they who constituted the main army of the English in India and fought battles for them both in India and outside and won many a victory for them. It was with their help that the English traders had settled down as rulers. They were professional soldiers who could fight but could not lead. They appreciated the able leadership of the English officers and chose them as their masters. Of the Indian soldiers' bravery even the British officers used to boast saying that their battalions had broken French regiments in fair and open fight and had advanced in the face of dangers where even the British soldiers had flinched. These loyal fighters too were disillusioned, for they were a sensitive people and possessed a measure of self-respect. In their association with the British they realised that all higher posts in the army were reserved for the white-skinned and that they were to serve mainly as cannon fodder. Their salaries were low, their diet was poor and living conditions abominable. In every battle they bore the brunt of attack. They marched in front while attacking and covered the retreats. They put up with all these humiliations because they had accepted the British as superior fighters. But the discomfiture of the British in the Afghan War in 1842 and also

at Chillianwala against the Sikhs disillusioned them. Moreover, when they learnt later, after the disaster, that the British had tried to save their skin in Afghanistan at the expense of the Indian troops who were allowed to be killed and their women made captive, their resentment grew strong. They now realised that after all the British soldiers were not superior to them in any way.

There was still another cause of resentment. Originally they were required to serve in India only and for service out of the then bounds of India they used to get an extra allowance. But when they were sent to conquer Sind the allowances were stopped and the complaint against this was treated with contempt. This led to widespread indignation in the whole British Indian army, and their confidence in the justice, honesty and the word of their white masters was severely shaken. To crown it all, yet another regulation (the General Service Enactment Act) by Canning was passed according to which every Indian soldier could be asked to serve anywhere in or outside India.

To these various insults the decision of the army officers to have a common communal kitchen for both Hindus and Muslims worked as fuel to the fire. Further Lord Dalhousie made another enactment by which soldiers, whose pay was Rs. 7 per month were henceforth required to pay for their postage and all the road tolls whenever they used the roads.

Zakaullah has admirably enumerated the causes of disaffection in the Indian army in his book *Mutiny of India* thus :—

1. The Hindu soldiers should not put *tilak* on their foreheads.

2. They should not wear earrings.

3. The Indians should use hats.

4. They should shave off their beards.

Other causes that increased disaffection among the Indian soldiers were :—

1. They were not given the rank of officers beyond that of Subedar.

2. The Tommies did not salute Indian officers.

3. The English officers would use wrong language on parades and the responsibility was thrown on Indian soldiers.

4. The English Tommies got more pay than even the Indian officers.

5. *If an Indian died in the battlefield his children were left unprovided for, to die of starvation.*

6. *Sir Arthur Wolseley had ordered that wounded Indian solidiers should be shot dead instead of being administered medical aid.*

7. *The English officers started to mix with and make amorous approaches to Indian women.*

8. *Excuses were always found to deprive them of pensions to which they were entitled by law.*

Thus the ground was ready for them to raise their standard against their white masters.

The common man had his own grievances. The Government started hospitals for the sick and issued an order that private practitioners must not attend sick people. In prisons food was cooked collectively which gave the people an idea that the English wanted to do away with the caste of the people. Such people when they came out of jail bereft of beards and moustaches, were treated



Delhi Bank in Urdu Bazar, Jama Masjid after it was damaged
on May 11, 1857.



Remnant of Magazine which was blown up
by Englishmen on May 11, 1857.



The remains of Badli ki Serai where a fierce battle was fought on June 7, 1857.



Observatory at the Ridge.

strangely by their own 'relations and as outcasts. The missionaries all the time were persuading both Hindus and Muslims to bring their womenfolk out of the *purdah* which tended to disrupt their peaceful family life. Family life was already disturbed when sons were advised not to marry before they attained a given age.

Thus the masses irrespective of class or community, or whatever part of the country they lived in, were disgusted with the English. They did not like their system of education; they did not like their hospitals; they did not like their courts nor their administration or the police. It was high time, they considered, that these foreigners should be made to leave the shores of India.

But who would make them leave the country? They would not leave of their own accord; and the people by themselves could not start or lead a movement against them. Such leaders could come from that class only which was accustomed to lead. They were the various rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, feudal chiefs. These too had their grievances against the English, aggravated since 1849 when Dalhousie introduced the system of Lapse. It was they who, feeling the pulse of the people at large and finding it favourable for a revolt against the foreign ruler, took up the organisation of the movement in their own hands.

PLANNING THE REVOLT

It thus came about that letters were passed between Bahadur Shah of Delhi, Nana Sahib of Kanpur, Begam Hazrat Mahal of Lucknow, Rani Laxmi Bai, Jhansi, Commander Nabi Bakhsh of Patna, Kunwar

Singh and Amar Singh of Jagdishpur, Bihar, and a host of other leaders. Nana Sahib accompanied by his counsellor Azim Ulla Khan toured northern India and made contacts with popular leaders. Maulvi Ahmad Shah of Fyzabad toured the same territory extensively ; and visited Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Meerut, Patna and even Calcutta. **He adopted the queer but effective method of distributing chapatis which passed from village to village thus covering a great part of the country. These chapatis probably carried messages hidden inside them.** This system was later adopted by Maulvi Rajab Ali when he passed secret reports to the English from Delhi city, the reports being hidden in the bread.

Red lotus flowers were distributed in the army and the receivers used to nod and say, "Sab lal ho jaega" (all will become red) by which they probably meant that bloody work was ahead. Both these practices—distribution of lotus in the army and of *chapatis* in the villages—were sensed by the English as a warning. Theodore King remarks about them : "All that history can record with any certainty is that the bearers of those strange missives went from place to place and that even as they went excitements were engendered and vague expectations raised..."

"Letters were sent throughout India from regiment to regiment, from town to hamlets, from village to city, even up to the very presence of the various thrones of India."

These were all real and sincere countrywide efforts that were made by the rebel leaders. Mysterious premonitions followed. A number of fires

were reported all over India in which the bungalows of Englishmen were burnt mysteriously but most likely with lighted arrows. The pattern was the same throughout and must have been inspired by one source. The distribution of the Enfield cartridge in the army was another occasion which caused excitement in all the Indian armies serving under the British.

Thus most of the people of India, belonging to both the major communities and belonging to almost all classes except money-lenders who had become big zamindars with the help of the English, had sentiments against the English and wished their departure from the shores of India if not their total extermination. They, however, needed a common incentive. This common factor was religion which all of them valued more than their lives and for which they were prepared to suffer and die. And it was this factor which was capitalised by the leaders who appealed to the people in the name of religion. This appeal was a direct, effective hit, as it touched the sentiments and emotions of the people at large.

With popular discontent so well pronounced and the message of revolt carried far and wide, in city and village there was scarcely possibility of failure. But fail it did.

It had been planned that the revolt was to start with the army, followed soon after by people of all classes in all provinces. The day fixed for the first shot was May 31, 1857. But as fate would have it, the first shot was fired in Meerut 21 days earlier on May 9, when by reason of an insult to some of their comrades (see next chapter for details) the

simmering rage boiled over somewhat prematurely, eventually upsetting the leaders' plan.

"Among the many lessons the Indian mutiny conveys to the Historian," writes Forrest, "none is of greater importance than the warning that it is possible to have a revolution in which Brahmins and Sudras, Hindus and Mohammedans, could be united against us and that it is not safe to suppose that the peace and stability of our dominions, in any great measure depends upon the Continent being inhabited by different religious systems, for they mutually understand and respect and take a part in each other's modes and ways and doings. The mutiny reminds us that our dominions rest on a thin crust ever likely to be rent by titanic fires of social changes and religious revolutions."

CHAPTER II

DELHI AS IN 1857 : THE MEERUT REVOLT

Wheat one rupee a maund—Delhi's first College—Bahadur Shah—The outbreak in Meerut.

In 1857, the main city built round about the Red Fort was known as Shah Jehanabad. Although it was founded by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan, yet it was known as the New City, the old one being the present Mehrauli, which it seems had received special attention from the last Mughal, Bahadur Shah. The New City was surrounded by a city wall seven miles in circumference. It had seven gates, viz. Kabuli, Kashmiri, Mori, Lahori, Ajmeri, Turkman and Agra also known as Delhi Gate. It had four rather small gates, Rajghat, Nigam Bodh, Lal Darwaza and Kala Darwaza, and two *Khirkhes*, small openings, Khirki Farashkhana and Khirki Patni Mal. The city wall had eight bastions for defence. It was 24 feet high and seven feet wide.

The city's population has been placed between 1,60,000 and 1,80,000 at the beginning of 1857. *Fawaid-ul-Nazarin*, edited by Ram Chandar, in 1846, gave the census of the city thus: The city had 12 thanas, 500 Chhatar Mahals, 18,327 pucca houses, 7224 kacha houses, 9780 pucca shops 166 kacha shops, 261 mosques, 186 temples, and 196 schools. The population consisted of 71,530 Hindus, 66,120 Muslims, and 321 Christians. In terms of sex, there were 50,060 males, 51,540 females, 20,278 boys

and 16,693 girls. Of course, there was an admixture of Sikhs and Afghans which have not been separately recorded.

The main street of the city was *Chandni Chawk*, gay and lively and famous for jewellers. • It had wide roads, with a canal running in the centre alongside a pucca platform and shaded trees on either side. At every hundred yards there were domes where the wayfarers could find shelter as also drinking water. If one looked down on this street from the Fort, the city on the southern side had narrow streets and congested houses and on the right were bungalow-type houses, with grassy compounds and shady trees where men with better means lived. On the eastern side of the city wall lay the Red Fort, by the eastern side of which flowed river Jumna.

The Red Fort, as is well known to students of history, was built by Shah Jehan. Its walls $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference, were 110 feet high on the river side. It had at that time cost the king one crore of rupees. On all sides of the Fort, except the one on the river side, was a moat 75 ft. wide and 30 ft. deep which was always full of water so as to make the walls of the fort not easily accessible. The two gates of the Fort, Delhi and Kabuli also known as Lahori, could be approached through draw bridges only.

The three sides of the Fort were thickly inhabited by people of fair means. The site now known as Parade Ground and also the site of the present railway station and yard were thickly populated. A mosque, known as Akbarabadi mosque, had stood in front of the Fort in the Parade Ground.

WHEAT RE. A MAUND

Prices of all articles were cheap, very cheap when compared to the present-day price index. And so were the houses. Wheat was sold at one rupee a maund and ghee at four seers for a rupee. Milk was available at six pies a seer. Vegetables were so cheap that three pies worth sufficed for a big family. Homespun cotton cloth filled the shops, but wool was not much in evidence. Foreign goods were few but were being progressively introduced by the British. Though generally lanes, the famous *galis* of Delhi were narrow and rather ill-kept, as they are even today; the main roads were in fine condition and Chandni Chawk was specially maintained as a beautiful bazar. The lowest coin current was a cowrie, a shell, 100 of which could be had for a pice.

Darya Ganj, known as Darriao Ganj, was the abode of well-to-do Englishmen, Indian Christians, and Muslims and the houses there were of the bungalow type. Such bungalows were built also outside the Kashmiri Gate and had extended up to Metcalfe House. Mostly Englishmen resided in those houses. There were a number of suburbs surrounding the city. Besides these, relics of some 52 bazars and 36 mandis may also be found in the city as it was on the eve of the 1857 movement.

Life at the opening of the year was apparently tranquil. Mughal courtiers, Hindu and Muslim merchants and British officials lived side by side. The Court was a centre of culture. Hindus dominated the commercial life and the British conducted the administration. There was free exchange of civilities and observance of communal festivals,

at least some of them, was common. While Muslims enjoyed Diwali and Holi as well as Basant, the Hindus observed Moharram and Idd. There was no religious tension whatsoever. The usual cause of contention between the two—the slaughter of cows at Idd-uz-Zuha, was avoided by confining the slaughter to houses. The King always stood firmly against the infrequent requests of some Muslims to kill cows openly.

DELHI'S FIRST COLLEGE

Delhi was passing through a renaissance in literature at this time. English had been introduced through Indian Christian converts such as Prof. Ram Chandra the mathematician, and Mukandlal and Chamanlal, the first Indian allopathic doctors. Science was being taught and popularised among the people. Nazir Ahmad, Zia Uddin, Mohammad Hussain and others were doing notable service to Urdu literature. One of the prominent institutions in Delhi then imparting education on Western lines was the Delhi College situated outside Ajmeri Gate. It was founded in 1792 and was in the beginning devoted exclusively to Oriental teaching and maintained by voluntary contributions—all managed by a committee. In 1829 an English Department was added through the munificent gift of Rs. 1,70,000 by Nawab Fazal Ali Khan of Lucknow.

Prof. Ram Chandra joined its staff in February 1844 as a science teacher on a salary of Rs. 50 per month. He belonged to a Kayastha family of Roshanpura, Egerton Road. His father Sundar Lal, was a Naib Tehsildar. He was converted to Christianity through his contacts in school with mission-

aries, who also worked as teachers, in 1854. He started a journal in Urdu, *Fawaid-ul-Nazarin* in 1845, which contained science talks and information on scientific subjects. It was a fortnightly paper and its facing page had pictures of historical importance, such as of kings, old buildings, etc. The professor used to write articles on the title page photos. He was also keenly interested in women's education. According to him education of women did not mean merely reading a few prescribed books. They should be taught domestic science and hygiene. He also argued for separate syllabuses for boys and girls. That he was an Indian first and Christian afterwards is indicated by his articles on patriotism, which according to him must have Self-Assertion as its first requisite.

BAHADUR SHAH

In May 1857, the last Mughal Emperor of the Timur Dynasty, Mohammad Sirajuddin Bahadur Shah Ghazi Zafar, was resident in the Fort. He had ascended the throne in 1837, on the death of his father, Akbar Ali. His succession was at the instance of the British and against the wishes of his father whose choice was another of his sons. Bahadur Shah in 1857 was 82 years old. He was short in stature and infirm, but his face was handsomely cut and he did possess an air of refinement. The British while placing him on the throne had reduced his pension to Rs. one lakh per annum and restricted the domain of his rule to 12,000 souls that lived in the Fort. When Bahadur Shah urged increase of his pension, he was asked to surrender his vested powers, the Fort and his residence in

Delhi, which he boldly refused as stated earlier.

Bahadur Shah II was a man of culture and upright character. In the words of Charles Metcalfe (in 1826), "he is undoubtedly the most respectable, the most accomplished of the princes, the most worthy of His Majesty's love." He lived simply and dressed simply. No doubt, he was ill-suited to military leadership for want of experience. However, he was a noted philosopher, a renowned poet, a patron of arts and a man with humane ideas. He was not a religious bigot or a fanatic.

Dr. Spears has described Bahadur Shah very eminently thus: "Taking him all in all Bahadur Shah presents a pleasing if not heroic figure. That he lacked the greater gifts of personality is obvious; that he possessed real abilities and a certain charm is equally clear. He had the courage of his race and showed it when he faced the twice mutinous mutineers and protected Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan from their vengeance. His later misfortunes brought out a quality of stoic endurance of suffering which must inspire respect in the least friendly. Judged by the evidence available by the standards of his time and in relation to the peculiar difficulties of his position, Bahadur Shah stands as a dignified, cultured, intellectual and not an unsympathetic figure."

The Court, however, was full of intrigue and corruption, though it was still the fountain from which culture flowed throughout India. Zauq and Ghalib, Dagh and other famous poets adorned the Court and many a well-attended *mushairas* were held under the patronage of the King.

Thus Delhi appeared to be enjoying a peaceful

and calm life. The feelings against the British were there as an undercurrent but the surface was quiet. They put up with the *ferunghi*, the foreigner, because he was the real ruler, and the King still commanded their respect. The people would daily go behind the Fort to the riverside where the King would give them *darshan*, a sight-audience, and would also listen to their grievances and accept petitions although he knew he could do nothing. If such petitions carried any complaint against the British he would pass them on to the British resident asking him to redress the grievance. He did certainly take action if any complaint was made against any of his own courtiers. He held his Darbar daily in the Diwan-e-Khas where only courtiers had access. The public Darbar was held in the Diwan-e-Aam.

The English had realised the importance of Delhi as the ruler's capital. Yet they could not station their important forces here because the Emperor was still the legal ruler and the presence of a large force serving the British would have been resented by him. Meerut was the nearest station, hardly forty miles from Delhi, which was ideally suited for the purposes of a cantonment. So they built it up as a big military station and maintained a large army there. As there were not many British soldiers at that time, they had engaged the services of Indian soldiers who had stood by and served well in all their battles so far. Although many among the British army officers had of late suspected the loyalty of the Indian troops yet they had no other alternative but to carry on with them, as there were not enough Anglo-Indians or Indian Christians to replace them. But they were certainly on their

guard. Events had been happening in other parts of India where the Indian troops had broken discipline and the English officers had to shoot them down. The English thought such summary punishment would serve as a preventive to others. Every tyrant thinks that severity can completely eradicate opposition. He conveniently ignores or is oblivious that the spirit of a phenomenon is invincible. It may be suppressed for a time but it re-appears with double force at a suitable opportunity.

The English rulers in 1857 believed in, as all old tyrants, stern suppression and cruelty ; but their complaisance was rudely shaken by the refusal of the men of the 3rd Light Cavalry to use the newly issued Enfield cartridge which, according to them, was smeared with the lard of the cow and the pig. Instead of attending to their just grievance, the British officers decided to teach them a lesson. They marched them to the field, arraigned 85 of them, tore off their uniforms, sentenced them to 10 years' or 5 years' rigorous imprisonment, manacled, put them in bar fetters and marched them to jail through the streets of the city of Meerut.

This was an ignominious punishment, and happened on May 9.

When the soldiers of that unit and those of 11th and 20th N. I. went to the city in the evening, they were rated and taunted by the women, mainly public women, who offered them bangles. A rebuke from a woman is insulting to the dignity and honour of a man. Coming from a prostitute it was doubly so. These soldiers returning, ashamed and indignant to their unit decided to revolt immediately, forgetting that such untimely action would disturb

the whole programme. On the morning of May 10 they broke out in revolt, killed the white men, women and children that they came across and marched towards Delhi.

It is not clear why the Indian troops who had revolted did not finish off the English troops there, a rather small but very important task. Perhaps there was no leader to guide and there was confusion among them. They wanted to have some one under whom they could fight : and that some one, they thought, was some 40 miles away—Delhi. No doubt, the King's impotence was well known but that was the very reason that he should be declared and upheld as King so that the pristine glory of Timur's dynasty might be restored.

The Emperor still had greatness in the eyes of the princes and people of both communities. The seven surrounding states of Delhi, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Farrukhnagar, Pataudi, Dujana, Loharu and Ballabgarh still owed allegiance to the Emperor though in name only.

Bahadur Shah, was, however, weak, decrepit and senile. He had lived a life of peace and had no desire to be disturbed in whatever pleasures he was enjoying. True, he did not like the British, still he had resigned himself to his fate and was therefore rudely shaken by the arrival of nationalist troops from Meerut on the morning of 11th May.

On May 10, Simon Fraser, the British Resident of Delhi, had been warned through a letter of the impending arrival of the nationalist forces at Delhi. But he kept the letter in his pocket, went to a dinner, drank heavily and slept over the letter. When he read it the next day, it was too late and

this laxity in duty proved fatal not only to him but to 139 men, women and children of his community, as will be seen in the following pages.

CHAPTER III

BATTLE OF THE HINDON RIVER : OF BADLI KI SERAI : AND THE RIDGE

Indian Christians' role—Massacre of Europeans—Magazine blown up—Bahadur Shah's Firman—Refugee Christians massacred—Measures to restore order—British C.-in-C. orders mobilisation—Battle of the Hindon River—Battle of Badli ki Sarai—Battle of the Ridge—Court hot bed of intrigues—Traitor merchants—The soldiers' call—Salutary response—General Bakht Khan—Mirza Mughal—Bahadur Shah's appeal to British rejected—City in chaos—Hodson's espionage system—Rajab Ali, the perfect spy—Recriminations—More court intrigues—The Karnal siege train—Battle of Najafgarh—Situation in September—Bahadur Shah's gesture of abdication.

On the morning of May 11, the King was enjoying the morning breeze from his Jharoka opening on the Jumna side when the first troops arrived from Meerut. He was taken by surprise. They beseeched him to lead them under his command but he was unwilling. Instead, he sent for Capt. Douglass, the Commandant of the Palace Guards, through his courier Ghulam Abbas. Douglass and Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan, who was the king's chief adviser and personal physician, remonstrated in vain with the troops who then marched towards Rajghat Gate in the south.

The King, having decided to have nothing to do with them, ordered all the city gates to be closed. According to Zahir, in *Dasten-e-Ghadar* written

after the great turmoil, the Rajghat Gate was got opened by Hindus who were wont to use *that gate* for going to take bath in the Jumna. This gate opened on Daryaganj where then lived the Europeans, Anglo-Indians and the Indian Christians. The advance group of national troops from Meerut entered the city by this Gate and were joined by the 38th Regiment.

The main rebel force was approaching in strength from the Jumna Bridge of boats. The British forces made attempt to blow up the bridge but the gun could not be moved from the magazine at Kashmere Gate for want of bullocks.

British officers stationed outside Kashmere Gate on learning of the arrival of nationalist troops in the Fort, marched down the 54th N. I. to Kashmere Gate where they met the rebels. Thereupon a British officer who had Indian troops under his command ordered them to fire on the nationalist force. The order was ignored. When the order was repeated they turned their rifles against the officer, a colonel, and shot him. Thereafter they marched back to their camp in the cantonment.

In the meanwhile massacre of Europeans and the Indian Christians had already started in Daryaganj.

THE INDIAN CHRISTIANS

A digression is here necessary to indicate the role of the Christians, the converted ones. During the days of Akbar, when the English had first entered India, Christian missionaries had not made their appearance. They were all merely tradesmen. But it is a well-known historical fact that wherever

an Englishman made his appearance as trader, he was followed by missionaries who under various guises prepared the grounds for political interference and meddling, eventually leading to the Englishmen's control of the country concerned. So it happened in India. It was later, in the seventeenth century, that the English missionaries came to India and started preaching Christianity with the permission of Emperor Jahangir. It is also stated that Jehangir had married a Christian woman, Mariam by name.

Had these missionaries been truly spiritual-minded they would have confined their activities to the preaching of religion. If this were so perhaps India would have absorbed them without any spirit of animosity. But with the assumption of political power by the English in India the influence of a sort of coloured Christianity also spread. It went beyond the limits of religion and entered the day-to-day life of the common man.

Clearly the social conditions in India in the 17th and 18th centuries were different from those that prevailed in Europe. Were they not different and better three centuries earlier when European travellers had admired India to the certain disadvantage of European countries?

The missionaries, however, wanted to introduce their ill-digested doctrines and customs in India, both on the Hindu and the Muslim people. For example, *purdah* was observed by the women of both communities. Female education was confined to whatever could be taught at home and the girls were not sent to any school. Promiscuous living, if any, was all hidden and was not treated as a

matter of open gossip. But the missionaries openly preached against all these customs. They opened schools where they invited women of both communities to join. They asked them to discard *purdah* and those who did were openly courted by the foreigners. In fact, many women of both the communities adopted Christianity and married foreigners.

Another class which accepted conversion to the newly introduced religion was the lower castes of both communities who were under oppression by the higher caste compatriots, and who were now offered not only equality with their previous oppressors but even a higher status. There was, however, no intermingling of this class with the foreigners and they were given a place in the new hierarchy only next to the Anglo-Indian or Eurasian that had come into existence as a result of marriages between high class Indian women and foreigners.

In the administration under the English in India, that is, wherever they were in power, preference was given to the people of their own community, then came the Eurasians and lastly the Indian Christians. The Hindus and the Muslims formed the lowest rung of the social ladder. It was but natural that both the communities looked with justifiable envy and indignation towards the Christians who incidentally took satisfaction by behaving haughtily. They were thus all the time harbouring a spirit of latent anger and this wrath burst open against the Christians at the start of the great upheaval in May.

The Indian troops, specially those imbued with

the national spirit, had sufficient experience of the Christian soldiers taking sides with the English. For instance, when in the Bengal army the revolt started, the Christian soldiers sided with the British and betrayed the Indian soldiers. Again, when the Indian troops in Bombay had completed their plans of revolt and were about to carry it out, the plan was betrayed at the last moment by a native Christian sentinel, resulting in the arrest of the national leaders. The plan of revolt there was thus nipped in the bud.

The Anglo-Indian community, as a matter of fact, considered itself a part of the ruling race and, encouraged by the English, their behaviour right up to the advent of freedom in 1947 had been anything but desirable. A change was discernible after 1927 when their delegation to the British Parliament under the leadership of Henry Gidney, to get their class recognised as Europeans had failed, when the wise among them felt convinced that their future lay with India. Not many among them, however, listened to this wise counsel and emigrated to Australia but had to return to India as the treatment meted out to them there was not such as to encourage them to settle there.

MURDER OF EUROPEANS

The Indian troops in revolt, joined by others at Delhi, murdered all Europeans and Indian Christians whom they came across and then proceeded towards the Red Fort. Since the revolt was not expected for some days still, Delhi troops were taken by surprise. These murders which started with the arrival of soldiers from

Meerut, were not pre-planned. But the pent-up feelings of nationalists against the English and the Christians burst out and the common people of Delhi, including bad characters, joined in the massacre as well as the loot that followed.

“There was a scene of fearful uproar and confusion,” wrote J. W. Kaye, “which filled the old King with bewilderment and terror. The murderers with the blood-stained swords in their hands, went about boasting of their crimes and calling upon others to follow their example.

“The courtyards and the corridors of the palace were swarming with the mutineers of the 3rd Cavalry and the 38th and soon the Meerut Infantry Regiments began to swell the dangerous crowd, whilst excited Muhammadan rabble mingled with the Sepoys and the Palace Guards.”

The condition in the city was growing worse and worse every moment. While the Indian troops on the Kashmere Gate side had allowed the Europeans to depart in peace that could not be said of those in the city. It is also true many of the latter were given shelter by the residents of the city but mostly no white-skinned or European-dressed person was safe from the city goondas who had joined the uprising in numbers. Their property was looted and burnt. The Delhi Bank, situated in the present Urdu Bazar near Jama Masjid, was looted and the building burnt along with its European Manager and other inmates. Some 49 of them, men, women and children, were, however, rounded up and marched to the Fort where they were received by Bahadur Shah and kept there in safety.

Among the slain were Captain Douglas, Simon

Fraser, the Commissioner, Hutchinson, the magistrate, who all met their doom that morning, though against the wishes of the King, who actually wanted to help them but the situation was beyond his control. Somehow, Theophilus Metcalfe, Resident of Delhi, escaped to Jhajjar from where he left for a safer place later. Among the bad characters roaming the city were the prisoners kept in the Delhi jail who had been released by the jailor, Lala Thakur Dass.

It was in these conditions that the King was approached once again by the Nationalist forces to become their head. What was he to do? The city was in ferment, conditions were growing worse every moment and the goondas were having the time of their life. It would not be surprising if the King remembered his own grievances against the British. He must have worked it out that if he were to join the nationalist forces he had nothing to lose if the battle were lost. In case of victory he was to benefit immensely. He, therefore, bowed to destiny, adjusted himself to the circumstances and took the plunge. In this he was helped by the great enthusiasm of the princes. Mirza Mughal was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist forces at their request.

Earlier, when the Nationalist forces arrived in Delhi the magazine situated between the Kashmere Gate and the Fort (where the present G. P. O. stands) was in the possession of British troops. There were some nine of them with Lt. Willoughby in charge. They decided to save the magazine at all cost and if that was not possible to prevent its falling into the hands of the Nationalists.

At about 3-30 p.m., some Indian soldiers approached and said they were sent by the King to take charge of the magazine. This long lapse of time shows the state of confusion that must have prevailed in the Nationalist ranks. It also indicates the unpreparedness of the forces at Delhi; and it is quite likely the soldiers were not sent by the King, as he at that time had not made up his mind to join the revolt.

MAGAZINE BLOWN UP

The magazine was said to have had more ammunition than at any other place in India. Its capture by the Nationalists would have made a material difference to the course of the war that followed. Anyhow when Captain Forrest and Lt. Willoughby realised that they were unable to save the magazine they blew it up. This caused death to some 300 Nationalist troops and spectators, while only seven English lives were lost. Forrest and Willoughby escaped and reached the British camp safely.

The King by this time had apparently cast his destiny with the Indian troops, but he was nervous. Delhi too cast its lot by doing away with all the symbols of the British, such as the Union Jack, the English type of dress, etc. ; even English words were taboo. The Nationalists swore to keep aloft their own flag at the cost of their lives.

Things, however, did not move so smoothly as conditions were still fluid. The goonda element, always lying low and waiting for a suitable opportunity, now came out in the guise of Nationalist wrath and started arson and loot indiscriminately.

The Delhi College, situated outside Ajmeri Gate, was burnt. Its principal, Taylor, was saved by his Muslim servant and later removed to the house of Mohammad Baqar between Mori Gate and Ajmeri Gate. Prof. Ram Chandra was also attacked but he was saved by his Hindu brother, Shankar Das. Other Christians done to death by the goondas were Mohanlal, Chamanlal, Badridas, Munshi Rudramal, Ghulam Mirza, Juli Begam and Hamid Ali as they had given shelter to Europeans.

Gama Pahalwan, a notorious outlaw of the time, was a prominent figure among the rowdies. Shops were looted, rich houses were plundered and burnt and the city was for all purposes, except those of the goondas, dead. These awful scenes continued on the 12th May when the King decided to go out in a procession to the city to appeal to the people to restore order.

According to Zahiruddin the looting mob consisted of soldiers, coolies, cobblers, dhobies, bhisties, kanjars, butchers, wrestlers, pick-pockets, etc. besides goondas. Bahadur Shah appointed Faiz Ullah Khan as City Kotwal and charged him to bring about order in the city. A city magistrate was also appointed to try and punish the guilty. At his instance shops were reopened and business was resumed.

BAHADUR SHAH'S FIRMAN

After giving his assent he held a Durbar on May 12, in the Dewan-e-Aam and issued a *Firman* to the following effect :

“To all the Hindus and Mussalmans of India,—
Taking my duty by the people into considera-

tion at this hour, I have decided to stand by my people. Whoever shows cowardice at this delicate hour, or whoever in innocence will help the cunning English, believing in their promises, he would stand disillusioned very soon. He should remember that the English will pay him for his faithfulness to them in the same manner as they have paid the rulers of Oudh. It is the imperative duty of Hindus and Mussalmans to join the revolt against the English. They should work and be guided by their leaders in their towns and should take steps to restore order in the country. "It is the bounden duty of all people that they should, as far as possible, copy out this *Firman* and display it at all important places in the towns. But before doing so, they should get themselves armed and declare war on the English."

The issue of this *Firman* was followed within two days by the King's approach to the British stating that he was not with the movement. The *Firman* must, therefore, have been issued by the Nationalists who would have encountered not much difficulty in getting it signed by the King.

But obviously the King had not reconciled himself with the new situation. Perhaps he had been forced by the circumstances to take some action but always with a reservation, for he took the first available opportunity to write to the Lieut.-Governor at Agra that he was with the British but a prisoner in the hands of Nationalists and that he wanted the British to intervene. A special messenger was sent by the King to Agra but he returned

without any reply as the British had decided not to take any action on Bahadur Shah's request. In the meanwhile events were moving fast and there was no time to wait for any action from the British. Bahadur Shah had to take a decisive stand or give way to his son Mirza Mughal who had thrown himself in the movement wholeheartedly.

Here it has to be noted Bahadur Shah was forced to appoint his son Mirza Mughal as Commander-in-Chief, although the latter had perhaps never handled a sword. Equally incapable were his other sons who were appointed colonels in the army, perhaps at the instance of the Indian troops. People do not become leaders by birth. In the army particularly they have to ascend the ladder step by step and must receive a thorough training either in the battlefield or under the guidance of experts. Here, however, were a set of imbeciles appointed colonels and generals straightway.

The King, however, continued to take steps to restore order in the city. He appointed Thanedars responsible for keeping peace. He issued daily *Firmans*, passed orders on petitions and issued instructions. Special steps were taken against Gujars who were plundering the suburbs of Delhi. He held his Durbar daily and was ably assisted in his work by Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan and Mahbub Ali Khan, the Khwaja Sera of Ennoch. Thus, for example, he issued orders to Mirza Mughal to send immediately an infantry regiment to Najafgarh on the petition of police officer Maulvi Mohammad Zahur Ali.

The petition stated : "Royal orders have been announced to all the people including Thakurs,

Chaudhries, Kannungos and Patwaris. Proper arrangements have been made. Under Royal orders sowars and infantry are being collected and they are informed that they would be paid their salaries from the collections of revenues. Revenues, however, cannot be collected unless more forces are despatched here to stem the local marauders who have taken advantage of the turbulence. There is danger of destruction of many more precious lives and property. Hence the prayer that more forces with artillery may be despatched expeditiously."

REFUGEE CHRISTIANS MASSACRED

On 16th May, 49 Christians, men, women and children, who had been sheltered in the kitchen of the Red Fort on 11th May, were murdered in the Fort courtyard, by the King's retainers. The King, as reported by some observers, were present when this ghastly scene was enacted and this was one of the charges against him when he was tried after his arrest. But it appears doubtful that he had a hand in this matter. Mrs. Aldwell, wife of a government pensioner, who was one of the prisoners along with her children and who was assisted by her Muhammadan friends to pass off as Kashmiri Muslims, lived long enough to depose that the king had on 14th May served the prisoners a nice meal at his expense and that he was not responsible for the murder of Europeans on that day.

But the hand of Mirza Mughal may be reasonably suspected though even against him there is no direct evidence except the fact that he had watched their execution from the Fort terrace. Perhaps he had noticed the indecisive attitude of the King, waver-

ing between the Nationalists and the British and might have felt that after the murder of the Christians the King would stand implicated and that the British would not trust him.

At least that is how it really worked out. The King from that day on decided to take an increasing interest in the fight. He addressed letters to the Rajas of Patiala, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jind and Kashmir, at the request of Abdulla Beg, a European convert to Islam and asked them to proceed to Delhi with men and material and help him in turning the British out of India. The letter addressed to the Maharaja of Patiala was however passed on by Abdulla Beg to the British. It ran: "You have heard by rumour and through native newspapers of the disorganisation of authority and the prevalence of alarming disorders. Therefore on account of your proved attachment to my family, you are directed to report here in person with all your armies and resources as quickly as possible. Delay not for there is neither a road for escape, nor for opposition on my part. You are entreated to come down to this direction as soon as possible."

KING'S SECOND APPEAL

There was, however, no response from any raja to whom the King had addressed letters. In fact, the letters were handed over by the addressees to the local British authorities. Bahadur Shah, therefore, issued a general proclamation to all rajas and maharajas and nawabs of India. The proclamation ran:

"All you rajas are famed for your virtues and noble qualities and liberalities and are protectors of

your own faith and of the faith of others. God has given you bodily existence to defend your faith. 'It is, therefore, incumbent that you should destroy those who harm your religion. The English have been overthrowing religions through various means. They have adopted systematic policy to destroy the religions and cultures of India by introducing remarriage of widows, stopping of the Sati system, propagating Christianity by giving laurels to new converts, forcing the government employees to attend the church and listen to their Bible, by introducing the law that only legitimate son of the ruler would be recognised as heir-apparent, forcing the prisoners to eat bread cooked in a common kitchen, supplying atta (wheat flour) in the market mixed with crushed bones and supplying sugar whitened with bones. They have now introduced new orders of biting the greased cartridges. It is my conviction now that if the English continue their rule in India, they would kill all of us and destroy our religion.

“You Hindus are solemnly adjured by your faith in Ganges, Tulsi and Saligram and all you Mussalmans by your belief in God and Koran, that it is your bounden duty to kill the English and thus protect your religion and yourself. The English will try to raise the Hindus against Mussalmans and *vice versa*. Do not give heed to what they say, drive them out of the country.”

It will be clear from this that Bahadur Shah was not a nincompoop. How true was he in reading the character of the British. He very correctly appraised their line of action of working up one community against the other. But in this appeal

he did not ask for men and money, probably because the conditions in Delhi at that time were still uncertain. A British assault on Delhi was expected but it was not coming. Affairs were yet to settle down. The nature of the fight was not yet known nor was there any knowledge of the resources either of the Nationalist forces or the enemy. The appeal was therefore in the nature of sounding the reaction of the Indian rulers, though the events mentioned were sufficient to work up their emotions. Thus *Akbar ul Zafar*, a journal published from the Fort, wrote in one of its issues : "The money promised by the Raja of Jhajjar has not come up to this day. Let us see whether he sends it before the settlement of Pharee or after it. In our opinion it would be proper for the Nawab, looking to his advantage in this and the future world to send it now. We advise him and all his people to remove from their minds all expectations of Christian government and think no more of precautionary measures. Though Christians may be found here and there the Almighty Creator has removed their authority from the Muhammadan cities."

The paper criticised the Raja of Patiala for his friendly relations with the English, and warned him.

The fact, however, was that Bahadur Shah was having a difficult time, not from the enemy who had not shown his face yet, but from his own co-religionists. The hand of the British through their supporters was clearly visible : Some fanatic Maulvi declared a *Jehad* against the Hindus so as to restore the Muslim hegemony of India. They passed a *Fatwa* (religious edict) at Jamma Masjid on May 19, through Dr. Mohammad Sayyad of a holy

war against the Hindus as well. When the King came to know of it, he deprecated the move stating that to him the Hindus and the Muslims were equal. He further said that the greater part of nationalist forces fighting the British were Hindus who were well armed and if the Muslims raised *Jehad* against them the Hindu forces would finish off the Jihadis easily. Not only that, he banned the slaughter of cows, bulls, buffaloes, etc. on the Idd-uz-Zuha (Bakra Idd) day on the first of July so as to avoid estrangement of Hindus. He even forbade the use of bulls in drawing refuse carts saying that the bulls are respected by Hindus and their feelings should not be injured.

MEASURES TO RESTORE ORDER

Nationalist forces, in the meanwhile, were daily gathering strength through a constant stream of trained soldiers, raw hands, young and old reporting to the King for fighting the British. They came from all over India, singly as well as in batches. Some of them brought money though in small quantities. The King's monetary resources were very limited. They were certainly not sufficient to meet the expenses of the daily increasing Nationalist forces. And men with money were either sitting on the fence or were openly on the side of the British because they were guaranteed a sure percentage by way of interest. Under instructions from the King, his adviser, Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan, consulted leading citizens of Delhi such as Aminuddin Khan, Mirza Ziauddin, Hasanali Khan etc. He desired the people of Delhi to form a council to restore order in the city and to arrange for

food for the army. The council did not succeed for want of interest on the part of its members with the exception that it succeeded in making temporary arrangement for the supply of food to the soldiers through Mahbub Ali Khan. Mohammad Mir Nawab was appointed Governor of the city and Mirza Moiuddin Khan as Kotwal. The council appointed to assist the King in the administration of the city consisted of Mufti Yusuf Ali Khan, Mir Abdul Bahadur, Capt. Ali Dildar Khan, Mohammad Hyder Hussain Khan, Sayyad Sharaf Ali Khan and Nizamul Khan Bahadur. He also constituted a Court of Ten to look after the civil and military affairs. The following order was issued to establish it and to 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 are 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 two 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 different departments.

•4. At the time of appointment 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 being 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 are likely to be of use to the State. In exceptional cases one possessing requisite qualifications but not length of service may be selected; other members shall not raise objection to such choice.

The same procedure shall apply to the selection of 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 majority of votes. The decision shall next be placed before the Sahib-e-Alam Bahadur for his consent and finally for Huzur-e-Wala's (king's) approval. Sahib-e-Alam Bahadur was to be appointed by the King and was responsible to him only. If there be a conflict of opinion between the Court and the Sahib-e-Alam Bahadur, the matter shall be placed before the Court meeting for reconsideration. If disagreement still persists the proceedings in full shall be placed before the Emperor whose decision shall be final.

8. No one except the members is to have access to the meetings of the Court. The Sahib-e-Alam Bahadur and the Emperor 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 the resolution will speak first on the resolution without any interruption from other members. After him other members will have the right to express their opinion. After the Court passes the resolution it will receive the consent of the King and then will be circulated among the secretaries of the different departments for information and necessary action.

11. Persons chosen from the military will also act as their supervisors. To the two supervisors in each section shall be attached four other members to form a committee one of whom shall act as its secretary. The resolution 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."

The regulations set down as above distinctly indicate the democratic method adopted by Bahadur Shah for the day-to-day administration of both civil and military matters and his choice to rule as a constitutional monarch.

Conditions in Delhi at this time were narrated by a news reporter of Raja of Kapurthala to the latter thus: "The King is old. The officials belong to a worn out government. The Jagirdars in deference to the British have not girded up their loins. There is no arrangement for any provisions, much less for anything else. The sepoys are ready to give their lives and to take the lives of others. The King rode to the city to comfort people and asked them to open shops. But the people would not be comforted. Many shops have been deserted. The civilisation of fifty-three years has been destroyed

in three days. A regiment has come from Aligarh. They have not spared their officers. The King has summoned various big men of Delhi to make arrangements for the city. They have pleaded either sickness or incompetency. Sowars have been despatched to Alwar and Jaipur. The Delhi people have fallen into difficulties. God's will be done. The condition of the people cannot be described. They are alive but in despair of their lives. There is no cure for such a curse. *The sepoys are without a leader.*"

THE KING'S DILEMMA

Bahadur Shah's letter to Mirza Mughal on or about the 20th May gives a still better description of the city and the King's frustration and disappointment with the developments. He wrote: "Know that when the infantry men and sowars came to us we told them without reservation that we had no money in our treasury with which we could help them. On hearing this they bowed their heads indicating they were prepared to sacrifice their lives and all for our sake and agreed to be subjected to our order and discipline. They were ordered in the first instance to produce ammunition and to replenish the treasury because this would be to their and our common benefit and advantage. After this they occupied rooms in the Diwan-i-Aam and also Mehtab Bagh and did whatever they liked. They were so sunk in comfort and ease that they would not listen to anything.

"Know further that no sort of agreement was entered into with them; all the same loan was raised so that every sowar and infantry may be paid the

daily allowance. Further orders were issued from time to time that there should be no plundering or arrests in the city but all to no purpose. Even after ten days the same chaotic conditions prevail. Sowar and infantry regiments, though they quitted Diwan-i-Khas and Diwan-i-Aam because they were strictly ordered to remove themselves outside the city and they were further forbidden to perpetrate any sort of tyranny on the people; even so one regiment in Delhi Gate, another in Lahori Gate and the third inside the battlements of Ajmeri Gate have taken up their abode. They have plundered several bazars. They enter into private houses on the pretext of searching them for the English hiding there and loot them. They break locks of shops and without any fear take away the goods. They resort to such depredatory methods that even Chengiz Khan and Nadir Shah may not have done in such open cities that surrendered without firing a shot. Besides this the soldiers threaten the Royal servants and the people. Although infantry men from Farash Khana and Sowars in the garden have been ordered to quit, yet it is not done. These are places where Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali and even the British Governor-General have not dared to go on horse back.

“The forces demanded that the princes be appointed to different commands and they promised to obey them. This was done. Then they desired that the princes be granted robes, that their appointments be made permanent and all the English prisoners be murdered. We agreed to this also. On the same day a poster in our hand and seal was exhibited in the city that courts had been establish-

ed in the city and the forces were ordered to desist from all sorts of crimes. But this also had no effect. Apart from all these facts it should be realised that when the high officers of the British Government used to visit the Fort they would alight from their horses at the gates of Diwan-i-Aam and then walk on foot. But these forces seated on their horses come right up to Diwan-i-Khas and insolently too. Their dresses with the exception of uniforms and turbans are against Royal decorum. The military officers too, instead of binding turbans come to the Court in caps and swords in hands in a most careless and disgraceful manner. In the times of the British Government no officer had behaved like this.

“And, though they themselves destroyed all the articles in the magazine and the treasury they now demand daily allowance. Not only that, they demand daily allowance even for absentees. They take away forcibly all articles from the shops in the city without paying their prices and perpetrate all sorts of excesses.

“Conditions outside the city are as bad. These forces do not establish peace and order. On the contrary, hundreds of people have been murdered unnecessarily. Due to loose civil administration in the country and for want of proper disciplined army and regular police arrangements revenues from different states and provinces cannot be collected. For this reason provisions cannot be had.

“These people (army) cannot visualise the consequences of such conditions. How can they be thought to be the well-wishers of the Government and the nation ! There is no money in the treasury and the people who could contribute have been

looted and rendered paupers.

“Under these conditions we have decided to pass the remaining days of our life in the way of God and discard the title of kingship, to wear the shroud and at first to stay for some time at the Dargah of Khwaja Sahib (Nizamuddin) and then after making arrangements for the journey, to go to Mecca. For conditions in Delhi have become extremely intolerable. We feel we are responsible and therefore answerable before public and before God for all their depredations, looting, plundering and killing of people by hundreds. Their duty should have been first to establish a strong and sound government with the fullest co-operation of the people and then they would have been amply rewarded. But quite the contrary has happened.

“With a painful heart, we suggest that you should gather all the three forces, infantry, cavalry and artillery, and their officers and announce that whoever wants to serve the Government in the country would be provided with a form that should be filled by him as a sort of agreement in writing for their consolation and satisfaction. But from now on they should desist from their previous conduct.

“All the infantry and the cavalry regiments should remove themselves outside the city. Every sepoy found guilty of plunder, arson and murder will be adequately punished as an example for others. They should obey all Royal orders for the establishment of law and order, peace and prosperity in the country. No unnecessary demand should be made on the King who is even otherwise duty bound to look after them in all respects like food, clothing,

arms and ammunitions, etc. under the prevailing conditions.

“And if they are not going to abide by these terms and conditions we shall have no option but to renounce the world and settle down at the Durbar of Khwaja Sahib.

“Let them answer these questions and submit their petitions accepting these terms duly signed by them and sealed and present them to us. We do not take all these things lightly as on account of age and consequent weakness we do not find ourselves capable of carrying on this cumbersome weight of responsibility. *To rule a nation and to manage the armies of a country are not a child's play.*”

This letter was written by the old King in the early stages of the revolution. He had yet not reconciled himself with the idea of breaking away from the British, because being weak and not accustomed to hardship he was quite content to pass his life with whatever he could get out of life in the conditions prevailing in the pre-revolt period. The circumstances had overwhelmed him and he himself confessed his incapability. But matters had reached a stage where he was compelled to remain the titular head of the movement, willy-nilly.

BRITISH C.-IN-C. ORDERS MOBILISATION

At this time, the British Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, was in Simla. Not expecting any untoward event he was shocked at the news from Delhi. He ordered general mobilisation but there were not sufficient men available and without adequate forces he was not inclined to risk an attack on Delhi. He had realised the importance of Delhi

from the way the nationalist forces had flocked to it and a loss of battle in Delhi would mean loss of the whole of India, which would seal the fate of the British throughout India.

This was once again emphasized when the Delhi Garrison Commander Wilson proposed withdrawal from Delhi at which Brig. Baird Smith shouted out, "We must not give up hope. We must not release our hold on Delhi even by an inch....If we raise the siege of Delhi, the Punjab will be out of hand, India will be gone and the Empire ruined for ever."

Ambala was selected as organising centre to collect men and material for attacking Delhi. As there were not many Europeans the English took the risk of including loyal Indian troops in the army, at the same time ordering that Enfield rifles with new cartridges should not be issued to Indian troops. Afghans, Afridis, Mahsuds, Waziris, Ghilzies, Pathans, outlaws, desperadoes, escaped convicts, murderers, rogues and vagabonds were enlisted and trained by Nicholson with the battle cry, "Delhi and Loot."

For the British, safety of Punjab was essential as hardly seven years back they had won it from the Sikhs and a general uprising there would leave them no place wherefrom they could proceed with attack on Delhi. The additional fear was there that the Sikhs might pay off their old scores by siding with the nationalists and then Punjab was the only region from where they could gather men and material. Lord Canning therefore took special steps not only to neutralise the Punjab but also win it over to his side.

Douglass Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of

Ambala, was a personal friend of the Raja of Patiala. At the instance of John Lawrence he wrote to the Raja stating the facts and asking for help. The Raja unhesitatingly agreed. So did the Raja of Jind. These results were brought about by the admirable handling of Brig. Stuart Corbett and Robert Montgomery. They worked up a scheme to bring Sikhs to fight the Muslims by telling the Sikhs that they could thus avenge the death and persecution of their Gurus. They also incited them against the Hindus by stating that the Hindus, Brahmins of Oudh and Bengal, could not tolerate the rule of the Mughal and that they wanted to establish their own rule. They succeeded in their mission beyond expectation, much to the disadvantage of the Nationalists.

Troops from the Punjab assembled at Karnal. Instructions were sent to the Meerut garrison to proceed to Delhi and meet the troops from Karnal. Hodson, later of the Hodson's Horse, and the genius behind the wonderful British intelligence system in Delhi, covered seventy miles in one night on horse back to deliver instructions to the Meerut garrison.

BATTLE OF THE HINDON RIVER

The Meerut garrison set off for Delhi on May 30 under the command of Brig Wilson. When it reached the Hindon river, some fourteen miles from Delhi, it found itself facing, across the river, a contingent of Nationalist troops with three guns. The first contact of the two forces was made there.

The Nationalist troops were commanded by Mirza Abu Bakr, another of Bahadur Shah's sons. He was watching the battle from a house top when

a British shell happened to fall and explode within his sight causing some casualties among the troops. The sight of blood was too much for the prince who turned his face and fled to Delhi. The Indian troops were all for fight but they could not be expected to fight without a general; they retreated. Due to the cowardice of Mirza Abu Bakr, the first day's battle, the first contact with the enemy, was lost by the Indians. Nevertheless they did not lose heart and gave battle to the British on the following day. The contest was tough. But luck was with the British. Just when they were about to retreat they were joined by Gorkhas who turned the table against the Nationalist forces. But unlike the battle of the previous day when one gun had been lost to the British this day the Nationalists succeeded in withdrawing their guns from the field. This encounter took place at Hindon river at Ghaziuddin Nagar (present Ghaziabad).

The defeated Indian troops returned to Delhi. At that time the river Jumna was crossed by a boat bridge. When Bahadur Shah learnt about the defeat of the Indian force he ordered the boat bridge to be destroyed just when the troops were crossing it. Hundreds of the troops were thus drowned and their guns fell into the hands of the British. Why he gave that order is one of the many inexplicable mysteries of the great Revolution, but it did cost many valuable Indian lives and still more valuable guns, all mainly due to the incompetent leadership of his own son.

BRITISH ESPIONAGE

In the meanwhile the British espionage system,

under the direct control of Hodson—that most irregular of all irregular men—haughty but full of action and quick decision, had already been set on foot and started working admirably. According to Jeevanlal, it was discovered on May 26, that somebody had filled the guns on Islam Garh Bastion with stones and kankar. Many more guns in fact, were found having thus been interfered with. Gujars were also active in removing the gun powder from the magazine, probably with a view to selling it to the British. Baldev Singh, Darogha of the Jumna Bridge, according to Moiuddin, was secretly conveying provisions to the British. He was caught in the act and was hanged. British spies were at work in the Fort also. One Wazir Ali was suspected as he was in the habit of visiting the various entrenchments daily but no action was taken against him. Gunpowder and ammunition, so badly required by the troops on the front, was discovered in the palace granary. Mirza Abu Bakr was suspected of having stored it there although Zeenat Mahal Begam was also not above suspicion.

Commander-in-Chief Anson died of cholera before he could proceed further. The command was given to Gen. Bernard. He proceeded with his army consisting of British and Indian troops comprising of Punjabis, Gorkhas, Sikhs and others mentioned earlier, to Delhi where he was allowed for another inexplicable reason to encamp at Alipore, some ten miles from Delhi. He had planned to meet the forces of Gen. Wilson at the Delhi Jumna bridge but Brig. Wilson has already made a diversion from Ghaziuddin Nagar and had reached Alipore safely.

• Four days before the arrival of the British troops at Alipore Ahmad Khan, Risaldar of the 4th British Cavalry, arrived at Delhi. He met the King, expressed his loyalty to him and said his cavalry was prepared to join the Nationalist forces. He further stated that the day the two forces would meet he would lead his men away to the right and then join the Nationalist forces. His offer was accepted and he was treated with courtesy. After staying in the Fort for three days he left but not before he had sent word to the British through their arch-spy Latafat Ali that at first he would join the Indian forces and at the first opportunity would cross over with his forces as also with Zeenat Mahal Begam and Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan. From this communication of Ahmad Khan it appears that Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan, the most trusted advisor of the King, and his own favourite queen, Zeenat Begam, were planning as early as the beginning of June to go over to the British. That they were unable to do so may have been for some reason not yet known.

The spy Latafat Ali, a sowar, contacted one Sayyed Hamid Ali Khan, a friend of the British. The Sayyed stated that when the British attacked Delhi, he, Nawab Zeenat Mahal and Azam Ali Khan would collect their forces and, after pretending to be fighting with the Nationalist forces, go over to the British at the first opportunity.

BATTLE OF BADLI KI SARAI

Gen. Bernard and Brig. Wilson decided to march upon Delhi, although they knew that the task was not easy. The Indian forces had a fortified position

at Badli ki Serai where they wanted to meet the British forces. This was just four miles from Delhi. The British, after a reconnaissance by Hodson on 7th June, marched towards the Serai. Their intention was to deliver a surprise attack on the rear of the Indians but they were discovered by the Indians who fired upon them and the battle of Badli ki Serai started. It was a very fierce contest, the Indian troops being led by Mirza Khizr Sultan, another of the King's sons. There was a possibility of the Indians gaining the battle when the traitor Ahmad Bakhsh who had promised help to the Indian troops and who had been pretending all this while to be fighting with them, suddenly ordered his cavalry to turn against the Indians and open fire. The result was disastrous for the Indians who lost the battle and all the guns they had, but not before they had caused heavy casualties in the enemy's ranks. Although Mirza Khizr Sultan, the commander, had fled from the battlefield, the troops retreated to the ridge where they gave another fight under the command of Samad Khan but the odds were against them and they had to retreat to the city.

The British encamped at the ridge and also captured the Hindu Rao House which assumed importance later as many battles were fought around this house. This house situated on the ridge, some 60 ft. higher than the city of Delhi, commanded the Sabzimandi area and was used by Gen. Reid for assault on Lahori Gate.

George Forrest writing about this battle states : "The victory was won against a strong foe, strong in artillery and strong in moral. But the English

also suffered a terrible loss..." But for the treachery of Ahmad Bakhsh, it is patent the result should have been the reverse and history would have been written in some other way.

The British General reconnoitring the ground and the ridge extending two miles on two sides of Dêlhi, found it a suitable ground for the entrenchment of the British forces. On the third flank, was the river Jumna while there was a canal behind the ridge. Obviously this was a vantage point some 80 to 100 feet higher from the level ground of the city, holding a commanding position.

British guns on the ridge repulsed Indian attacks on 9th and 10th June. Till the 23rd June the Indians made small but sharp attacks on the British but they were all sporadic and although they caused some damage to the British their effect, if any, had only nuisance value and made no material difference in the situation.

The Nasirabad column under Mohammad Ghaus joined the Indian forces on the 19th June which gave strength to the depleted Indian forces and increased its moral.

BATTLE OF THE RIDGE

As the Battle of Plassey had taken place on 23rd June 1757, the day came to have special importance in the eyes of the nationalists who were also encouraged by predictions of Pandits and Maulvis that the British rule would come to an end exactly one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey. They, therefore, made great preparations to give battle to the British on June 23. They were further strengthened by fresh troops from Jullundur and Phillaur.

The Indians were in possession of Sabzimandi and Kishan Ganj from where they decided to launch their attack. But through spies working in the city and the Fort the British received prior information with minute details of the Indian forces, proposed action and was prepared to meet it.

The Indians marched out of the city, attacked the British positions and a severe battle ensued continuing the whole day. Maj. Reid who faced the onslaught on the Sabzi Mandi front wrote : "The mutineers about 12 o'clock made a most desperate attack on the whole of my position. No men could have fought better. They charged the Rifles, the Guides and my own men again and again and at one time I thought I must have lost the day." The day, however, ended with no victory to either party.

Lack of co-ordination and mutual support were the chief causes of the defeat of Nationalists. The troops who had come to Delhi and who were not paid any salary, helped themselves with loot and plunder and grew so heavy that they found excuses for not going to the front to fight the enemy. It was the new arrivals, who had no experience either of the enemy or the terrain of Delhi, who were invariably sent out to fight. They were not even offered guidance by those who had fought earlier.

LAWLESSNESS AMONG TROOPS

The condition of the troops was so bad that they lost sight of the main goal for which they had assumed arms against the English, and took to looting of the citizens. The King was forced to remind Mirza Mughal on June 8 thus : "Yester-

day under our Royal Seal an order was issued that the forces posted at the Old Fort should desist from plundering the population of the city. It is regretted that nothing had been done so far. There is no danger of the enemy approaching so far. Hence these forces be removed from the Old Fort to a distance of five or six miles from the city so that people may have relief from their plundering. The wall of the Fort may be repaired completely before the approach of the enemy's forces."

Conditions did not seem to have improved. On June 19, the residents of the Paharganj area made the following petition to Mirza Mughal: ".....The Royal forces coming out of the Ajmeri Gate spread in different directions in our bazar and carried away everything from shops and houses, including beddings, clothes, utensils. For God's sake we pray you to save us from these atrocities..... Any resistance from our side brings death on us. These forces may be asked to explain their conduct and be also asked to desist from these nefarious activities in future."

The petition was passed on by Mirza Mughal to the King who replied: "We have received your petition written to Mirza Mughal in which it was mentioned that four or five vagrants of the army have begun plundering and terrorising people in the city and now they have extended their activities to the suburbs also. It is, indeed, strange that these men have not been tackled even when the military is present in the city. They must be arrested along with similar suspects and be produced before us so that they may be dealt with properly."

About the depredations of the Gujars, the King wrote to Mirza Mughal: "It has come to our notice that the Gujars created a disturbance in Paharganj and plundered people there. Now they have extended their depredations to even Mehrauli. Sayyed Hussain Ali Khan, Police Officer, informs us that a Jemadar and sepoy were seriously injured by these Gujars on being challenged. This sort of lawlessness is extremely dangerous. We order you, therefore, to at once despatch a company of Infantry with fifty sowars and arrest all the Gujars and their headman. They need a deterrent punishment."

COURT HOTBED OF INTRIGUE

The intrigues at the Delhi Court played not an insignificant part in the defeats of the Nationalist forces. As already stated, the King was weak and senile and his resources were limited. While men in thousands were pouring in from all over India and augmenting the Indian forces, there was no money to pay them wages or provide food and ammunition. Orders used to be passed on by the King to Mirza Mughal, the C.-in-C., to make arrangements for the supply of ration to the troops. Mirza Mughal was, however, inefficiency personified. Thus for days together no ration was issued to the soldiers. After some four days parched gram and jaggery were supplied. This left the soldiers to what devices they could think of. Plundering was the most obvious. Many a time, therefore, when they should have been fighting the enemy they were plundering the people. No doubt, they came to fight the British but how long could they fight on

empty stomach ? Their enthusiasm started waning. The King issued warnings to them time and again. He threatened drastic action against defaulters such as blasting away the powder magazine. When he found his threats ineffective he proposed abdication and even threatened to commit suicide.

TRAITOR MERCHANTS

The blame, however, cannot be placed entirely on the shoulders of the soldiers or of Bahadur Shah. While rations were denied to them the same rations were regularly supplied by the merchants of Delhi to the English forces outside the city, because the British paid them handsomely. The English had vast resources whereas the Indian soldiers were paying with their own lives.

These merchants were served well when immediately after the fall of Delhi, the whole city including the wealth amassed by them was looted by the British soldiers and their allies and they were either done to death or were turned out of the city with their women folk. Indeed, it can be safely stated that the merchants of Delhi were partly responsible for the defeat of the Indian forces by withholding them provisions as they were for the victory of the British forces and maintained a regular supply for them. It is they who at a time when their patriotic sense should have got the better of their love of money, caused scarcity, pillage, and finally chaos.

After the explosion of magazine at Kashmeri Gate on May 11 (stated earlier), great shortage of ammunition and specially gun powder was experienced by the Indian troops and therefore a factory for the

manufacture of gun powder was started in Churiwala at Begam Samru's house. Some 250 people were employed, but the task was rather difficult particularly in the damp and monsoon weather of July. The quality was inferior and production was far short of requirements. Nevertheless the forces continued making sorties against the enemy inflicting heavy losses on them at the same time suffering heavier losses themselves.

Shortage of money compelled Bahadur Shah to collect loans from the wealthy people of Delhi. He formed a committee consisting of Nawab Hamid Ali Khan, Raja Debi singh, Salig Ram, Nawab Musa Khan, Nawab Ahmad Mirza and Hakim Abdul Haq. He instructed them thus : "You should raise as much money as you can but with the voluntary consent of the people. Treat them gently and politely. Look after the people and fight against the Christians. As soon as revenues are received loans will be repaid."

The committee, however, did not meet with any success. A few small loans were received but bankers such as Jugal Kishore, Sheo Parsad, Munshi Jeevanlal, Debi Singh, Saligram did not help much. There was, however, one exception. *The biggest Sahukar of Delhi of that time, Seth Ramjidas Gurwala, thrice gave to the King huge sums of money as donation besides big loans and a considerable quantity of wheat.* This fact was acknowledged by the King in his *firman* to Mirza Mughal dated 27th August 1857. (Seth Ramjidas was succeeded by Seth Naraindas Gurwala whose son, Rai Bahadur Shrikishandas Gurwala, was the founder of the present Hindu College

in Delhi. The present eldest member of the family is the well-known Lala Sat Narain Gurwala.)

THE SOLDIERS' CALL

After vainly waiting for some four weeks for response from Rajas and Nawabs to the proclamation issued earlier by the King the troops themselves came out with two proclamations, one of which was addressed to the Indian troops who had joined the British forces, particularly in Punjab, and the second to all the Hindus and Mussalmans of India.

The first proclamation to the pro-British Indian soldiers read :

“From your brother-soldiers, Hindu and Mussalman, who have assembled at Delhi,

“To our brothers, Hindu and Mussalman, who are employed at Lahore and other places in Punjab,

“Salam ale kum and Ram Ram !

“It is a matter of great regret that although for the sake of our religion we revolted against the English and have collected treasure from every place and made arrangements for fighting and moreover, have killed all the European soldiers, the enemies of our faith, and through the kindness of God have been victorious, you, who are our relatives and have connections with us and are our brothers in arms are sitting idly there. Such conduct is unbecoming. In whatever way you can, destroy the enemies of our religion and come to Delhi. All the revolting troops from Calcutta to Peshawar are collecting at Delhi. It is proper and just to fight in defence of our faith. Thousands of Hindus and Mussalmans have joined us. Do not stay back on any account and if British soldiers oppose you on your

way, kill them by all means. Do not think of your pay and service. Through the blessings of God there are appointments for soldiers at Rs. 12 per month and food and drink in abundance. [The British were paying Rs. 7 to Indian soldiers.] 'Those who die in this battle will attain Ghazidom, if Musalman, and Baikunth (Heaven), if Hindus.

"Do not entertain any fear but come at once. All the sipahis (soldiers) have unanimously issued a proclamation throughout India. The whole country, Hindu and Mussalman, is with us. A copy of the proclamation is herewith forwarded. Read it and understand it. You should get ten, twenty or even fifty copies of this proclamation written in legible hand and display it everywhere in cantonments so that all our brothers, both Hindus and Mussalmans in the Punjab, may be alerted and may act whatever they are capable of. Do not fail in this. The arms of a soldier are his hands and feet. Do not give up your arms and thereby save yourself from helplessness. So long as you are alive, do not give up arms and should European soldiers cross you on your way, do not let them escape.

"Don't you feel timid that while we are at Delhi, you are scattered in different places. Why this delay ? Please act on the instructions given in this proclamation."

The proclamation clearly indicates that so far as the feudal princes were concerned they had failed to take up arms against the British and the appeal of Bahadur Shah had had no effect on them. While there was no dearth of people joining the movement, as thousands of them were pouring in

from all over, there was certainly dearth of experienced soldiers as well as arms, besides money. Hence the appeal was made by the Nationalist soldiers on a soldier-to-soldier level.

Moreover they had realised the importance of Punjab and as the revolt had not spread there, at least on a large scale, they addressed their comrades there. They knew very well where the Punjab princes would stand if their army deserted them. Since religion and money were the two important matters that counted with the masses, they gave sufficient importance to both in their proclamation.

The strategy, however, was defective. Instead of deploying the Punjab troops in Punjab only against the British there, or asking them to disrupt the enemy's communications in that province, they asked them to proceed to Delhi where there was already shortage of money, arms and accommodation. Of course the soldiers could not be blamed for this lack of strategy for they had no capable advisers or leader to think and plan on a wide and comprehensive basis. A capable leader or even an experienced soldier would have asked them to cut off the supply of men and material to the British forces.

CALL TO CITIZENS

The Nationalists also felt that a mere revolt of the army was not enough and that to succeed they must rally all the people, as the struggle was in the interests of the people at large. They therefore issued a proclamation. This second proclamation was issued in the name of Hindus and Mussalmans assembled at Delhi and elsewhere, who had

without any motive of worldly gains fought for their religion, destroyed the tyrants and enemies of their faith and were prepared to carry on the war. The proclamation ran as follows :

“To all the inhabitants, Hindu and Mussalman, and others in Hindustan : Be it known : The armies of Hindustan have fought faithfully on behalf of the Queen of Britain and the Honourable John Company and conquered for them territories extending from Calcutta to Peshawar. For those services rendered by us the said Queen and English rulers have bestowed on us the following rewards, viz.

“(1) In Hindustan they have exacted a revenue of Rs. 300 where only Rs. 200 were due and Rs. 500 where but Rs. 400 were demandable, and they are contemplating further enhancement. The people will thus be ruined and reduced to beggary.

“(2) They have doubled and quadrupled and even raised ten-fold the Chowkidari tax, determined to ruin the people.

“(3) The occupation of all respectable and learned men is gone and millions are now destitute of necessities of life. When any one in search of employment decides to proceed from one district to another he is charged six pies as toll on roads and has to pay from four to eight annas for each cart. Those only who pay are permitted to travel on public roads.

“There are too many tyrannies to be detailed here. Gradually matters have come to such a pass that the Government aims at subverting our religion. Therefore the whole army of Hindustan, both Hindu and Mussalman, from Calcutta to Peshawar, has

risen up in arms. After all man dies but once. To die denying one's religion is disgraceful in both the worlds. This should be prevented. Destruction of oppressors and enemies of faith is laudable in every creed. It is surely the right path, in case of death by martyrdom to attain to paradise.

"Therefore all Hindus and Mussalmans, siding with the army, have assembled at Delhi and other places with the view of fighting for their religion. It has been decided by all that we should kill the enemies of our faith wherever found. It is proper that every Hindu and Mussalman should kill the enemy whenever he gets an opportunity; otherwise all should proceed to Delhi and join the respective parties to which they belong. For this contest is simply for the defence of religion. If our faith is preserved we have everything. Otherwise death any day is preferable.

"Should the enemy of our religion at this time endeavour to coax or win over or proclaim a reconciliation, please know that such promises are unworthy of trust, and deceptive. Let no one sacrifice his life by falling into the enemy's snare. The inhabitants of Punjab should also awaken from their apathy and consider that twice the government has ruined Hindustan by heavy assessment and improper cesses and has attempted to destroy our religion. They will surely do worse in Punjab and subvert the religion of its people. Then it will be too late for you to do anything. At the present time it is easy to bring the tyrant to account. The army is disaffected from Calcutta to Peshawar. The force of the English consists of only four to five thousand Europeans of whom some are sick.

“Cast off, therefore, your female attire and mentality and join us, the army of men. Do not pay even a shell to government revenue; whoever pays before the establishment of Indian dominion will regret the step and whoever plunders the people or travellers, his life, home and property will be confiscated. Whoever plunders the enemy of our faith, however, will not be called to account, but will win a good name.

“Be it known that all the forces employed by the tyrants in the province of Lucknow, etc., have risen for their faith and have assembled at Delhi. The few troops still remaining are gradually joining us. The English have now but a few European troops and if each among us would manfully throw a handful of dust towards them, by God’s grace not a trace of them would remain. Let us, Hindus and Mussalmans, be on our guard. Let us kill the enemy at suitable opportunity. Trust in God and let not your resolutions waver. God is great and your faith in Him will lead you to victory.

“Any Hindu or Mussalmans who joins the enemy to fight against us will have his face blackened in both the worlds. He will have no Peace.

“To the English we have to say : Do not prohibit the display or perusal of this proclamation by your subjects at large. By doing so nothing can be gained. You should now resign to your fate. As you have issued proclamations for your arrangements so have we. As you are preparing for the contest, so are we. Remember that if it pleases God to maintain your government, it will continue; if not, God’s will be done. The tyranny of which you are guilty, God will bring before you.”

This proclamation is remarkable for its statesmanship. Though the causes detailed were economic yet emphasis is again laid on religion and in the conditions that prevailed in the nineteenth century no other aspect of man's life had assumed more importance. A clear way has been suggested to give battle to the enemy. There were few British troops in India and if all the Hindus and Muslims were to rise, as they were appealed to, then even a trace of the British would not be left in India, and then, the people have been asked to kill the enemy wherever he is found.

SALUTARY RESPONSE

The appeal had some effect on the Indian troops serving the British in the Punjab. The British came to know and took timely action by disarming the rebellious troops before any damage could be done. So the only course left to them was to proceed to Delhi. Thus such disarmed soldiers as well as soldiers from other Indian states in U. P. proceeded to Delhi. Common people also came in thousands from Jullundur, Lahore, Ferozepore, Nowshera, Ambala, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Rajputana, Nasirabad, Phillaur, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Saharanpur, Bareilly, Jhansi, Allahabad, Agra, Gwalior, Lucknow, Neemuch, Meerut, Muthra, Rohtak, Aligarh, Patna, etc. There was a Sikh Jatha from Panipat which in the last stages of the fight in Delhi, in September, manned the city walls between Mori Gate and Kashmeri Gate and fought valorously.

Thus from the first week of July people from all over, except the South, joined the fight

against the British, though unfortunately they all concentrated in Delhi which suited the enemy better than the Nationalist forces. That concerted action throughout India which was to take place on May 31, as had been worked out earlier, was woefully miscarried.

The concentration proved of immense advantage to the British as they were getting supplies of men, ammunition, rations and even money on interest, quite unhampered; whereas it tremendously hampered Indian authorities. There was lack of accommodation and the soldiers slept in the open even while it rained unless they occupied private houses and shops against the wishes and to the resentment of the owners or occupiers. There were no sufficient clothes and most of the troops had on them just a loin cloth and a pugree. There were no rations.

The King's resources were extremely little. He had no money with which to buy food for the soldiers of an ever-expanding army. The rich would not advance him loans even when guaranteed payment with interest as soon as revenue was received. With limited arms and ammunition, the Indian forces were more a cumbersome liability than an asset. When they fought they fought bravely as the testimony of Keith in a letter dated 29th June would indicate. He wrote: "The city of Delhi is much stronger and much better fortified than was anticipated and the mutineers fight like devils." Gen. Bernard wrote that he did not see such heavy or sharp fighting in the Crimea as he saw here. "They have plenty of guns and mortars and ammunition in abundance—guns of

a larger calibre than ours. A large number of artillery men along with their guns have joined the mutineers and serve them beautifully. Artillery officers say that our men do not serve the guns so well or manage to load them so quickly." All this in spite of their severe handicaps.

GEN. BAKHT KHAN

Among the Indian soldiers that had reinforced the Nationalist forces in Delhi in the first week of July was a brigade from Bareilly under the leadership of Gen. Bakht Khan. Bakht Khan was acclaimed by the Indian forces at Bareilly as their General on May 31, when the city declared itself independent of the British though some officers and men ran away to Nainital. Bakht Khan addressing his men inspired them with courage. Troops from other towns of U. P., such as Shah Jehanpur, Moradabad, Budaun, etc., joined forces under his command and all marched towards Delhi. He had fought a successful battle against the British at Agra and was welcomed to Delhi in the following letter: "To Mohammad Bakht Khan Bahadur,—All the troops present at Delhi and all the officers of the troops send you greetings and congratulations.....When your letter addressed to His Majesty the King was received, describing your various deeds, its perusal gladdened His Majesty's heart and he has ordered you to march to Delhi with the utmost speed..... The officers are proud of your brave and valorous deeds of which we have read and heard.

"Brother, your King and all of us are labouring day and night for the annihilation of a small body

of Christians, those infidels who fearing for their lives have entrenched themselves on the top of a hill which is neither practicable for cavalry nor even suitable for the artillery.

“You should march expeditiously so as to report to the King and unite with us in the extirpation of the infidels... After the successful action against these infidels at Delhi we propose to occupy Meerut, Patiala, Hansi, Lucknow and Agra as a few Europeans still remain there.”

Mohammad Bakht Khan was an artillery officer. He came from Lucknow and claimed relationship with the royal outh family and the Mughal family by marriage. The English admitted him to be a very intelligent and capable man. He was certainly resolute, energetic and ambitious and a capable leader. He brought with him a trained army of 3000 men and Rs. 4 lakhs.

MIRZA MUGHAL

Bakht Khan's advent on the scene of Delhi on July 1, 1857 was welcomed by all but one that was Mirza Mughal, the present C.-in-C. of the Nationalists. He must have felt that in the presence of a capable soldier he would have no place and that very soon he would be replaced by him as he had already shown his prowess in the encounter at Agra. As a matter of fact Mirza Mughal was all the time thinking of himself only. His one desire was to ascend the throne even by dethroning his own father; for that purpose he had in a way assumed the post of C.-in-C. Had the forces under his command permitted it he would have succeeded in his object but they were cautious and managed to

check his selfish ambition. They had seen his incompetency in the battles of Hindon and Badli ki Serai which resulted in huge loss of men and arms. Since then daily skirmishes were arranged but without any plan or any result. They must have realised that extermination of a small British force on the ridge with limited weapons was not a difficult task for a capable leader while Mirza Mughal lost much valuable time and permitted them to augment their resources. A capable leader would have used judgement and boldness in attacking the weak spots of the enemy line, the right flank and the rear. He would have followed up the advantage and dislodged him. There was after all nothing wrong with the troops who had fought bravely and had received praise from Sir Charles Napier as "men of high caste and very daring," besides others. But after all he was the son of the King whom they had installed as their head and he was appointed commander-in-chief by them. So they could not make any move against him.

This left him free to direct his energies to work against Mohammad Bakht Khan. He worked up the Neemuch Brigade against him. He got many important battle plans postponed on false pretences. He withheld proper supplies to the army and caused confusion. All round tension developed thereby between the Bareilly and the Delhi contingents between the troops and the Court and between the troops and the citizens.

This state of affairs must have made Bahadur Shah think that after all he had not bargained for all these petty-mindedness when he had assumed leadership. But he perhaps did not adequately rea-

lise that himself being unable to lead the army in the field he should have recognised ability and chosen proper leaders. Instead he appointed his worthless sons to high ranks, who fled the battlefield frightened, causing demoralisation in the forces. Not only that, they allowed valuable and much-needed guns to fall into the hands of the enemy which were later turned upon themselves. The troops naturally accused the King for these disasters.

The King, finding himself thus in an admittedly unenviable position, approached the British once more. He conveyed his desire to Maj.-Gen. Reid, who had arrived at Delhi on June 10, and was then occupying the Hindu Rao House at the ridge, on July 4. He passed the message to Sir John Lawrence, Commissioner of Lahore. Reid wrote : The King is said to be anxious to come to terms provided his position and pension are secured to him." Reid added that the King on obtaining such assurance, had proposed to open the Salimgarh Gate of the Red Fort and let the British in. Lawrence was prepared to accept provided the King surrendered Delhi to the British and left Delhi permanently. This Bahadur Shah was not in a position to accept as he was in the hands of the Nationalists. The supreme command of the British also did not accept the proposal and Bahadur Shah once again was left to his fate. He then wanted to retire to Kutab and later, finding the affairs beyond his control, even threatened to become a faqir, but being a victim of circumstances, a puppet in the hands of his sons and other courtiers, was unable to carry out his intentions.

One of the British spies in the Mughal Court

wrote : "The King wants the sepoys to try and make their peace with the British but they reply that there is no hope for them and that they must conquer or die." The letter further states that the King ordered his elephants with the intention of going into the British camp himself but the sepoys would not let himself go.

CITY IN CHAOS

In the city too, conditions were getting almost chaotic. Fanatical Muslims created communal riots; it seemed the hand of the British agents was behind these activities. Soldiers were demoralised, mutual jealousies were rife.

Now that he could not get away to the enemy camp Bahadur Shah tried once again to raise loans and wrote to Mirza Mughal on July 16 : "It is now necessary to raise loans from the local traders to pay to the services and particularly the army. Many have paid but there are many more who have not. The latter category has been put under arrest, so that their relations may be compelled to pay for them the loans asked for. With the help of some vagrants and bad characters attempts are being made to rescue them. You are hereby directed to take steps and to arrange proper guards to foil their attempts. Otherwise our power and reputation is at stake."

He wrote to him again on July 28 : "There is no money in the treasury to pay the armies their daily or monthly salaries nor can we get arms and ammunition without it. And if there is no ammunition the situation will be impossible. It is expedient therefore that money be procured from

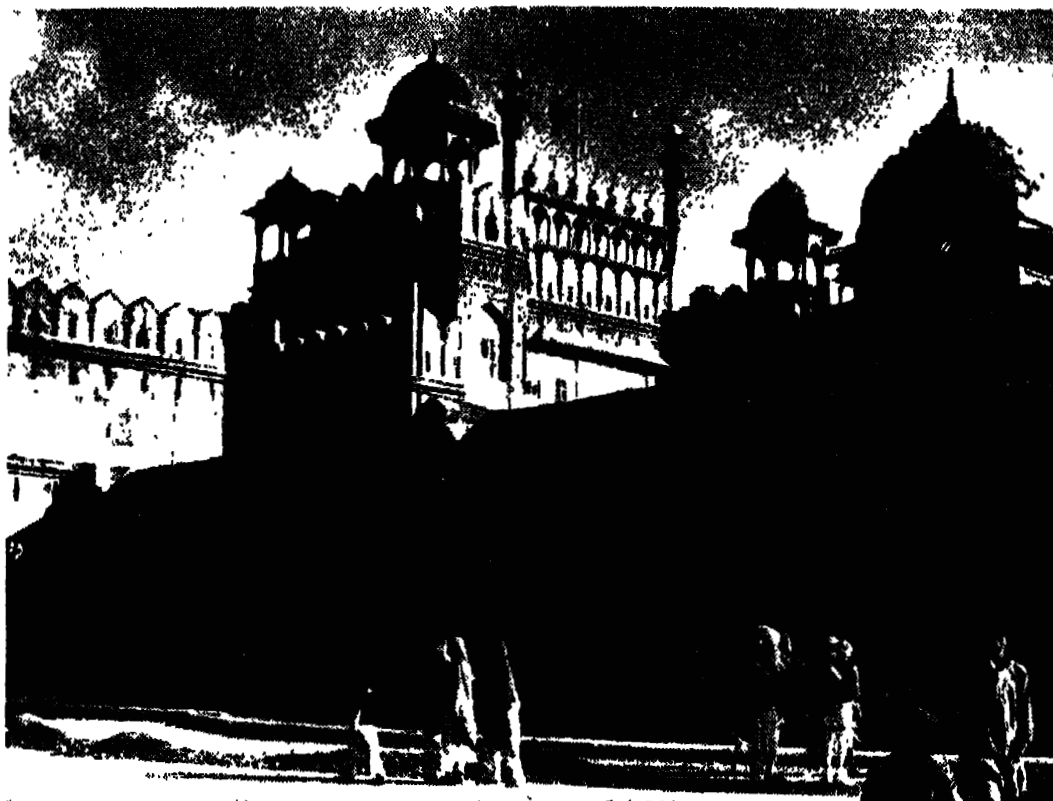
Punjabi traders and the rich servants of the English. Hundis be prepared and issued under our signatures and the seal. Voluntary donors will be amply rewarded according to their positions (donations?). Whoever does not help in the procurement or evades payment or does not submit to authority, should be adequately punished.

“This is a national emergency. The forces require to be properly fed and armed with weapons of warfare. Adopt methods that within three days the treasury may be full. Those who have already advanced loans through the late Munir Uddaula may not be disturbed and the Hundis issued to them may be honoured.”

Mirza Mughal replied: “It is the submission of the gentry and of the general people alike that they have no objection to pay money for the expenses of the army, etc., but it would be best organised and collected if done through the religious heads of the different communities and sects of the people. In this way a very large amount can be secured and people will gladly contribute. It is prayed that the dignitaries who have suggested this may be deputed to function as collectors of funds. This procedure will create a fund of goodwill among all subjects of Your Majesty, Hindus as well as Muslims.”

As the proposal was sound it was accepted by the King. Some of the moneyed people like Mathuradas Saligram and Nabi Bakhsh, who had already advanced loans twice before, were exempted from further payment.

However, the Indian troops, when they did not get any pay or ration or accommodation resorted



Lahori Gate of the Red Fort.



Flagstaff at the Ridge in 1851



Mirza Mughal

plundering. They would spot out wealthy people, enter their houses on the pretext of searching for hidden Englishmen who were, of course not there, and then ransack the whole premises taking away whatever wealth they came by. On July 25, Mubarak Shah, chief police officer, wrote to the King: "A large number of infantry men have broken into the houses of Lala Alopī Pershad and Lala Ram Lal on the pretext of searching for Englishmen. Neither Englishmen nor any stolen property was found by them but they have looted all their property the loss of which cannot be estimated. By this act of theirs great unrest prevails. They have also, it has come to my notice, arrested two persons and have taken them away. There is great unrest and resentment on this account amongst the people."

The King ordered a regiment to subdue all such law-breaking people and also arrange for the release of the arrested persons. When these troops plundered Shahdara Bahadur Shah advanced Rs. 15,000 to be paid to them on their salary account. Daily allowance to the monthly paid soldiers was stopped, others were paid part of their dues so that they might stop plundering the people.

HODSON'S ESPIONAGE SYSTEM

Hodson, a past-master in the organisation of intelligence system, placed his spies in every nook and corner of the city as well as high places in the court. In the earlier part of the struggle *Purbeah* troops had also entered the Indian ranks of the British forces but instead of spying they manoeuvred to kill the British officers. Soon they were

caught and shot. And probably efforts to pierce the enemy's ranks incognito thereafter were given up. Hodson gave his spies perfect training. They belonged to both the major communities. They sneaked in everywhere, every sphere of life and made day-to-day reports. They moved freely in the Nationalist camp in order to know the numbers of the infantry, cavalry and the artillery and also guns. They formed a group of supporters in the city, of course on payment, from whom also they received daily reports. About the Court activities they would report what the King remarked, what Mirza Mughal did, what was the reaction of Bakht Khan, how forces were behaving, what were the gun positions and how the troops were placed, where the attack was proposed to be made, etc. Similar details were sent out about the city. There were different persons on different jobs and on each job there was a cross checking.

Thus it happened when the Nasirabad Brigade arrived at Delhi on June 19, and proceeded to Sabzi-*mandi* to deliver an attack on the Hindu Rao House from that side, the British spies sent information giving full details of the proposed action and the British took ample precautions and made advance preparations to meet the attack. Again information was passed on about the Indian troops building batteries at Kishan ganj. These informations took the edge off the surprise attack and in most cases resulted in the discomfiture of the attackers because they had gone to assault and was unprepared for assault on themselves. The battle of the 23rd June was lost for similar reasons although the fight on that particular day was rather heavy, being, as said

before, the anniversary of the battle of Plassey.

The British intelligence system did not end there. It worked in the front lines as well. Very often sand and stones and kankars were found in the guns instead of gun powder, fuses were reduced to irregular lengths, charge powder was too much or too little. Rations were purchased at higher rates against cash and were supplied to the British in cart loads at the ridge. Even Bhishtis (water-carriers) were used for serving strong drinks instead of water at the time of action.

RAJAB ALI—THE PERFECT SPY

Rajab Ali was the most important of these spies. He was a former Mir Munshi of Sir John Lawrence at Lahore. "The old Maulvi, with a fidelity and a zeal which it is impossible to overestimate in that crisis, rigid Mohammedan though he was, daily forwarded from the very heart of the city—in a quilt, a chapati, the sole of a shoe, the fold of a turban or the matted hair of a Sikh anywhere or anyhow, so as to escape detection—a slip of paper containing the news of all that was passing in the city which it behoved us to know. And so great was his tact that not a shadow of suspicion rested upon him. Like the two ends of an electric wire were Rajab Ali in the city and Hodson in camp; through them passed daily the most authentic intelligence of the rebel plans and movements." (Rev. Browne, J. C., in the *Punjab and Delhi in 1857*.)

Rajab Ali had occupied a prominent place in the Court as Mir Munshi to the Commander-in-Chief for three months. It was he who was responsible

for the explosion of the magazine at Churiwalan on August 7, where some 250 workers and a thousand others were blown up. Before the explosion he had written a letter in the name of Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan and allowed it to fall into the hands of the Nationalist forces so that suspicion was created in their mind against the Hakim who was arrested by them and whose house was looted. Rajab Ali had manoeuvred this with the knowledge and consent of Hodson according to Greathead. The King, however, did not suspect the Hakim and strongly protested against his arrest. He even threatened to commit suicide; then only the Hakim was released and his house restored on condition that he should not interfere in the Government matters.

The King's pitiable condition is disclosed in his letter to Mirza Mughal which reads: "To Mirza Mughal and Court Officer about Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan,—Please tell people under your command to release Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan. Even at such an old age I am trying my best to look after the interests of all of you. Whoever has any doubt on the loyalty of the Hakim Sahib should give it in writing and should prove it. His looted property should be restored to him. If that is not done, either I will run away or I will commit suicide. A box has also been stolen from his house in which there was the Royal seal."

Rajab Ali was found out as the chief British spy on August 9, but he made his escape before he could be arrested.

With the addition of Bareilly Brigade under the leadership of Mohammad Bakht Khan in early

July the British expected a strong assault on their forces. They had also observed that there were regular desertions from their 4th, 9th and 17th Irregular Cavalry and also the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, the troops going over to the Indian side. These desertions were regularly reported to them by their spies Mohiuddin and Meghraj in their extremely important confidential reports. They had also lost Gen. Bernard who had died on 4th July from cholera and had been succeeded by Gen. Reid. But the attack from the Indian side, at least on a large scale, never came. There were assaults on a minor scale almost daily but they resulted more in losses to the assaulters than the assaulted. The reason for losing this valuable opportunity of making one determined attack was ascribed to the recriminations among the Indian troops.

Mirza Mughal had already succeeded in working up Neemuch and Nasirabad Brigades against the Bareilly Brigade. If one Brigade went to the battle front the others would wait and watch and never go to its help even when it was necessary. The result of such a battle was a foregone conclusion and yet neither Mirza Mughal nor other leaders seem to have realised the consequences. There was, however, no lack of enthusiasm on the part of common soldiers. They fought losing battles with heavy losses to themselves on July 4 at Alipore, July 9 at Sabzimandi, July 14 at Sabzimandi and the Ridge, July 18 again at Sabzimandi, July 23 beyond Kashmeri Gate and Ludlow Castle; and on July 28 they had planned to make a very strong attack from the rear by building a bridge of boats on the canal but were thwart-

ed by heavy rains which swept away the bridge. Besides there was insufficient war material including gun powder as well as fire-arms.

RECRIMINATIONS

The non-co-operation among the Indian forces was attempted to be solved by dividing them into four divisions, *viz.*, Nasirabad, Bareilly, Ferozepore and Delhi Divisions, each consisting of six infantry regiments, 1000 sowars and artillery. Each division was to fight by turns. However, even this arrangement did not work satisfactorily for the reason stated—one division would not go either to help or rescue the other in case of difficulty. Mohammad Bakht Khan who had been appointed Lord Governor General of the Army under the designation of Sahib-e-Alam Bahadur, and who knew his own ability as he knew the incapability of Mirza Mughal, did not want to suffer as a result of the Mirza's follies and foolish campaigns. His co-operation with the Mirza was therefore nominal and this gave the Mirza occasion to undermine the authority of the General.

Mirza Mughal worked up Gen. Abdul Samad Khan of Neemuch Brigade against Bakht Khan. Then he made complaints against him to the King that other officers were not prepared to co-operate with Bakht Khan. He next made a direct complaint against him in his own name thus : "It is respectfully submitted, and as is also well known to your Majesty, that everything was taking place quite in order but since Gen. Bakht Khan has come here things have changed and deteriorated. I had taken out the forces duly armed to attack the enemy

when Bakht Khan stopped me saying they were not to go anywhere, without his orders. It is submitted that if everything is to happen under Gen. Bakht Khan's orders then an order may be passed that I should not interfere in military matters and movements so that I may explain to the officers under me, who may then obey only Bakht Khan. If Your Majesty's orders are against your slave then there would be great resentment amongst my officers. On the other hand if the military movements are to be conducted under this slave's orders then the General should not interfere in my affairs."

In this petition the Mirza cunningly held out a threat that unless he was given more powers there would be disaffection in the army under his command. He forgot that he and his men had done nothing in the whole month of May and June when the enemy's forces were nominal and could be easily defeated and when there were plenty of troops on the Indian side full of zest and verve and prepared to die for the cause. He forgot the ignominious defeats suffered at Hindon and Badli ki Serai when he was the Commander-in-Chief. It appears his one aim was to become supreme and remain supreme irrespective of the fact whether he was suited for the job or not, whether the interests of the cause demanded some other man to guide the operations.

Mirza Mughal thus not only got the General admonished by the King but he also got him served rebukes by the Military Council which was under Mirza's influence. One such address signed by six members of the court remonstrated with the Lord Governor General Bakht Khan in the following terms :

“From Het Lal Misr, Sub Maj.; Tala Yar Khan, Sub-Maj.; Sheo Bukhsh Misr, Sub-Maj.; Jewa Ram, Sub-Maj. Bahadur; and Dhani Ram, Sub.—All Members of the Military Court, To the General Commander-in Chief :

“The kingdom of Delhi which has sprung up by the grace of God is in its infancy and resembles a child...God has sent you to foster the child and we hoped that you would manage this affairs of this infant kingdom in a satisfactory manner...Great tact and wise policy are required to rear an infant kingdom inasmuch as all kingdoms are conducted according to *Rajniti*...But from 10th May to the present time the commanding and other officers and sepoys who were the first to rush into this flame have been forgotten by you and you have considered yourself wise...The first commander of the army is obeyed by all. Here in the first fierce struggle everything was managed by Mirza Mughal, the Commander-in-Chief. In every respect he (Mirza Mughal) is your superior; nevertheless up to this day you have never submitted the present state of your Brigade nor ever asked premission to issue orders. All this is foreign to *Rajniti*. If you will not obey your superior, how will your subordinates obey you ?

“We, Sirdars who compose the Court, have only this duty to perform, viz. to see that the affairs of the kingdom are properly managed, and the administration is strong and not undermined by any one's act, that everything be conducted according to *Rajniti*, that the sepoys and the minor officers obey the great Sirdars and that everything is placed in its proper order.

Yet these Sirdars turned a Nelson eye to

the misdeeds of the princes, perhaps because the latter came from Royal blood. Thus Mirza Abu Bakr was in the habit of visiting dancing girls where parties were held and drinks freely served. If anybody like Ahsanul Haq, son of the Mufti, checked him he was shot by the prince, and his men plundered Ahsan's house. Even the police officer Khuda Bakhsh Khan did not escape the plunder because he had the audacity of instituting inquiries into certain murders caused by the prince.

During this month Ahsan Ullah Khan was reported by Rajab Ali to have misappropriated money meant for payment to the soldiers, adding the money to his personal account. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the wrath he invited upon himself from the soldiers on the 7th August at the time of the explosion of the Churiwala Magazine.

The whole month of August, like July, was wasted in mutual jealousies and squabbles. The rivalry between Bakht Khan, Mirza Mughal and a third, Gen. Sidhara Singh continued. As in July half-hearted sorties were made against the British with equally abortive results. Aid from the Gwalior Brigade was sought for but it did not arrive.

MORE COURT INTRIGUES

Mirza Mughal, according to intelligence reports received by the British, was manoeuvring for the murder of his father, the King, who was, however, supported by Gen. Bakht Khan. Gen. Sidhara Singh was won over by Zeenat Mahal Begam and Nawab Ahmad Khan and consequently he withdrew from the administrative court. The Begam

and the Nawab were planning to cross over to the British side, as reported by Toorab Ali, a British spy in the Court. According to another intelligence, the Indian troops wanted to murder Mirza Mughal as they had not received their pay. Mirza Sahib saved his neck by resigning from the post of Commander-in-Chief, which post was then offered to Mohammad Bakht Khan. Some of the princes, whose names are not known, sent letters to Greathead, "declaring they have all along been fondly attached to us and they only want to know what they can do for us." Of course, their protests of innocence were ignored by Greathead, as they deserved to be.

General conditions in the city were worse than in the previous month. Food supply was shorter still. Arms and ammunition were daily being depleted through loss to the enemy. The production of gun powder had gone very low after the explosion of the magazine on August 8, particularly for want of money and sulphur. The quality was also bad because of rains and the damp powder was undependable. Gun powder was now being manufactured in another magazine at Darriao Ganj in the house of Hassanali Khan. The troops, at least many of them, getting no pay and ration or for the matter of that any accommodation even, started deserting the ranks and returning to their homes. A committee of 14 Hindus and 14 Muslims was appointed to collect money but it met with the same fate as the earlier one. Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan was released on August 12 on the condition that he would confine his activities to his profession only. Batches of troops were

sent out of Delhi to collect revenue as well as donations from the neighbouring places. They too did not meet with any success.

On 14th August, a solemn oath was taken by the Indian troops and officers over salt dissolved in water. They pledged to fight the British to the last, never to return alive without victory. If they did, God was to dissolve their bodies like the salt in water. Gen. Bakht Khan and Gen. Sidhara Singh made up their differences and agreed to join forces and to fight the British relentlessly. At this time some 100 Sikh soldiers serving the British forces outside the gate of Delhi deserted their ranks and joined Sidhara Singh. This, however, did not stop desertions from the Indian ranks. According to another British spy Gauri Shankar's report of 18th August, "The King's seal is at the mercy of anyone and everyone. There are a thousand reports hatched in the palace and circulated in the city which have no foundation whatever. The King, the princes and the officers are all an imposture and a farce. Lies have their paradise here. Such a state of affairs has never been heard or seen before."

The organisation of the Indian forces was going to pieces. There were constant betrayals in the Court. Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan was already suspected. Zeenat Mahal Begam had also been sounding the British. She, too, like the Hakim Sahib, was misappropriating money that was collected for paying the troops. The troops came to know of it and would have looted her house at Farashkhana had there not been a guard posted there. Mir Nawab Aziz, and Mir Hyder Ali, in charge of the King's

elephants, were also detected giving information to the British but no action was taken.

While desertions from the Indian ranks were taking place daily there were on the other hand regular arrivals of troops and common people from various places. A statement was prepared by Rajab Ali, the arch British spy, who had got himself appointed to the key post of Mir Munshi to the Indian C.-in-C., showing the number of troops ~~and~~ the places from where they came. The places mentioned are Meerut, Hansi, Muttra, Lucknow, Nasirabad, Ferozepore, Jullundur, Bareilly, Jhansi, Gwalior, Neemuch, Benares, Aligarh, Agra, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Tonk, Allahabad, etc. According to him the total number of cavalry that come to Delhi was 3590, infantry 4420 and guns 30.

With the Indian forces divided among themselves, the troops dissatisfied, ammunition unreliable, and the Court full of English spies, the King held a general Darbar at which were present officers from the Brigades, and to which were called representatives of the city people also. Like any other Darbar held in the Diwan-i-Aam, lay people were present in large numbers. The King narrated the conditions, emphasising the gloomy part of them and asked if the war against the British should be stopped. There was a heavy uproar from the people against the suggestion and they shouted with one voice that the war must be continued.

Bakht Khan was very much downhearted with the rampant corruption and betrayals. Nevertheless he bowed to the wishes of the common man. He agreed to continue the war.

THE KARNAL SIEGE CONVOY

The enemy was at that time expecting a siege convoy consisting of some 1000 bullock carts which had been collected at Karnal and were proceeding towards Delhi carrying six 24-pounder guns, eighteen 18-pounder guns, four 8" howitzers, fourteen 10" mortars, with 400 rounds of ammunition for each gun. Bakht Khan realised that if the enemy received all that material it would be difficult for the Indian forces to overcome him. He therefore decided to intercept the siege convoy. Najafgarh, some 16 miles from Delhi, was considered a safe place from where the convoy could be intercepted and seized. The Barcilly and the Neemuch Brigades, therefore, marched towards Najafgarh on August 24. But then arose a difference between the commanders of Neemuch Brigade and the General about the strategy of the operation. The Brigade Commanders did not listen to Bakht Khan who stopped his Brigade at Palam, about six miles from the place where the Neemuch Brigade encamped. The much-boasted friendship and oaths of August 14 had dissolved. The Neemuch Brigade occupied a *garhi*, a sort of strongly walled serai about half a mile from the village Nunglee which itself is about a mile from Najafgarh, on the road to Delhi. The Brigade had some 6000 soldiers drawn up in a long line of two miles between the canal bridge and the village. Four guns were mounted on the *garhi* and nine placed between the bridge and the village.

Nicholson, who was in charge of the siege train, had, however, arrived at Delhi earlier and had brought with him 2000 soldiers composed of tribal

people and five heavy guns, ammunition, gun powder and several lakhs of rupees. Before his arrival at Delhi Nicholson had earned fame in Punjab and a certain Sikh section had come to look upon him as guru. They in fact had given him an Indian name, Nikul Seyn. Even the frontier tribes were devoted to him. And so he gathered these Sikhs and the tribesmen with promises of loot and plunder to their hearts' content.

BATTLE OF NAJAFGARH

The English spies in the Fort, however, sent information about the departure of the Nationalist forces to Najafgarh stating the number of men, the guns and the Brigades. The English were thus well posted with facts about the Nationalist forces and their dispositions. They decided to take advantage of this and about 2000 infantry and cavalry left for Najafgarh on the morning of August 25, under the command of Nicholson who had come to regard himself as bearing a charmed life.

Heavy rains had filled the Nala breast deep, just this side of the garhi where the forces under Abdul Samad Khan and Sidhara Singh were resting. The flow of the current was rapid. Nicholson jumped his horse into the Nala and proceeded towards the garhi. His troops at first wanted to retreat but when they saw that Nicholson had already gone ahead they followed him.

The downpour, still continuing, was so heavy that the Indian troops who had not expected an attack on themselves, did not notice the arrival of the enemy till they received a heavy barrage from the English guns from very close quarter. In fact

Nicholson had opened the fire from as close as 30 yards. A gun had been mounted by him on a peepal tree some half a mile from the garhi which continued rapid bombardment of the garhi area. This peepal is still there, and was till 1947 a place of visit for the English. This bombardment by artillery was complemented by close-quarter attacks by the cavalry and the infantry.

Although the Indian forces were taken by surprise yet they put up quite a stiff fight and the battle lasted three hours. The surprise factor lent a great advantage to the English and the unwary Indian forces lost the battle but not before 800 of them had died fighting. The rest retreated towards Delhi, leaving behind all the 13 valuable guns which fell into enemy hands. They also left behind huge stocks of ammunition, treasure, tents, and baggage.

When recently the writer visited Najafgarh for collection of original material from the local people as also photos of the well-known places, he was told a different story by the people who have had it from their fathers. According to them the battle between the Neemuch Brigade and Nicholson's forces was fought between Nunglee and Bapraula villages. While no mention was made of the heavy rains or even the surprise attack of Nicholson they ascribed the defeat to the betrayal of the Sikhs. It is said that in the first instance the Sikhs approached the Indian forces saying that they were with them. But when Nicholson came round and attacked the Indian forces, the Sikhs turned about and opened fire upon the Indians.

While there is no proof about this and no Eng-

lish author has reported about it, this is certainly within the domain of possibility. It will be remembered that no English author has mentioned about the betrayal of Risaldar Ahmad in the battle of Badli ki Serai yet it was a fact as we have got the information from more than one reliable source.

All the time the battle was being fought at garhi, Gen. Bakht Khan was waiting at Palam. When he learnt about the mishap he returned to Delhi with his forces. He was severely rebuked by the King for withholding help to his brothers-in-arms and putting up with their discomfiture.

The news of this lost battle of Najafgarh was received by the people of Delhi with dismay. They realised that the end was not far. Women started to leave Delhi for safer places. At this time Maulvi Fazal Haq arrived from Alwar and worked up the feelings of the people by speeches in mosques. He said that he had seen with his own eyes in the *Agra Gazette* a decree of the Imperial Parliament directing the wholesale slaughter of every living soul in Delhi and the entire destruction of the city. Only one minaret of the Jama Masjid was to be left standing as a reminder to future ages that on this spot the city of Delhi once stood. His preachings did move some people including some princes but no strong impression was left.

The princes in fact were busy misappropriating money collected as revenue or donation and enjoying a gay life. The King was forced to issue a *Firman* asking the people not to pay any money to the princes. Zeenat Mahal swallowed Rs. 10,000 received from the Raja of Ballabgarh. Mufti Saddruddin, a wealthy man of Delhi and a sirdar of the Court,



Ketwahi, where thousands of Indians were hanged.



Kashmere Gate, the storm centre of the battle of 1857.



Meena Bazar, also known as Khanum Bazar (present Parade grounds,
before it was demolished in 1860.



Humayun's Tomb in 1857 where king Bahadur Shah Zafur
and his sons were arrested.

when asked for money by the King, threatened to fight against him. Desertions from the Indian ranks continued and so did the differences among the various units of the Indian forces. Mirza Mughal was still full of mischief and busy in his nefarious activities of working one brigade against another and all against Bakht Khan.

BAHADUR SHAH'S GESTURE OF ABDICATION

After the battle of Najafgarh Bahadur Shah was near despair. He thought the battle of freedom was being lost because of him. He therefore decided to give up his powers and even the throne. He addressed letters to the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Alwar, all Rajputs. He said :

“It is my heartfelt desire that the Ferunghis should be turned out of the country at any cost and by any means. It is my wish that India should be free once more. But I am not meeting with any success in this battle of freedom. It does need some one who will not only take up the responsibility of waging the war against the English but will also unite the various peoples of the country under one flag. I have no more desire to rule over India. *If you, Rajas and Maharajas, unite and come forward to fight the enemy, then I am prepared to delegate all my powers to a joint body, which may be elected by you.*”

This of course had some effect.

SITUATION IN SEPTEMBER

The crucial month of September opened with this situation in the city, the court and the Indian ranks : The British spy Toorab Ali reported that

the Indian forces had only 15 field guns left, six of which belonged to the Bareilly Brigade, five to Neemuch and four to the King. Gun powder could not be manufactured for want of sulphur. The Military Council was still there and its members at the beginning of September were : Gen Ghaus Mohammad Khan of Neemuch; Hira Singh, Brigadier of Neemuch; Mohammad Bakht Khan, General of Bareilly; Mohammad Shafi, Risaldar, 8th Irregulars; Hayat Mahmood, Risaldar, 14th Irregulars; Qadir Baksh, Subedar, Sappers and Miners; Nathoo, Subedar, 72nd Regiment; Hardatt, Subedar, 9th Regiment, and three others.

Maj.-Gen. Reid wrote to Sir John Lawrence : "Must hold on to the present position. The enemy are numerous and may possibly break through our entrenchments and overwhelm us. Luckily the enemy have no lead and method and we hear dissensions are breaking out amongst them."

As a matter of fact had the Nationalists shown any enterprise by, say sending a strong column in the rear of the British forces encamped on the ridge any time in May, June, July or even August, there was no chance for the British to face them on two fronts and the Nationalist forces not only would have routed them but would have left no possibility for them to escape. The whole British force encamped there could have been annihilated. There was unfortunately not one Indian soldier in the ranks of the Indian forces who could lead them to victory. Had there only been a Hyder Ali or a Tippo Sultan or a Sivaji the usual courage of the Indian soldier and the man of the street was such as to give the British a complete defeat. No earthly

power could have saved the British in India then.

The British spy, Fateh Mohammad, in his communication to Hodson, threw light on conditions in the Indian camp. "The Ncemuch and the Nasirabad Brigades are supporters of Mirza Mughal while the Bareilly Brigade is devoted to the King. The officers of the latter and Mirza Mughal are bitter enemies... It is probable that the Bareilly forces will fall out and kill Mirza Mughal. There is not a pie in the treasury. The Sipahis may plunder the city and fight over it. Collections from the townspeople are embezzled by the Shahzadas. Bareilly forces want the King to dismiss Mirza Mughal or in the alternative to allow them to return to Bareilly. Reprisals may force them to commit some violence."

Gauri Shankar, another spy, wrote: "The forces are divided into territorial factions and there is no agreement between them on anything. The treasury is empty. The King is getting money through different sources but the money is being misappropriated by Zeenat Mahal Begam. The King has cried down the credit of the Shahzadas and has proclaimed that no money should be paid to them. But the requisitions of the Military Court (military council) must be obeyed."

Zeenat Mahal Begam wrote to the British Commander on August 22, offering her good offices for the settlement of the dispute between them and her husband. Her offer was rejected by the British. Then after collecting money through unfair means she organised a set of her sympathisers in the army on the condition that she would pay their salaries if they accepted her son Mirza Jawan Bakht as their commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH OFFENSIVE : FALL OF DELHI

Troops dispositions—Kashmeri Gate falls—street battles on the 17th—Nicholson fatally wounded—The unknown Amazon—Bahadur Shah a captive—Zeenat Begam—Mirza Elahi Baksh—A King's prison room—Why the revolt failed—Why the English succeeded—Some estimates.

TROOPS DISPOSITIONS

Before describing the final showdown a clear understanding of the situation on both sides of the contending forces may be attempted. The reports of the well-trained spies of Hodson dispatched by clever devices provide the best material for this purpose with regard to the Indian side. These reports by Toorab Ali, Gauri Shankar and Fateh Mohammad are dated 9th and 10th September.

The reports are separate and independent of each other and indicate that Hodson was careful in keeping his spies in the Indian camp unknown to one another so that he might get a correct view by cross-checking. Toorab Ali wrote on the 10th September: "Yesterday evening after the rebels had returned from the batteries, a grand assembly was held in the Church compound (at Kashmere Gate). Each and all bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to fight and die like men.....

"An attack will probably take place tonight when the moon rises. The Nasirabad Light Field Guns

were withdrawn from the batteries and placed in the Church compound. The Kotwal of the city went round the city at night, and ordered the inhabitants of every mohalla to be armed and ready. Directly the English made their appearance they were to slay them. The citizens replied that as they led such a happy life with the mutineers, of course, they would kill all who opposed them; if indeed any European should attack them they would resist to the best of their ability. Toola Ram of Rewari has sent Rs. 50,000. Barkat Ali has made his escape and reports that after distributing ammunition to the rebels only 12,000 caps and 60 mds. of gun powder remained in store. The soldiers made the King come out of his private apartments and abused him. The King wept bitterly and exclaimed, 'For God's sake take my life.'...

"Mirza Kawash (King's grandson and son of the heir-apparent) has succeeded in withdrawing two of the Barcilly Regiments to his own standard. He wishes to march out to Gurgaon to raise revenue... The writer hopes he may receive a pass so that his life and property may be respected during the approaching assault.

"All the bridges in the city are standing. The rebels talk of destroying the Custom House....They are constructing an inner battery there. Behind the Shah Bastian the rebels have erected a sandbag breastwork; they are repairing all breaches in the city walls in the same way. Two regiments are in the Fort, of which one does duty at Salimgarh. The King's personal troops with 200 of the 9th Irregular Cavalry, who act as his body guard, are also in the Fort. Three heavy guns are mounted

at the Dewan-i-Aam. One heavy gun stands between the Delhi and the Lahori Gates opposite the wall of the Fort.

“At Col. Skinner’s house (the old Hindu College) the 9th and the 20th N. Infantry are stationed. Between the Kabul and the Water Bastians there is detailed the 10th N. I. (Hoosainec). At the Church is the police battalion from Agra. At the Kutchery is the 38th N. I. and there is a regiment (name not known) at the Nigambodh. The 5th N. I. are at the Lahori Gate. The 11th N. I. is stationed at the Ajmeri Gate in the Madrassa of Ghaziuddin Khan. At Hauz Kazi and Sita Ram Bazar and in the Imli Mohalla up to Turkman Gate there are three regiments, viz. the 3rd N. I., the 6th N. I. and the 36th N. I. In the bazar near the Delhi Gate is the 74th N. I. and five regiments occupy Darriao Ganj, viz. 15th N. I., the 30th N. I., and three other regiments from Nasirabad. The 4th Irregulars, the 9th Irregulars, the 6th and the 7th Regular Cavalry and Saduddin Khan’s men are also in Darriao Ganj. In Begam Samru’s garden are the 3rd Cavalry and other Hindustani Sowars.

“*Conditions in the city.* Church is nearly levelled. The Kabuli Gate has been closed with masonry. The portals of only Lal Darwaza are closed. The Khirkee at Farashkhana is closed. The Ajmeri Gate is open, but extensive preparations have been made for resisting any assault. Twelve guns are mounted at the Ghaziuddin Madrassa. Yesterday when assault was expected two heavy guns were placed in position near Kotwali, one on the road leading from the Lahori Gate and another on the

roof of Lala Har Narain's house. But all three were removed subsequently.

"At all the cross roads, midway between the Lahore and the Kashmeri Gates, barricades have been erected, and it is intended to have a gun inside every gate. Inside Kashmeri Gate there are four guns in position. Cannon are also mounted on the bastians round the city. The walls are manned with great vigilance and in greater numbers than previously. All the canal bridges inside the city are standing. (This refers to the canal which ran through the middle of Chandni Chowk then.) The Delhi and the Meerut regiments are in the city. The fanatics have gathered in a body and are ready for action."

Report by Gauri Shankar :

"Every gate of the city (13 in all) is more or less fortified especially the Kashmeri, Kabuli, Lahori and Ajmeri Gates. The guns at the Kashmeri and the Water Bastian areas as also of the Kabuli Gate have been completely silenced. The Shah Bastian is in ruins. The city wall from the Shah Bastian to another bastian near the Bad Rauh gate (Ganda Nala) and the compound of the Boboos house is intact. This last will have two guns. The 9th N. I. went to the King and declared its unwillingness to fight any more. They said, 'Our destiny has been fulfilled. We will go out by the Kashmeri Gate and surrender. Send us such support as you may deem proper' (this for the spies only)... There are no guns left in the Fort. Indeed there is scarcity of serviceable cannon. The guns are made to do double duty, sometimes in the Fort and sometimes at Kashmeri Gate. The breach-

es are repaired as soon as possible and every man who shows his face, whether merchant or shopkeeper, is seized."

Report from Fateh Mohammad :

"At the Fort and at the Delhi and Lahori Gates I found the guard stronger than usual and every preparation made for resisting an assault. One heavy gun was mounted at each gate. At the Diwan-i-Aam there were four guns and six ammunition tumbrils. The citadel of Salimgarh is well fortified and guns are mounted on all sides. There is strong muster of troops from the Kashmeri Gate extending to the Lahori Gate and in the main street every house is filled from top to the ground floor with troops. The cavalry are encamped about the Bank, Lall Diggee and Flour Mills. There is also a large party of them in the Badshahi Masjid near Darya Ganj (Masjid Ghata), others are scattered here and there all over the city.

"All the bridges in the city on the canal up to this time are in good repairs. The troops undoubtedly get more and more disheartened every day. Hira Singh, Brigadier of Neemuch forces, is not to be found. The Brigade people say he has gone to the Batteries and the men at the Batteries say he is with the Brigade. The soldiers are selling off all their cumbersome articles. The gates of the city are closed and well guarded. Toola Ram of Rewari has sent in Rs. 45,000 today. Imdad Ali of Palwal with all his men has left Delhi and is not to be heard of."

The British, in early September, had some 14,000 men under arms, a number of guns, immense war material, supplies well maintained and regulated,

rations assured and above all a determined spirit to win the battle at any cost.

Their supplies of food and other articles of general daily use were being met by two firms who had opened their shops in the camp. They were A. & D., an English firm, and Jehangir and Cowasjee, Indian Parsis. Two and half cwts. of oil was daily supplied from the city. All their Sappers and Miners, as also khalasis, coolies, Bhishtis, sweepers, khansamas, were Indians, mostly Muslims. The khansamas were very regular in supplying food even at the battle front.

The English generals had had war experience in the Crimea and the Afghan wars. Certainly the divided Indian forces were no match to them.

The King had only Rs. 40,000 at the beginning of the month which he distributed, along with some gold mohurs, to the army on the basis of Risaldar, Rs. 12, Naib Risaldar Rs. 8, Jamadar Rs. 6, Dafadar Rs. 5, Trooper Rs. 3, Sepoy Rs. 2, and camp followers Re. 1 each. This of course did not satisfy the troops who accused Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan and demanded his death or imprisonment.

The English knew these state of affairs, and that is why, instead of accepting the offer of surrender by the King or of good offices by Zeenat Mahal Begam, they carried on fully expecting the fall of Delhi any moment. The Governor-General was also urging the commander at Delhi to capture the city. The eagerness of the British to capture the city may be well understood for they knew its capture was vital, as failure here would not only mean their complete extermination but the end of the British empire. So at the expense of

Kanpur, Oudh, and other places in India they concentrated on the capture of Delhi. Their forces poised for a final assault at the city included Baluchis, Sikhs, Gorkhas and several tribes from the mountains of Afghan frontiers, along with Europeans. Among them was Skinner also who before May 1857, was a courtier of Bahadur Shah.

The Gwalior Brigade was a very well trained set of men adept in the latest warfare tactics. But this unit was sitting on the fence, for though opposed to the British they neither supported Nana, nor Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi, nor even the forces at Delhi. Their active participation at this even late stage might have changed history. But they joined when it was too late and suffered the fate they deserved.

On this side of the city desertions from ranks continued. When they first came the men were full of enthusiasm, determined to wreak vengeance on foreigners who had meant ruin to them and their religion. But after some time they became victims of a situation whereby all their zeal and zest were turned into disgust. They were starved, ill kept and worst of all ill-led in the battle field. Those who died fighting, and their number was legion, were certainly luckier than those that lived. These had no heart in their job, and inclined to return to their homes.

Bahadur Shah, however, had realised by now that the only chance for him was to give a battle to the British, may be the last battle. He therefore issued orders to prevent desertions by arrests. He called upon the Hindu and Muslim citizens of Delhi to fight against the British, side

by side with the Indian army. This order was enforced on all citizens, Government employees, and new arrivals. They were promised all the booty they captured from the enemy except arms and ammunition. The King also appealed to the Indian troops of the British army to desert their ranks and held out good prospects to all such deserters. He made a special appeal to the Sikhs. This work in the enemy camp was carried out by *Purbeah* troops.

By this time the sorties from the Indian side had also come to an end as the Indian forces were expecting an assault on the city by the British forces, who had built up strongholds at Kabuli Gate, Mori Gate and Lahori Gate. They had enrolled in large numbers Mazhabi Sikhs from Punjab to work as sappers and coolies.

The British assault started on September 7. The Nationalist forces were expecting the assault at night and they had therefore ignored the Ludlow Castle side. The English took advantage of this negligence, captured it and installed a heavy battery there. Kudsia Bagh was also mounted with heavy mortars. The Nationalists counter-attacked from the custom house side, behind the British lines (where the present Hindu College cricket grounds are) but did not succeed. The capture of Ludlow Castle and Kudsia Bagh proved of immense value to the British.

On the night of 11-12 September there was severe fighting. According to the spy Gauri Shankar, the citizens, too, took part in the battle. Expecting British assault the Nationalist troops swore to each other to die like martyrs. *The King gave*

away his silver howdahs (seats on the elephants), sticks, utensils, etc., for melting and converting into coins for the use of the army. This mint was situated at Katra Mashroo in Dariba. Money was also received from Toola Ram Jat of Rewari and was distributed in the army. Sikhs among the Nationalists fought better than others in this battle.

KASHMERI GATE FALLS

Reinforcements on the Indian side came from Jhajjar, Bareilly and Lucknow but were insufficient and then it was too late. Betrayals at Delhi continued even more than before. Nawab Hamid Ali Khan, Ahmad Kuli Khan (father of Zeenat Mahal Begam) and Hakim Abdul Haq were imprisoned as they refused to give money to the King. A report of a British spy dated 13th September states that the examination of the stores showed one and three quarter lakhs of empty cartridges and no gun powder.

The final British assault on the city of Delhi was on the morning of 14th September. They attacked it on five sides, but the main attack came on Kashmeri, Mori and Kabuli gates. Kishanganj came next in importance. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe who had known Delhi well and who bore a grudge against the people as they had plundered his house and library, was of great assistance to his side.

The writer has heard from his great grandfather that while leaving Delhi Metcalfe was passing through Ajmeri Gate Bazar on horse back in the early days of the revolution, he was heavily stoned from roof-tops on either side. At this time a Muslim water-carrier was flying his pigeons from one of the

house-tops and when he noticed the stoning of Metcalfe he remonstrated with the people why should they kill an innocent unarmed man. They desisted and he escaped. I was further told by my grandfather that when the English came back to power, Metcalfe sent for that Bhishti and suitably rewarded him.

The whole previous night was spent by the Indians in repairing the breaches of the city walls and by the British in making preparations for the assault. They however continued their salvos from their batteries throughout the night. Next morning when the British advanced towards the city they were met with volleys of bullets. Since not many bullets or guns were left, stones were thrown down on them when they reached the city walls. The British forces, however, succeeded in scaling the walls with the help of scaling leaders after they had succeeded in blowing up Kashmeri Gate with dynamite. Nicholson led them, and they entered the Kashmeri Gate and proceeded along the city wall towards Lahori Gate to meet the forces under the command of Maj.-Gen. Reid. Every house was then turned by the Indians into a barricade. There were shots from every house and Nicholson had to fight for every one of them.

NICHOLSON SHOT

The Mori Gate had also been blown up and fresh British troops had entered the city from there. Kabuli Gate was also captured by them. The Nationalist forces, however, made a strong stand at Burn Bastian and did not permit Gen. Reid to break through Lahori Gate to join forces with Nicholson,

who tried to reach him but was shot through the lungs by a bullet, near the Kabuli Gate. He was after some time removed to the British camp where he died on September 23, after Delhi had been captured by the British. There was a severe fight on the Teliwara front also, while on Kishanganj side the British troops were supported by the Jammu Brigade. When the English troops reached the Jama Masjid, *white-robed Muslims clad in the garb of Ghazis (martyrs) rode out of the mosque, hurled themselves on the British and got killed in large numbers.* Real martyrs indeed! Had they appeared in the earlier stage of the battle, the result would have been different. But then the Indians have the knack of doing right things at wrong times.

Such rare faith and courage evoked the following remarks of Theodore King:

“It was a strange struggle that threw up heroes who appeared from nowhere and from every walk of life. It moved men to perform gallant deeds and die strange deaths.”

The Kashmere Brigade attacked the Indian forces on the Idgah front and although they were fresh in the field and had many guns with them, yet they were severely punished by the Indians and had to fall back outside the Mori Gate. Maj.-Gen. Reid, however, failed to break through the Sabzimandi side and was himself injured and the English were forced to withdraw their forces outside the city walls.

Charles Griffiths while describing the engagements of 14th September wrote: “Had the enemy after our unsuccessful assault on Kishanganj on the 14th but shown a spirit of pluck and daring

it is not too much to affirm that the camp might have fallen into their hands and our successes in the city have thereby rendered almost nugatory." Wilson had also said: "Had the fellows any pluck, our small force must have been annihilated after getting into the city which is built of brick houses, each a fortification with few exceptions."

The fact of the situation, however, was that the Nationalist forces had no initiative or zest for victory left with them. Their determination, then was only to die fighting for the cause for which they had revolted. They were at that time no more thinking of victory against the British.

On the 16th September the British captured and blew up a magazine. The Indian forces evacuated Kishanganj where they had successfully withstood the British onslaught only last evening. When the English troops were returning to their camp via Kashmeri Gate they came across stores of brandy, whisky and other liquors and they helped themselves to the liquor with abandon. The result was all of them were lying on the road, in the gutters, helpless and imbecile. The Sikhs and Punjabis fighting on the side of the British later passed that way and destroyed the unconsumed stock of the spirit.

STREET BATTLES ON THE 17th

Full details of the conditions in Delhi on 17th September were forwarded by the British spies so that they fully knew about the Indian forces' dispositions, emplacement of guns, barricades, condition and quantities of arms and ammunition, etc. The British attacked the city on this day and severe

fight again ensued. Common people fought from the house-tops and in the streets with sticks and stones as they had no arms with them. Sikhs fighting on the Indian side, however, decided to leave the city. Rohilkhand and Neemuch Brigades also realised the folly of fighting a lost battle and made plans for withdrawal from the city. It was from now a people's battle in which organised soldiers played rather insignificant part. People fought for every step killing the enemy in hundreds and suffering themselves in thousands.

On the Lahori Gate front in this day's fight, an old gunner showed guts, remarkable under the circumstances. First he went on, all alone, firing volleys ; and when his ammunition was over, he started hurling big stones on them, holding the enemy, led by Greathead, in check. The latter had to retire with his men and could capture this gate next day only from the back side, thanks to the betrayal of some grain merchants who purchased their freedom by betraying the gallant old fighter.

The British forces on this day succeeded in establishing a line from Kashmeri Gate to Urdu Bazar. The King's troops were still in the Fort giving the attackers a good fight, though they too had realised that the end was near. Those who were not interested in the fight and the women started leaving the city from the Ajmeri and Delhi Gates. The wounded troops and men were being left unattended and whenever the British forces came across them they brought their sufferings to an end by shooting them dead. Lt. Hodson killed



The Nala of Namfgarh where the Najafgarh battle
was fought on August 25, 1857.



The Site where stood the Serai of Nunglee, the battle place
of August 25, 1857.



Najafgarh City Wall Gate.



James Skinner's Church, Kashmere Gate which was extensively used by the nationalist forces during the siege of Delhi.

many sick and wounded soldiers of the Indian forces at Burn Bastian and Lahori Gate fronts.

On 18th and 19th the battle was less vigorous. There were severe combats at Chah Rahat and Gulian, near Jama Masjid. Battles also went on at Darriao Ganj and Burn Bastian fronts. But there was no fire from the Fort. The King retired towards Kutab, along with his family. The town was being evacuated rapidly. Burn Bastian fell on the night of the 19th September.

THE UNKNOWN AMAZON

Thus on the morning of September 20, the city as well as the palace was almost deserted. Only stray fighting went on in Chandni Chawk, and a few other places. The British took possession of Jama Masjid.

But the story of the great and patriotic fight will be incomplete without the most heroic exploit of an unknown Muslim *burqa*-clad amazon. She was an old woman of 50, in green, the martyr's colour. She inspired the Nationalist forces to fight and die like brave men. When she was left alone, she mounted a horse, took a rifle in one hand, a sword in the other and killed at least half a dozen British soldiers before she was wounded and captured by the British. Even Hodson, who knew not what compunction was, called her the Indian Joan of Arc, or the Maid of Delhi. She was eventually removed to Ambala and what happened to her thereafter is not known.

Keith Young wrote to his wife on 18th September : "As our troops advanced this morning they found heaps of dead sepoys. Scarcely a house,

they say, that had not one or two in it. The poor wretches, probably mortally wounded, had crawled into the house to die. We have so far captured 206 guns from the enemy during the last four days. The wretches can't have left many more now. *But their greatest want must be ammunition for their guns as they could hardly have taken much out of the magazine."

Kuli Khan, the artillery man, was another brave one who rendered yeoman service to the Nationalist forces all through and died in harness for the cause.

What troops were left in the palace on the morning of the 20th September, still continued making the last stand against the enemy, ceasing only when either they were dead or incapacitated by wounds. The British forces then captured the Fort, thereby completing their victory in Delhi. They put an end to all the living beings of the Fort, including the wounded ones.

BAHADUR SHAH A CAPTIVE

Delhi had thus lost the first battle of independence against the British for reasons clear to the reader, and Timur's dynasty came to an inglorious end.

Bahadur Shah accompanied by his queen, Zeenat Mahal, and a few sons and a retinue of some 100 people was retiring to Kutab when he was persuaded by some British spies to go to the Humayun's Tomb near Nizamuddin. Gen. Bakht Khan who had still hopes of defeating the British offered the King his services with 5000 soldiers and asked him to leave Delhi along with him.

But there were other parties which were playing their own game. The queen Zeenat Mahal had already contacted Hodson on 18th September, through Elahi Bakshi and Hakim Ahsan Ullah for the King's surrender provided he, she, her son Jawan Bakht and her father Ahmad Kuli Khan were guaranteed their lives. This guarantee had been given by Hodson. When Hodson learnt about Gen. Bakht Khan's exhortations to the King to accompany him he immediately sent Elahi Baksh and the Hakim to prevent him from accepting the advice of the General. The queen played the most important part in this prevention and eventually Bakht Khan retired with his troops towards Agra and thence to Lucknow. History has not recorded the future movements of this great but unfortunate man who might have influenced the movement in another direction had his counsel prevailed in the court at Delhi or had he supplemented his generalship with skill in diplomacy.

It has been also stated if the Nationalist forces had fought earlier with the valour they displayed in September, success should have been theirs. This was realised by the forces themselves as reported by Toorab Ali to Hodson on 11th September. He wrote : "Great efforts are being made to get the inner batteries ready. The rebels work at night. Some Sikh horse-men came to the King and declared that they had taken 12 guns, and asked for the assistance of Butcher's Regiment. The King said that they might do as they pleased. The Regiments went out to fight, a subedar and several other men were killed... They declared that if they had fought from the out-

set with the same spirit affairs would not have been so protracted and all traces of the English would have been swept away from the pages of (the Indian) history.....”

The city was completely deserted on 21st September. The King was arrested by Hodson at Humayun's Tomb and brought a prisoner to Delhi. The guarantee of his life had been obtained by his queen on September 18th from Hodson who, however, saw to it that the King or his queen or other relations were not shown the least consideration that was due to their position. They were kept in a dungeon in the Red Fort till the end of their trial after which they were removed to a Rangoon jail where Bahadur Shah died in 1862.

ZEENAT BEGAM

Since Zeenat Mahal Begam played an infamous part in the defeat of the Nationalist forces a short description of her activities would not be out of place. She was the youngest queen of Bahadur Shah and was married to him rather late in life, in November 1840. Her father Ahmad Kuli Khan was an ordinary courtier but the Begam was known for her beauty. She had a son by the King, Jawan Bakht Khan. The eldest queen Taj Begam, was old by this time and was living a pious life in the Fort. She did not entangle herself in the Court affairs. But not so Zeenat Mahal. She was too ambitious to keep quiet. She was covetous and intriguing. She was able to influence the old King and stooped to meanest tricks to have her way.

The King had bestowed on her a big building at Farashkhana, Lal Kuan, which still stands in her

name. But that could hardly satisfy her unbounded ambitions. All along, since the birth of her son she had been scheming for her son to succeed Bahadur Shah. The King had approached the British in 1856 for the recognition of Jawan Bakht as his successor but her request was not acceptable to them. The queen had approached directly Sir John Metcalfe but he too turned a deaf ear to her request. It is believed that he (John Metcalfe) was poisoned at her instance. Her hand was also suspected in the death of Mirza Fakhruddin, the heir-apparent who died in 1856.

When the rebellion started it was the desire of the Begam that her son, though still in his teens, should be appointed commander-in-chief of the Indian forces. When she saw that the post was given by the King to Mirza Mughal, at the instance of the troops, she conspired with the British to accept her son as the successor of Bahadur Shah. When she did not succeed she kept herself aloof from the revolt watching how the wind blew. She had formed an opinion that the only chance of fulfilment of her desire was the success of the British. She was therefore extending them all kinds of direct and indirect help. The British spies in Court got all information about Court affairs chiefly from her, which they passed on to their masters.

In one of his despatches in August a spy wrote to Hodson : "The Sikhs have been scattered in different regiments. A letter to Mirza Elahi Bakhsh and Zeenat Mahal Begam even now can procure the desired aid from the garrison."

The queen played a still dirtier game by placing

all sorts of obstructions in the way of successful execution of the battle by the Indian army. Towards the end of the war on 18th September she had already purchased her own, king's, her son's and her father's guarantee of life on promise of payment of Rs. 2 lakhs. This amount was to be paid from her jewellery. Jawan Bakht, her son, afterwards volunteered to disclose other wealth which was recovered from her house at Farashkhana, and the value of which was reported to be much more than the ransom amount.

Lt. Hodson writes in *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India* : "During their escape (king, queen and others) to the Tomb (Humayun) many messages were constantly coming especially from Zeenat Mahal that they (the royal family) were prepared to surrender, if their lives were spared, the king is restored to his previous position and he gets his pension right from May, 1857."

Saunders, Commissioner of Delhi, wrote about her : "She is a very clever and intriguing woman and has had very considerable influence over the King in his old age."

She did not mind misappropriating the money received as revenue or donation to fight the British and utilise that money in buying off generals of the Indian forces in favour of her son. To say the least she played a dastardly part in the whole affair and may have been virtually the cause of the King's unstable mind throughout the revolt.

She retired with the King to Rangoon. She made two trips to India thereafter but her visits were resented by the English. It was suspected by them that she might be making preparations for some

treachery. They had particularly resented the regard she had received from the people of India on her visits. She eventually died in Burma in 1882.

The King had been captured by Hodson on September 21. On the following morning he received report from Mirza Elahi Bakhsh that some princes were still hiding in the Tomb and that he should capture them too. Hodson went to the Tomb, killing all the sick and injured he met on the way and captured some of the princes whom he brought to Delhi.

The story as described by himself reads thus : "I got permission for the capture of the princes without any interference from the General. I captured them and despatched them towards the city. Behind them I authoritatively demanded of the other people to surrender arms which they immediately did. I then galloped after my prisoners. A crowd had collected around them. I appealed to the crowd not to interfere with them. They were butchers who had used helpless women and murdered them. Then seizing a carbine from one of my own men, I shot them dead one after the other, their bodies to be thrown before the Kotwali at the place where four months ago they had murdered our women. In twenty-four hours I disposed of the principal members of the family of Timur the Tartar. I am not cruel but I confess I did rejoice at the opportunity of ridding the earth of these wretches." The princes were shot outside the Delhi Gate, in front of the jail, near the gate which is still called Khuni Darwaza. They were Mirza Mughal, Mirza Khizr Sultan and the King's grandson Mirza Abu Bakr.

Later, Hodson was questioned by men of his own race about the action he took in shooting the princes but he kept up his stand that he had done the right thing by them and if he were to get another similar opportunity he would do the same thing. That was Hodson, "the most irregular of all irregular men".

MIRZA ELAHI BAKHSH

Mirza Elahi Bakhsh, with the help of Maulvi Raja Ali, who had earlier fled the Fort when discovered as a British spy, had persuaded the King not to listen to Bakht Khan when the latter wanted him to accompany the General so that he might fight the British from outside Delhi. About this Mirza Elahi Bakhsh, a Secretary of the Punjab Government, wrote to the Secretary of the Government of India on 8th Aug. 1859 :—

"During the siege of the city in 1857, he (Mirza Elahi Bakhsh) is believed to have exerted in our favour by his counsel to the leaders of the rebellion; at any rate he did good service by enabling us to capture the ex-king after the fall of the city, since it is stated that it was by his persuasion that the ex-king did not accompany the rebel army in its flight from Delhi."

Mirza Elahi Bakhsh saw a member of the royal family and a descendant of Alamgir II. His daughter was married to Mirza Fakhroo, the eldest son of the king and heir-apparent to the Crown, who died about nine months before the outbreak. In the opinion of C. B. Saunders, the then Commissioner of Delhi, Mirza Elahi Bakhsh performed a most desirable service in detaining the ex-king, as otherwise

his name would have been a rallying point for the disaffected and the rebellious in the country.

Mirza Elahi Bakhsh in recognition of his services wanted that the old pension payable to him should be continued. He also put up his claim for compensation for loss of property, etc. The Governor-General accorded his sanction for the payment of pension from 20th Sept. 1857, the date of the capture of the city. A life pension of Rs. 10 each for 76 members of the family at Delhi, then dependant on Mirza for support was also sanctioned. His claim for compensation for property and jagir was rejected. It was also decided that the Mirza along with his family should be removed from Delhi and sent to Rangoon or to some place distant from Delhi. He did not like Rangoon because of Bahadur Shah's confinement there; he was therefore given the choice to proceed to Karachi, or Pegu or Tennaserim. He was given a pension of Rs. 5000 per annum for life in lieu of his services.

The last scene of the arrest of the King at the Humayun's Tomb in which he played a prominent part is worth describing, even at the cost of some repetition.

Bakht Khan who stood by the King sincerely, implored him not to lose heart, accompany him to some safe place and stay there. He promised to reorganise the scattered forces and give battle to the British once again. The King who might have surrendered to the British in the Fort itself, agreed to think over the proposal and in the meanwhile retired with his queen and sons to the Humayun's Tomb. But the British spies under the command of Hodson were not prepared to allow slip from

their hands such a valuable prize bird. Mirza Elahi Bakhsh pleaded with the King to stay, in which he was supported by Zeenat Mahal, as the two had already bargained with Hodson. The Mirza, in the meanwhile, had also contacted Hodson apprising him of the position and requested him to come quickly and arrest the King. Through him the King also got the assurance from Hodson that he, the queen and Jawan Bakht would not be killed.

So on the 21st September when Bakht Khan's proposal for escape was under discussion, an altercation arose between Elahi Bakhsh and Bakht Khan. The Mirza accused Bakht Khan of being a Pathan. This enraged the General who drew his sword and was about to slay the Mirza when the King caught his hand and prevented him from putting an end to the life of a traitor. The King then addressed the General thus: "O brave soldier, I have full confidence in you. I have always liked your advice. But I am too old now and have no energy left to follow your advice. I have therefore to request you to leave me to my fate. You leave this place and go out elsewhere and show your prowess against the enemy. If I or members of my family have failed to save the honour of the country, at least you take up that cause. Do not bother about me, but do mind your duty to your country."

Bakht Khan then left the Tomb by the eastern gate. Hodson who was waiting outside, with a hundred men, entered the Tomb through the western gate on a given signal given by the Mirza. He wanted to arrest the King who only a few minutes back had been assured by Elahi Bakhsh that he

would not be arrested. So he hesitated a little, when Begam Zeenat Mahal intervened and persuaded the King to surrender on the condition that their lives would be spared. Hodson promised not to kill them. Hodson then put them under arrest and took them to the Red Fort via Lahori Gate and Chandni Chawk so that those of the people who were still in the city might know about the surrender and the humiliation of the King.

KING'S PRISON ROOM

"A small, low, dirty room whose only furniture was a common charpoy, rudest of native bedsteads, served as a couch for the little hook-nosed, keen-eyed, white-headed, toothless old smoker of 84, whose ancestors had filled the world with fame, whose titles would have covered a page of print. In another room, yet smaller, darker, dirtier where on a common charpoy, surrounded by several women and a boy or two, lay the dark, fat, shrewd, sensual looking Zeenat Mahal, mother of his darling Jawan Bakht." (Trotter in *History of India*).

While in captivity the King was given an allowance of **Two Annas** a day. He was disrespected by even a common soldier who would make him stand up and salaam the soldier. Many of them pulled his beard just to watch his reaction. What could be the reaction of one who was too old to protest and too meek and humble to grudge their pastime. Even the privacy of the queen was not spared. She was allowed a *chik* in front of her room and had one or two female menial companions. Soldiers would come and without any warning draw the *chik* aside to stare at the queen and her beautiful

face, which she denied them by turning her back towards them. This was the treatment that representatives of the 'most civilised nation in the world, the Christians who had wanted to redeem the Indians through baptism,' were meting out to the scions of Rulers in whose courts their predecessors had considered it an honour to find a standing place.

The English were rather sorry to have spared the life of the King. There was a lot of correspondence at high level and eventually it was decided that a Commission, military in character, should try the King and communicate its decision to the Governor-General. It was also decided that no other guilty person should be promised his life. The Governor-General also took strong objection to Hodson's promise to spare the lives of the queen, Jawan Bakht and Ahmad Kuli Khan.

(For the trial of Bahadur Shah see chapter 6.)

WHY THE REVOLT FAILED

The causes of the failure of the revolt in Delhi, though clear from the narrative, are tabulated below. Most of these defects and deficiencies, however, still persist among us despite the bitter experience of our forbears.

The importance of right leadership cannot be sufficiently emphasised. How wrong leadership can end in disaster should equally be realised.

Democracy, however, functions best when the individual citizen is well informed, possesses a discerning understanding, does not let himself be carried away by momentary impulses and delusive catchy slogans.

The basic truth of existence our sages have

taught, is : The spirit of the universe is one, therefore life is one. Hence sanctity of life. Right living, the *sine qua non* of well-being, individual and social, rests on mutual understanding, out of which proceeds love.

- All phenomena being relative, correct evaluation of ideas and ideologies calls for broad vision and mature deliberation.

India's integrity as a nation rests on cultural unity which she has happily inherited from the ages past. This unity, however, expresses itself in multiple forms, and colours. This is as it should be, or life would be "drab and dull." The Infinite has all the possibilities of the multiple inhering in Itself.

Therefore live and let live. The more numerous are the tints of flowers in the garden the more beautiful it is.

The golden motto for a citizen and a leader is 'unify, integrate.' No separation whatever, for it tends to disintegrate.

Unity endures on the bedrock of love—not hatred. For instance, the pacts based on the A-bomb cult is based on hatred, therefore destructive. What destroys another destroys oneself too.

No one has said the last word on anything under the sun. Therefore there can be no dogmatism in politics as there can be no bigotry in religion.

Democracy as a system of political government is still in the experimental stage. The U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. are two extreme manifestations of Democracy. India from her detached position can study both, reject the evils in both and adapt the good in both.

Now to resume. We may schedule the causes which contributed to the failure of the revolt in Delhi one hundred years ago.

1. Concentration of all the forces at Delhi.
2. Vacillation of Bahadur Shah, who never put his heart and soul in the movement.
3. For three weeks from May 11 there were no other outbreaks anywhere in India. The Native States also waited for time.
4. Mutual jealousies in the Indian camp for which Mirza Mughal and Zeenat Mahal Begam were largely responsible ; each new commander distrusted his rival ; and there was lack of co-ordination. In fact there was no co-operation among the various Brigades although there was unity of purpose.
5. The rising was premature and lacked an all-India character.
6. Lack of a leader of commanding ability and recognised position, a leader who could be trusted and obeyed.
7. The failure of various Indian chiefs to help the movement with men and money.
8. The moneyed classes not only kept aloof from the movement, but even aided the enemy for personal profit.
9. There was hardly any intelligence system which could help the Indian forces in finding the enemy's position and movements.
10. Lack of resources in general which were vital for fighting a successful battle.
11. Weak handling of the bad characters at the start of the movement which antagonised the people of Delhi.
12. Complete absence of any kind of check or

control on the movement of suspicious characters. Their *bona fides* were not questioned and anybody who offered his services was welcome irrespective of thereby giving free scope for spying and sabotaging.

13. Rotten atmosphere in the court of the King and want of character in many of his sons who were given high ranks in the army.

WHY THE ENGLISH WON

The causes that helped the English in their victory were chiefly :—

1. Their determination to fight with ~~words~~ to the wall. They had no other alternative. To them it was either victory or total annihilation.

2. They had many able and experienced generals who had gained experience in many battles fought in India and elsewhere.

3. There was complete co-ordination of their activities.

4. They got support from quarters which should have been fighting against them. Such were the forces of almost all the Punjab princes, viz., Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala, Kashmir, Hyderabad, Gwalior, and Nepal. The Sikhs of Punjab, the tribal people of the frontier border and particularly the Gorkhas of Nepal had overwhelmingly weighed the scales in their favour.

Charles John Griffiths has stated about them : “Sir John Lawrence issued a proclamation calling on the Sikhs to aid us in our trouble. They came at once in hundreds, nay in thousands, to enlist on our side. Veterans of Ranjit Singh’s Khalsa army, men who had withstood us on equal terms in many sanguinary battles, animated by intense hatred

of Purbeah sepoy's enrolled themselves in the ranks of the British army and fought faithfully for us to the end of the war. *Their help was our safety. Without these soldiers and the assistance rendered by their chieftains, Delhi could never have been taken.* While, on the other hand, had they cast their lot with the mutinous sepoy's, no power on earth could have saved us from total annihilation."

If there was one class in India which should have opposed the British it was the ruling chiefs of India many of whom had lost their states and others were likely to lose theirs. Yet many went to the help of the British at the most critical moment. Similarly, it passes one's comprehension to find the Punjab province which was the last province acquired by the British in India, instead of being galled under the new yoke stood by them and became means of their salvation. For it was from that province that the British drew their army to fight the Indian forces under the command of Nicholson. A handful of English soldiers alone could never have done the work; but supplemented by the Punjab and Afghan soldiers—particularly 8000 Punjabi soldiers—they were able to enter the city of Delhi and defeat the numerically superior forces of the Indians.

5. Their excellent espionage system which served them from day to day and hour to hour giving complete details of the Indians' movements and activities which enabled them to forestall them. According to the documents now available it can be safely stated that the English did not win a single battle of note in which they had not received full information in advance about the position of the

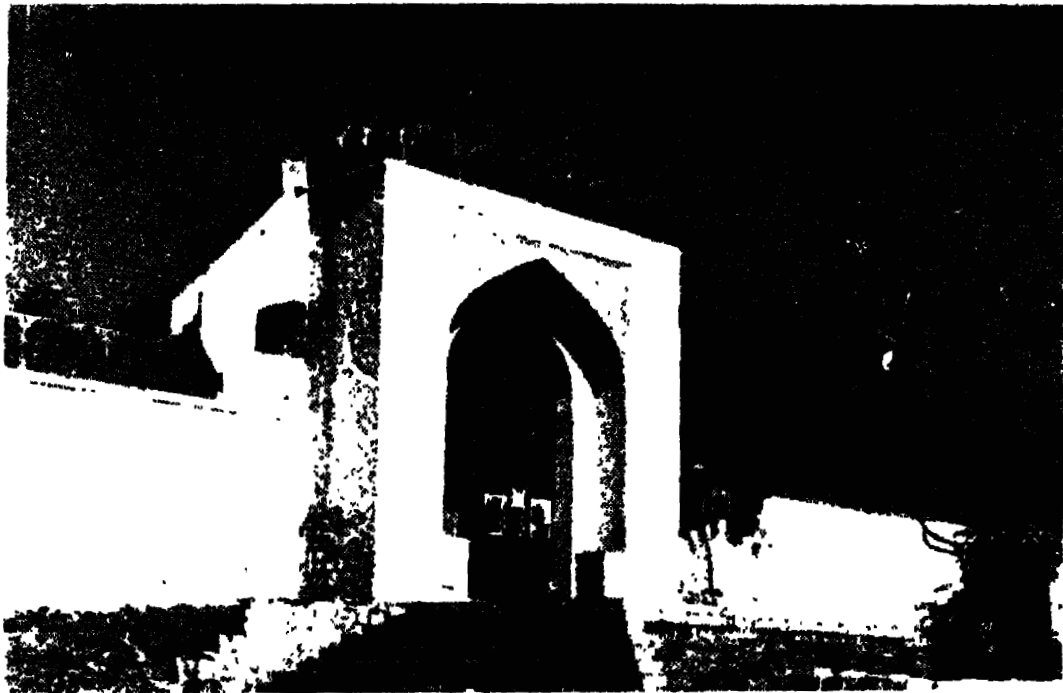


How Castle, the Headquarters of the British Forces.



Bazar Gahran, main mosque where the British were housed from September 16 to 19, 1857.

The Bastion of Mori Gate.



Idgah where Indian forces defeated the English force-
on September 15, 1857.

Indian forces. They thus not only got opportunities to make preparations in advance but also were able to spring an element of surprise for which the Indians were unprepared.

6. The resources available to the British were immense. These assured them regular supplies of rations, arms, ammunitions and other materials required by them for the successful prosecution of the war.

Names of some of their spies that were working for them in Delhi have been gathered from their original reports that are now available in the national archives. They are : Rajab Ali, Toorab Ali, Fateh Mohammad, Latafat Ali, Hafiz Mohammad Ismail, Sahabuddin, Mir Mohammad Ali, Kallu, Pirbhu, Man Singh, Jawahar Singh Kashmiri, Meghraj, Amin Chand of Bakhtawarpur village, Mamraj, Man Mania, Harchand Gosain, Gauri Shankar, Gopal, Raja Lal and the very Mukund Lal who was the private secretary of the king.

The first battle to get rid at the British was lost. But not the lesson. The Indians had realised that the British were really not invincible. They could be fought on equal ground and defeated. The seed of the future struggle was successfully planted in 1857 : the flame kindled and the way shown to the future generations to do their duty by their country. Yes, the battle was lost but not the cause which remained alive, till India was free from the alien rule.

SOME ESTIMATES

To the soldiers the cause of the battle was lost on September 14, when the English had blown up

the Kashmeri Gate and had entered the city in large numbers. This is why they started leaving the city. From that day onwards the cause was taken up largely by the common man of Delhi. For him now there was nothing else but to Do and Die. And it goes to his credit that he acquitted himself very creditably. It was he who checked the onward march of the victorious English at every step. Every street became a fighting arena and every house a barricade. He had no weapons to fight as they had already been taken away from him by the Indian soldiers. But he still had sword and stone and he made use of both. It was not a surprise therefore that thousands of dead people were removed from houses by the orders of the English authorities after they had retaken the city. Out-of-the-way places like Kucha Pandit in Hauz Kazi and Bazar Sita Ram had houses full of rotting corpses of those who had died fighting. They had kept the flag of independence flying till the last drop of their blood oozed out and on their ashes the future war of independence was to be built. Disraeli correctly spoke in the House of Commons that the outbreak was national and not merely military. Even Lord Salisbury admitted in Parliament that it was something more than a mere mutiny.

P. E. Roberts has described the movement as a military-cum-popular revolt. According to him people arose alongside the military and in some places even before the military. He continues, "It can be termed as a national uprising, of course, but which was not properly exploited by the authorities—that be due to their plans of personal ambitions and

rivalries. The causes were political, social, religious and military."

Rev. Dr. Guthrie, preacher of Edinburgh, speaking in January 1859 on the movement had admirably stated the sentiments of the Indians in his own way thus : "Had I been an Indian and had I been in India, I would have fought on the side of what you call the mutineers. I would have fought for my country. I would have fought for its liberties. I would have fought for my native land, would have fought for my faith. The very reason why I honour Wallace and Bruce for repelling the foot of a foreign foe from Scotland would have led me, had I been there, to take the side of the natives...Were our country to be conquered by a black pagan soldiery, were our beloved queen to be dethroned, were our government to be turned over, were every office of honour and power to be filled by a race of foreigners, alien in colour, in language, in faith, were our ancient nobility to be annihilated, were our lands to be siezed, were large masses of our peasantry to be reduced to grinding poverty, were the worship of heathen cows to be set up in our land, and were we all to be subjected to the degradation and humiliation of conquered people, is there a man among us with a spark of liberty in his bosom, who would not embrace the first opportunity of breaking the yoke and of doing this country what the Hindus have attempted in theirs ?"

CHAPTER V

'THE CITY OF THE DEAD'

The victor's vengeance—A lady's testimony—In villages too—Nadir Shah outdone—Temples sacked—Pillage and plunder—Return of the people—Jhajjar Nawab deposed and hanged—Fate of other feudal chiefs.

"We marched in silence, or involuntarily spoke in whispers, as though fearing to disturb those ghastly remains of humanity. The sights we encountered were horrible and sickening to the last degree. Here a dog gnawed at an uncovered limb, there a vulture, disturbed by our approach from its loathsome meals, but too completely gorged to fly, fluttered away to safer distance. In many instances the positions of the bodies were appallingly life-like. Some lay with their arms uplifted as if beckoning, and indeed, the whole scene was weird and terrible beyond description."

Thus writes Lord Roberts, describing the scene in Delhi streets on the 24th September, in his *Forty-one Years in India*.

He continues :

"The march through Delhi in the early morning light of the 24th September, was a gruesome proceeding. Our way from the Lahori Gate by Chandni Chawk, led through a veritable city of the dead ; not a sound was to be heard but the falling of our own footsteps ; not a living creature was to be seen. Dead bodies were strewn about in all directions, in every attitudes that the death struggle had

caused them to assume, in every stage of decomposition."

Writing to his mother, he says :

"Our horses seemed to feel the horror of it as much as we did, for they shook and snorted in evident terror. The atmosphere was unimaginably disgusting, laden as it was with the most noxious and sickening odour."

About women and children he wrote to his mother : "After possession was taken of Delhi, everybody was turned out of the city and all the houses were plundered. A very necessary punishment, but at the same time a sad sight to see old women and little children, who had probably never stirred out of their houses before, making for one of the gates, leaving their home.....I have wished the last few days there were no such things as women where war was. Kicking men out of houses and home matters little, but I cannot bear seeing unfortunate women suffering....."

That was the frightful scene in Delhi city after four days of dreadful carnage which was still continuing.

To begin from the beginning, that is, Sept. 20. Soon after the occupation by the British forces the first impulse of the officers commanding the various units was to demolish the entire city, including the Fort and the Jama Masjid. But better counsels prevailed and the Governor-General decided to demolish only the built-up defences and edifices close to the Fort. Historical buildings and places of worship were to be left intact. The Fort was considered to be an excellent place where the British troops could be accommodated but all houses and

other buildings in the near vicinity around a radius of 440 yards were completely levelled to the ground. The Parade Ground and the people's park, as well as the level ground towards Darya Ganj which once had beautiful buildings and the famous Dargah of a Moslem saint and the Akbarabadi Mosque as also the frontage of Urdu Bazar and the site where Edward Park stands, were razed down to the road level.

During excavations of the present Parade Ground in 1921-23 beautiful houses built of marble and other stones were discovered beneath the ground.

The Jama Masjid, Masjid Fatehpuri and Kalan Masjid in Bazar Sita Ram were for some time occupied by the English troops. The Jama Masjid was restored to the Muslims in 1862 on payment of Rs. 2 lakhs, the Fatehpuri Masjid was restored in 1870 and the Kalan Masjid some time later.

THE VICTOR'S VENGEANCE

The troops who had fought on the British side were officially permitted as per promise made to them earlier, on September 7, to help themselves with whatever they could lay hands on. Perhaps the indication was with regard to property, loot. But actually what happened was wholesale slaughter. Men, women and children, old and young, sick and wounded, all were put to the sword and shot for about a month.

Many people had earlier fled the city. But there were still many thousands left who had been helping the British and had expected awards for their services. There were others who had kept themselves aloof from the movement and who had remained believing in the sense of security,

being innocent. There were also those who were unable to leave the city being sick or wounded in the fight. But all alike, the guilty and the guiltless, the poor or the wealthy were mercilessly massacred.

•Orders were simultaneously issued to the citizens to evacuate the city. Some managed to pass out unharmed, but not all. Whoever was suspected was picked out to be summarily shot or hung on the gallows. Practically the whole city was turned into a gallow-house.

Chandni Chawk, between the turning to Esplanade Road and the Kotwali, received a special 'privilege'. Gallows were erected along this route and people were hanged in dozen at a time.

The white soldiers, the Sikhs, the Gorkhas, and the qabailies (frontier tribespeople) roamed the city, entered galis, kuchas and houses and put to death all whom they came across.

Lord Elphinston, Governor of Bombay, on hearing about the massacre in Delhi, wrote to John Lawrence: "After the siege was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply heartrending. Wholesale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend or foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadir Shah."

According to Moinuddin Khan who was a sub-inspector of police in a suburb of Delhi. all able-bodied men were dragged out and shot. "For several days after the surrender," wrote Mrs. Saunders, wife of the Commissioner of Delhi, "every native that could be found was killed by the soldiers....." Chaplain in his *Narrative of the Siege of Delhi* writes: "A general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi, a large

number of whom was known to wish us success, was openly proclaimed."

Thousands of women, says Moinuddin in his *Memoirs of 1857*, who had never come out of pardah, committed suicide. Kucha Chelan in Bazar Sui-walan, [where lived our revered leader Shri Asaf Ali] was a special target. Many prominent people were resident in that locality. According to Moinuddin, and he is supported by Zahir in his *Dastan-e-Ghadar*, some 1400 people of this lane were marched to the Jumna through Raj Ghat and decapitated; their sundered bodies were thrown in the river.

There were instances of brave self-immolation as well. When the house of Mohammad Ali, son of Nawab Jung Khan and nephew of Raja of Dadri, was ransacked, the ladies of the house and a wet nurse with a child plunged into the well and perished. At Bhojla Pahari, Mian Amin Sahib, a scribe, shot dead the first intruder before he was himself shot through by another.

But lucky were they who were made the targets of bullets or who were hanged as they got rid of their physical and mental suffering at one stroke. Not so were many who were tortured by flaying or red-hot branding.

Nicholson had once written to Edwards: "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 simple hanging for the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening. I wish I were in that part of the world that if necessary, I might take the law into my own hands. As regards torturing the murderers of the women and children; if it be right otherwise

I do not think we should refrain from it because it is a native custom. We are told in the Bible that penalty shall be meted out according to faults and if hanging is sufficient for such wretches, it is too severe for ordinary mutineers. If I had in my power today and knew that I were to die tomorrow I would inflict the most excruciating tortures I could think of on them with a perfectly easy conscience."

Tortures that Nicholson had once advocated were not long in coming. Mowbrey Thomson told Sir Henry Cotton of the fate of some prisoners he once took at Delhi: "Late in the evening a Sikh orderly came to my tent and saluting said, 'I think sir, you would like to see what we have done to the prisoners.' Suspecting the worst I sprang up and rushed to the guard room and there witnessed the spectacle of those wretched Mohammedans at their gasp, tied to the ground, stripped of their clothing and deeply branded over every part of their bodies from head to foot with red-hot coppers. With my own hands I put an end to their agony by blowing out their brains."

A LADY'S TESTIMONY

Mrs. Coopland gives a graphic account in her *A Lady's Escape from Gwalior*: "The soldiers inured to sights of horror and inveterate against the Sepoys were said to have bribed the executioner to keep them a long time hanging as they liked to see the criminals dance a 'Pandies hornpipe' as they termed the dying struggles of wretches." According to her, the Provost Marshal, after having put to death between four to five hundred "wretches", thought of resigning his office.

Mr. Carthill wrote at that time, "All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered, were bayoneted on the spot and the numbers was considerable when I tell you that in some houses forty and fifty persons were hiding." These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule of pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed."

But even he could not put up for long with the sight of such horrors as he writes later: "I have given up walking about the back streets of Delhi, as yesterday an officer and myself had taken a party of twenty men out patrolling, and we found fourteen women with their throats cut from ear to ear by their own husbands and laid out in their own shawls. We caught a man there who said they were killed for fear lest they should fall into our hands, and showed us their husbands, who had done the best thing they could afterwards—killed themselves."

According to Mackenzie, British officers used to take parties of mounted men on the prowl in search of adventures. Very often they found them and took good care, in view of the irregularity of the proceedings, that no report reached the General.

There were certain Indians awaiting opportunity of wreaking vengeance on their enemies. They turned informers and got their enemies killed or hanged by implicating them, albeit falsely, in the crime of fighting against the British. Mirza Kali son of Bahadur Shah's brother, was one of them. He got his great grandfather, Mirza Kaiser son of Shah Alam, killed. Mirza Mahmood, another prince, was also sent to the gallows at Mirza Kali's instance. Gama Pahalwan, who had plundered the city in May,

and Ghulam Fakhruddin were other goonda informers. Gama, having overstepped the limits, was himself shot dead by the English deservedly for once.

After lawless murders had gone on for some time, Theophilus Metcalfe established the semblance of a military court to try those who had so far escaped the bullet, the sword or the gallows. The judges were in no mood to show mercy, for almost all who were tried by the Court were condemned and sent to the gallows. Gallows were set up in front of the Kotwali in Chandni Chowk and five to six people were hanged simultaneously. English officers used to sit puffing at cigars and looking pleasurably at the convulsive struggles of the victims as Mrs. Coopland has stated.

This process continued for months as the British hunger for revenge on the natives was not satiated.

Kay wrote: "The most merciful Major James Brind, in order to make an example of the supposed assassins, hunted houses and mosques all over the city and executed in hundreds whoever came into his hands. Having satisfied his blood-thirstiness he made over hundreds to the authorities. He was not alone in this highhanded task; there were other columns also moving in the city under different commands and they also perpetrated similar outrages. In this way thousands were executed with and without trial."

. According to Sir George Campbell many of these executions were unjustifiable. No discrimination was shown to those who helped the British.

Sri Ram Mathur of Roshanpura has written in his *Waqai Sri Ram* that his own father had died fighting against the insurgents in Hissar in the

service of the British but even he was not spared. His house was plundered by the British soldiers and he received a bayonet wound. His mother and wife were also insulted. It was with great difficulty that he could save himself and other womenfolk from further dishonour. Ram Chandra, who had escaped death at the hands of Christian killers on May 11, did not escape humiliation, canings and stoning at the hands of Tommies and their officers after his co-religionists had got possession of Delhi, even though he had managed to obtain a job in the office of the English Prize Agents. In a complaint made to higher officers he wrote that he was many a time struck with earth balls, hard and stiff like stone discharged by the English from a *gulail* and that his protests that he was a servant of the Prize Agents did not deter them from hitting him again. Twice he was caned deliberately by an officer in the Red Fort. Once an English Officer forcibly snatched from one of his friends a quilt that his friend was bringing from Darya Ganj.

IN VILLAGES TOO

Even the Indian *badmashes* had shown discrimination between friend and enemy when they had taken to looting. But the power-mad victorious English knew them all to be Indians who deserved death, punishment, insults and beatings, irrespective of the fact whether they had been their friends and had suffered for them. To quote Kay again: "Martial law had been proclaimed ; those terrible acts passed by the Legislative Council in May and June were in full operation and soldiers and civilians alike were holding bloody assizes or slaying natives

without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. Afterwards the thirst for blood grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General in Council, that aged women and children are sacrificed as well as those guilty of rebellion. They are not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages, perhaps now and then accidentally shot. Englishmen did not hesitate to boast or to record their boasting in writing that they spare no one and that peppering away at niggers was “very pleasant pastime, enjoyed amazingly.....”.

“It has been stated in a book patronised by high officials, that for those months eight dead carts daily went their rounds from sunrise to sunset to take down the corpses which hung at the cross-roads and market places and that six thousand persons had thus been summarily disposed of.”

Sri Ram, who after conditions had settled down, was rewarded for the services of his father to the British by appointment as sub-inspector of police and was posted at Hauz Kazi chawki has stated that after two months of his taking charge he was instructed to remove dead bodies in hundreds from Kucha Pandit at Bazar Sirki Walan.

Maulvi Sayed Ahmed Wali Ulhavi, who was an eye-witness of the events after the surrender, wrote his memoirs in 1903 in Urdu, entitled *Yadgare Delhi*. He writes : “After the capture of the city by the English, for five or six days it was given to massacre, plunder, loot and rape indiscriminately. Firing was the order of the day in all parts of the city besides the sway of the sword.”

“Under these circumstances thousands died of

starvation for want of any food and even for a drop of water, not to speak of many other thousands who were put to the sword.

“Then the city began to be evacuated. How can one imagine the conditions of these people, particularly the womenfolk among them and especially those who had never set their foot out of their houses. Now they are flying for their lives, hungry, thirsty, and falling with blisters on the soles of their feet. And then they are plundered in these flights and robbed of every pie and every valuable on their persons. Enemies apart, blood relations have turned enemies of their kin only to save their own skin and for getting benefits from the conquerors.”

PILLAGE AND PLUNDER

Massacre over, the soldiers turned their attention to wealth. Those who escaped death marched out mostly empty-handed.

The British authorities disallowed the inhabitants taking any valuables or luggage with them. There were separate queues for men and women and they were to leave by separate gates. Women got separated from their relations and fell an easy prey to goondas. While they were trekking out, their persons were searched and leaving aside shells and cowries which at that time was the lowest coin, everything was confiscated. If the goondas present at the time of the search, suspected any men, they were segregated and then hanged. This was true mostly of Hindus as most of the Muslims, those who had not fled the city, were captured and either shot or hanged or detained for trial. The British

had singled out Muslims for extreme punishment.

After their departure the city was given over to the troops and goondas. Before the surrender each regiment had appointed Prize Agents who were to collect the property left by the citizens and then distribute it among the troops. But the troops ignored this arrangement. They indulged in collecting the booty themselves and by the time the prize agents appeared on the scene most of the booty in common houses had disappeared.

Troops went in batches to every house in the street, lane, bye-lane or back lane and demolished floors and walls which sounded hollow where money and jewellery was supposed to be hidden. During those days as there were no banks, the only method adopted by the people to save something for the rainy day was to hoard it in the shape of jewellery, mostly silver and gold, and gold mohurs. These they hid in holes in the floor or wall. This fact must have been disclosed to the British soldiers, with the result that few houses escaped probing. The looted property was laden in carts and removed as private possessions. Furniture and other articles that could not be removed were broken and thrown out on the streets.

Charles John Griffiths, Captain of the 61st Regiment, which had taken part in the siege and sack, has described the systematic way in which the city was looted. He says : "The citizens were turned out and the troops, Indian and the British, raided each and every house using hammers, pick-axes, spades, etc. And this was carried out even by the prize agents who were supposed to collect the loot for eventual distribution among the soldiers." Griffiths

himself participated in the loot, using a Muslim *kamarband* to carry away the valuables.

This kind of plunder was carried on daily for three weeks. Griffiths remarks vividly about it : "Though many years have elapsed the events of those weeks seem as vivid in my memory as though they had happened yesterday—the brightness of the jewels, the dazzling gold, the nerves wrought to the highest pitch of tension while waiting in eager expectation for the result of a search."

The booty even on individual account was such as to enable many British soldiers to buy their discharge from the army and settle down in England as white Nawabs.

The plunder, it seems however, had not ceased in three weeks. For Sir John Lawrence made an inquiry on December 12, 1857 : "Is private plundering still allowed ? Do officers still go about shooting natives ?"

That the process of looting was not always smooth is indicated from reports of altercations, resulting sometimes in deaths, between the British and the Sikhs over the possession of booty, though such cases were rare as there was plenty of property available. Thus the Mooltani troops who had been brought to Delhi by Nicholson with the promise of plunder, looted the city to their satisfaction and declined to accept pay as they had had enough of looted wealth. They returned to their homes after Nicholson's death on the 23rd. Even men of morals, according to Griffiths, who had in the beginning refrained from looting later plunged into it when they saw high officers taking part.

The systematic way in which the pillage was

carried is further evident from a letter dated November 17 by one Omaid Singh, who was tutor to the Maharaja of Holkar, in his letter dated 17th November addressed to Sir Robert Hamilton. It say : ".....Could I tell you about my family ? My heart would burst. At Delhi they (the British) have made no distinction between friends and foes, innocent or guilty ; and generally the former, the mercantile class, men of substance or those who were friends of order, because they had something to lose, have suffered the most.....All the inhabitants who escaped death by bombardment and otherwise were turned out without a penny-worth of possession and all the property was plundered. It was not done by badmashes, as they had fled the city earlier."

He adds : "The gates of the city were shut, ingress and egress was regulated by ticket and then commenced the digging of the best houses for hidden and buried treasures. My own house was looted. Our property in cash, gold and jewels, silver vessels, shawls and furniture was not less than Rs. 2,00,000 worth, it might be more than that. My notes worth Rs. 1,20,000—and I have their numbers—my house worth Rs 50,000 and my money investments in six Rewari and three other villages was worth Rs. 60,000—all this immense wealth is gone. My children are having one meal a day."

In the meanwhile, the prize agents were also making hay. Their accumulation of booty was worth several lakhs. Their rooms were filled with treasures of every kind—jewellery and precious stones, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls without number, from those "as large as hen's eggs to the small species used for necklaces, gold ornaments,

chains of the most beautiful workmanship, bracelets and bangles all of solid metal." (Griffiths)

The prize agents had free licence to search the houses of all suspects—and in their eyes every resident of the city was a suspect—by the Governor-General in his order dated 29th January 1858. Thus authorised, they even included the jewels of Bahadur Shah in their prize property, but the claim was not upheld by Governor-General who treated the jewels as state property.

However, the loot made by the troops on individual account and the distribution of prize loot made thereafter was considered insufficient by the authorities for recompensing the soldiery. Therefore they were given a batta of six months' salary as further reward.

TEMPLES DESECRATED

As history had furnished information about Muslim invaders' plunder of the temples of Hindustan, the temples of Delhi came in for the attention of the British. Most of them, including those of Chandni Chawk, Dariba, Dharampura and Kucha Seth, were systematically ransacked. The idols were broken up and precious metals and ornaments removed. Representations later made to the Governor-General for the restoration of the temple property were rejected. The Special Commission appointed to investigate the matter said: "It is difficult to analyse all that may have been done during that period of excitement."

FORT TREASURES AND ROYAL JEWELS

The Red Fort, along with other effectives of its

inmates that had been left behind by the royal family was fully plundered. The golden canopy over the throne was removed and all the valuable stones that adorned its walls were pilfered.

The sale value of the prize agents' booty, computed at Rs. 75 to 80 lakhs by Griffiths and at Rs. 2 crores by another official was eventually estimated at Rs. 15 lakhs only.

An official estimate of the treasure gathered by the prize agents is given as :—

Auction sales	: Rs. 5,00,000
Cash collected	: Rs. 3,19,000
Zeenat's jewels	: Rs. 1,00,000
Unsold property	: Rs. 10,000
Ransom money	: Rs. 4,25,000

Rs. 13,54,000

This is obviously a gross understatement. Hodson had taken two lakhs worth of jewels from Zeenat Mahal Begum alone as ransom. Jewels of much more value than this were recovered by him from the queen's residence at Lal Kuan at the instance of Jawan Bakht Khan. The King Bahadur Shah had surrendered his jewels in October, and Griffiths quotes looted property from the house of a rich man as valued at more than Rs. 2 lakhs. Add to these, booty from temples and the prize agents' collections during six months. The total must run to several crores.

According to the Military Governor of Delhi, Burn, the plunder by the English soldiers was estimated at Rs. 2 crores. The confiscated movable property was disposed of by distribution among the

troops for their labour, peril and suffering. The King's jewels were shipped to London.

Houses seized by the prize agents were after some time put to auction and men with money, those who had sided with the British and who had concealed it successfully so far, purchased large property for a mere song. And so it happens today that rows of houses in most localities belong to one owner.

There was another class which came into prominence as wealthy people. These were the spies and traitors. Mirza Elahi Bakhsh was awarded Rs. 1 lakh besides some other property, Amanullah Khan of Alwar got Rs. 15,000, sub-inspector Sri Ram got Rs. 900 cash besides his police post. Nawab Jan Fishan Khan was granted a pension of Rs. 1,000 per month and proprietary rights in certain villages of the Meerut district assessed at Rs. 10,000 per annum for his services before the revolt and after "rendered to Gen. Wilson's besieging forces at Delhi." A host of informers were amply awarded for their services.

RETURN OF THE PEOPLE

The people of Delhi who had been turned out, wandered about in the jungles, without food or shelter in the winter months of 1857-58. The most they could get to eat was a handful of parched gram. Thousands perished by hunger, cold and disease. In due course when rapacity and savagery had subsided orders were issued for the return of those who could prove their innocence. They were issued passes. Cess was collected from them on their entry and rent was charged for the houses

they occupied even if the houses had belonged to them. In certain cases they could enter these houses only on payment ranging from Rs. 5,000 upward. Holmes wrote about these people: "The people of Delhi had expiated many times over the crimes of the mutineers. Tens of thousands of men, women and children were wandering, for no crime, homeless over the country. What they had left behind was lost to them forever; for the soldiers going from house to house and from street to street ferretted out every article of value and smashed to pieces whatever they could not carry away."

Muslim virgins and widows that were left alive, married Muslim soldiers in the British army or took to the profession of prostitutes: thus probably came to be established the former Chawri Bazar. *Bahadur Shah's daughter, Rabia Begum, married a cook.* His second daughter Fatima Sultana became a teacher in a mission school. Thousands of women turned to beggary, whose descendants may still be seen on the pavements of Delhi streets.

Sporadic plundering continued even after a year and a half of the fall of Delhi. In October 1858 the Commander of Field Forces, Maj.-General Penny, wrote to the Chief Commissioner at Lahore suggesting that the work of prize agents might be wound up or in the alternative confine their activity to the houses of rebels only. He made the following suggestions: Those who had fought against the British—their houses to be confiscated and treated as prize property; those who had supported the British passively such as bankers, shroffs, merchants and trades people generally, and those

who could prove that they took no active part against the British—these to be permitted possession of their houses, like the inhabitants of Katra Neel, by paying a tenth of their estimated wealth. The third class which actively supported the English were to be permitted to occupy their houses and given protection.

JHAJJAR NAWAB DEPOSED AND HANGED

After conditions had somewhat stabilized military courts were set up to try people suspected of taking part in the revolt. Among these were the chiefs of states neighbouring Delhi. Some of these cases are as under.

Abdul Rehman Khan of Jhajjar was the ruler of the small state of Jhajjar and when the news of the revolt at Delhi in May reached him, he immediately contacted Colvin, Lt.-Governor at Agra, through a messenger, Akbar Ali by name, son of Gul Mahmud Khan.

Before his messenger could return from Agra, Metcalfe fleeing for safety reached his place in a pretty bad condition. The Nawab charged his father-in-law Ahmad Samad Khan and Munshi Imdad Ali to look after Metcalfe and one other who was with him. Both of them changed over to the Indian style of dress and ate Indian meals. In the meanwhile news of their presence spread in the town of Jhajjar. In the atmosphere surcharged with the spirit of revolt it was felt they were insecure in the palace. They were, therefore, removed under escort to Kothi Chhojakvas where Bahadur Ali Khan was asked to take proper care of them.

Some sowar, however, had followed them there ; he asked the chief escort to send them away elsewhere. According to the sowar, the instructions were from the Nawab. Metcalfe and his companion therefore left the place at midnight, swearing that if the British survived and he was alive the Nawab would be punished for his treachery.

The Nawab, on the other hand, was very much worried about the safety of his guests and he sent two constables charging them with the security of the guests. They reported back Metcalfe's departure. It later transpired on the Nawab's personal inquiry that the sowar had acted under instructions from one Thakur Shaloo Singh who, however, denied having done so. The Nawab made frantic search to find out Metcalfe but did not succeed.

In the meanwhile his messenger returned from Agra bringing instructions from the Lieut.-Governor that the Nawab was to help his (Governor's) agent in Delhi, Harvey. But the revolt was now on the upswing, and the Jhajjar chief was bewildered. He therefore delayed compliance. Later he received a Firman from Bahadur Shah to proceed to Delhi with men and money. Although still undecided, he sent some three hundred sowars only under the leadership of his father-in-law Abdul Samad Khan, and his grandfather Ibrahim Ali Khan. Soon after this he got orders from the British Commander-in-Chief to help him with two hundred sowars for the suppression of Mewatis in Gurgaon who had revolted. The Nawab did despatch the sowars but before they could reach Gurgaon, there was trouble among the troops due to stabbing of Shaloo Singh, and the troops returned.

Later the Nawab gave shelter to some English women till the fall of Delhi, when they were restored to the English at Gurgaon and their two protector-hosts at Kanwind in Jhajjar were rewarded.

Bahadur Shah's further demands for money, arms and men were turned down by the Jhajjar chief.

On the 14th of September when the British succeeded in making a breach in the ramparts of Delhi, Abdul Samad Khan and Ibrahim Ali Khan fled to Jhajjar, along with other Muslims. After Delhi's occupation by the British, at their request the Nawab arrested Ahmad Kuli Khan, father-in law of Bahadur Shah, and Hakim Abdul Haq, Mukhtar of Ballabhgarh state, besides others and sent them to Delhi. The British soon after proceeded to Jhajjar and arrested the Nawab. His palace was ransacked and many of his officers, and others, were shot dead. The Nawab was arrested and taken to Delhi, while his treasury at Kanwind which contained Rs. 9 lakhs was looted by Hodson. The army took the hint from him and looted the whole town of Jhajjar.

The Nawab was later tried by a military court for sedition, found guilty and was hanged in the Kotwali at Delhi on December 23. His body was then thrown into a pit. The Jhajjar state was annexed and amalgamated with Delhi. Large areas of Jhajjar were added to the territories of Patiala and Nabha rulers.

The Nawab's execution was followed by that of thirteen others in Najafgarh, then part of Jhajjar state. This was done on the initiative of one Gangal, who was appointed lambardar by way of

reward, and a confectioner who was awarded land.

There is a small village, Baqar Garh by name, seven miles off Najafgarh. When the English were in trouble they asked for help from its villagers who courageously refused. For this they were deprived of their land and property.

FATE OF OTHER FEUDAL CHIEFS

Ahmad Ali Khan, Nawab of Farrukhnagar, Nahan Singh Raja of Ballabgarh, Nawab of Loharu and Nawab of Dadrec were arrested and court-martialled on charges of rebellion and treason. Their lands and property were confiscated. Nawab of Farrukhnagar and Raja of Ballabhgarh were hanged and their bodies were buried along with those of some of the princes, in the Dargah of Bakiullah. The Dadree chief was not tried for treason but his estate and his property were confiscated and he was detained at Lahore. Dadree was given to the Raja of Jind who was a loyalist.

The Nawab of Loharu was acquitted of the charge of treason. Narnaul was rewarded to Patiala. Loharu, Dojana and Pataudi were not touched as nothing could be found against their chiefs.

Of the citizens of Delhi, almost all the leaders of the revolt who were caught alive were hanged. Some of these were Nawab Afsar Yar Khan and his brother Safdar Yar Khan, Mirza Mah Rukh Beg Khan, Qadir Bakhsh, subedar of a Sapper regiment, Raja Devi Singh, Salig Ram, Nawab Mosi Khan, Nawab Ahmad Mirza, Azeem Ullah Khan, who edited the paper *Pigham-e-Azadi* in 1857; Mir Faiz Ali, who saw to the drowning of his sisters and his mother in a well; Darogha Sheikh

Mohammad Bakhsh and his son Sheikh Ziauddin, etc.

Already two sons and one grandson of Bahadur Shah had been shot dead by Hodson, and two were hanged later. Others did not fall into the hands of the British and, with the exception of one Feroze Shah, who retired to Arabia, nothing is known of the fate of other princes.

Towards the end of June 1858 the British authorities decided to give a legal cover to the prosecutions of the citizens of Delhi that were going on in the city. The Chief Commissioner of Punjab wrote to Saunders, officiating Commissioner of Delhi, on June 25 that the time had come when the executive Government must secure, without doubt, to the prisoners under these Acts (Acts XIV, XVI and XVII) a trial, which though summary and speedy would yet be complete and to a certain degree normal. "...The Chief Commissioner directs that at Delhi itself where the mass of the cases will arise, a commission will be constituted to consist of the magistrate, joint magistrate and Captain Rothnay of the 4th Sikhs to try all cases under these Acts. It is necessary that a judicious selection be made, especially in regard to what may be called by-gone offences. The persons who committed offence during the disturbances under excitement may not be given death sentence. In such instances while the leaders or principals are selected for exemplary punishment, some might be flogged and discharged. Though imprisonment may be necessary, yet as you are aware it is undesirable to crowd our jails at present. But in all cases where a

prisoner has taken a prominent part against us, the heaviest punishment must follow."

Thereafter followed thousands of nominal trials and various persons (some place the figure at 6000) were sentenced, some sent to the gallows and many to the Andamans.

But one person was not tried. He was Bahadur Shah's chief adviser, Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan. because, according to the Chief Commissioner, he was to be granted his life and liberty on condition that he revealed all he knew according to the satisfaction of the authorities. "He has already given very valuable information on many important points." His evidence against his benefactor, Bahadur Shah, indicates that he had received Queen's pardon and had agreed to betray his master.

With regard to Bahadur Shah himself he could not be hanged as he had been already promised his life by Hodson. There was a lot of correspondence among the higher-ups on the question of his pardon which was finally overruled. They, however, decided to give him a judicial trial in order to fix his guilt. A military commission was, therefore, constituted to try him and report to the Governor-General.

CHAPTER VI

BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR'S TRIAL

The Governor-General constituted a Military Court to try King Bahadur Shah. The court consisted of Lt.-Col. Dawes, President, Maj. Palmer, Maj. Redmond, Maj. Sawyers, and Capt. Rothney.

James Murphy was the Court Interpreter and Maj. Harriot Public Prosecutor.

The case started on January 27, 1858 and lasted till 9th March. The proceedings were held in the Diwan-i-Khas in the Red Fort, Diwan-i-Am having been converted into a hospital. The following were the charges preferred against Bahadur Shah:—

1. That being a pensioner of the British Government in India he encouraged, aided and abetted native commissioned officers in the crimes of mutiny and actions of revolt between May 10 and October 1, 1857.

2. That during the same period he aided, abetted and encouraged revolt against the British Government through his son Mirza Mughal and other unknown inhabitants of Delhi etc.... subjects of the British Government.

3. That during this period although he owed allegiance to the British Government in India, he turned traitor and proclaimed himself the Ruler of India and then took traitorously possession of Delhi and also conspired with his son Mirza Mughal and Mohammad Bakht Khan and other traitors to raise levy and make insurrection, rebellion and war

against the State and assembled forces at Delhi to overthrow and destroy the British Government in India and carried on fight against them.

4. That he did cause or was accessory to the murder in Red Fort on May 16, of men, women and children of European descent ; he also encouraged the soldiers to murder European soldiers and other British subjects ; he further issued orders to different native rulers to slay and murder Christians and English people.

The King pleaded "not guilty" to the charge.

Some 20 witnesses were examined for the prosecution. Twenty-seven letters that had passed between the King and other parties in Delhi and other places were produced but these did not contain any seditious matter. Witness Ghulam Abbas deposed that the King was forced to accept the leadership of the mutineers by the latter and that he was also compelled by the rebel army to appoint Mirza Mughal as Commander-in-Chief. This witness was the King's defence counsel and was later withdrawn by him. The second and the most important witness was the King's favourite, the most trusted adviser, Hakim Ahsan Ullah Khan. He testified to the signatures of the King on various letters which passed between him and Mirza Mughal and other officers thereby establishing the complicity of the King in the revolt. He also deposed about the influence Darwesh Hassan Askari had wielded on the King and his family members and that one of the King's daughters had become his mistress. He also stated hearsay evidence about the King's making over Rs. 400 to one Sidi

Kambar, an Abyssinian who was supposed to go to Mecca but who was later reported to have gone to Persia. The Persian kings, according to Hassan Askari, was reported to be making preparation to invade India, turn out the British and then restore Bahadur Shah to the throne of India. Although the King had never spoken to the Hakim about Hassan Askari, yet he had seen the King sending articles to Askari's house. Hassan Askari carried the reputation of being a fortune-teller and a dream-reader.

Witness Jatmal was a British spy. He was produced against the King to prove that he was really under the influence of Hassan Askari and that Bahadar Shah used to send letters to the king of Persia. He said the rebels entered the city of Delhi through the Zeenat ul Masjid (Darya Ganj) Gate. He deposed about the murders of the various English officers on the first day of revolt, about the massacre of Europeans in the Fort on May 17 by the King's retainers, etc. But he was unable to say whether the King had any hand in the murder of Europeans in the Fort.

The third witness was Capt. Forrest, Assistant Commissioner of Ordnance, who stated the conditions under which the magazine near Kashmeri Gate was blown up by himself and Willoughby on May 11. The only thing that he could say against the King was that the messengers who were demanding the surrender of the magazine were doing so in the name of the King saying that they had been sent by him to take charge of it.

Sir Theophilus Metcalfe then deposed that a

rumour was current in the British Indian army that very soon a Russian army would attack India to turn the British out. He also affirmed that the letter posted on the gates of Jama Masjid said to have been written by the king of Persia stating that he would be coming to India soon, did not cause any excitement among the people.

Hassan Askari denied that he was either a fortune-teller or a dream-reader nor did he know Sidi Kambar. But he did treat the King for his ailments.

According to the news-writer Chunilal in the daily paper *Delhi News*, there was a great commotion in the city before the revolt started. *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar*, a weekly, edited by one Jamal Uddin, was a very popular paper of Delhi and it used to write against the British. Chunilal thought that the King was involved in the murder of Europeans in the Red Fort on May 16, though he had not seen him issuing orders to that effect.

Mrs. Aldwell's evidence simply stated about the murder of Europeans on the 16th May and how she saved herself by passing off as a Kashmiri Muslim. She had nothing to say against the King. Even Mukand Lal, who was secretary to the King and was all the time betraying him by daily reports to the Lieut-Governor at Agra, had nothing serious to say against him except that he had agreed to accept the leadership of the rebels on May 12 but not before he had tried to dissuade them from their risky adventure.

The evidence tendered on behalf of the prosecution was of such nature that no independent court

of justice would have convicted the King on it. None of the witnesses was in a definite position to state that the King was responsible for the murder of 49 Europeans on May 16. Mrs. Aldwell, a white woman, clearly stated that the King was not present at the tragedy. She should have known better than other witnesses as she was one of those who were going to be shot. Her statement that she saved herself by saying that she and her children were Kashmiris does not sound convincing. She was all the time after her arrest in the custody of the Fort people and yet at the time of shooting they could not recognise her. The reason, though not known, might be something else. Hakim Sahib and Ghulam Abbas denied that the King wanted to fight against the British but that he was forced by Mirza Mughal to accept titular leadership. Statements of Jatmal and Mukand Lal cannot be given much credence as they were British spies. And most of their evidence was either concocted or hearsay reports. These were events that took place on one day within a period of a few minutes or an hour. Yet Jatmal stated that he did see all these with his own eyes.

The King's defence was that he had no prior knowledge of the revolt and that at the beginning he had helped European officers such as Douglas, Simon Fraser, etc. Thereafter affairs went beyond his control. He had saved the 49 Europeans who had been rounded up on 11th May and brought to the Fort and he had given them shelter. They were, however, killed by rebels or his retainers, without his approval. Similarly while he did not deny his signatures on various letters, Firmans and

other documents produced against him, he said he was not the master of events. He was a prisoner, virtually, in the hands of the forces who came to him with ready-made drafts and orders and he was compelled to sign. That is how his own sons came to be appointed to high ranks in the Nationalist army. And in fact he had to put up almost daily with the insults that were hurled on him by the rebels, for he had no army of his own nor any resources to organise one. He denied that he had sent Sidi Kambar to Persia. He had advanced him money for going to Mecca only. He admitted that he did go out in procession to the city but he had to do so because he was a prisoner of the rebels.

One wonders if the defence advanced by the King should be accepted as correct. In this case he could be given no credit whatsoever for the great movement and he would no more deserve the sympathies of the nation, leave aside the praise for heading the first national movement for independence. For credit then will go to Mirza Mughal who had no doubt thrown himself heart and soul into the movement though his conduct deserves severe condemnation for losing sight of the main goal, giving importance to his personal motives. Even if the King made the statement in defence to save his skin and suffering, it will not earn him any encomium. A braver stand was expected of him, irrespective of consequences it would have entailed. After all he had very few years to live and he would have died a martyr's death had he accepted the responsibility of the movement, and posterity would have honoured him. *The most astonishing*

fact is how he accepted the position of his being a subject of the British thereby rendering himself open to the charge of sedition and revolt. He was a king, though with limited powers, and he had a treaty with the British on equal terms according to which the British were administering his territory as his deputy and were paying a certain amount of money for enjoying those rights. At least that was the legal position though factually the position stood in a different perspective. This fact was ignored altogether by the King and his defence counsel.

The court declared the King guilty on all counts. The decision was communicated to the Governor-General in Council who exiled him and his family to Rangoon, as stated earlier, with Begam Zeenat Mahal and others. Bahadur Shah died in jail of a paralytic stroke on November 7, 1862.

The Special Commission which was constituted in July 1858 to try cases of rebels convicted 2025 persons and acquitted 1281. Of the convicted 392 were sentenced to death, 57 were sent to the Andamans for life, 256 sentenced to various terms, of imprisonment varying from 3 to 15 years and 126 for shorter terms. The total convictions, however, were 4011, as stated in another letter of one of the British officers at Delhi to the Chief Commissioner, Punjab.

APPENDIX

QUEEN VICTORIA'S PROCLAMATION

While the vengeance of the English was in full vigour in India in 1858, the authorities in the United Kingdom decided to wind up the East India Company and for the Queen of England to assume direct control of the Indian Empire through a Governor-General and Viceroy. It was, however, realised that the announcement of the change would bode no good until peaceful atmosphere was restored in the country. The Proclamation was therefore despatched to India, but its announcement date was left to the authorities in India. The original printed copy of the Proclamation preserved in the records at Simla carries a remark in ink on the top left corner, "Recd. 10th May (18)58". Seemingly latitude was given to the authorities to first satiate their desire of vengeance. By the end of October 1858 the commotion had subsided. The Proclamation was therefore released on November 1, 1858.

Being of historical interest it is reproduced in full hereunder :--

"Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the colonies and dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australasia, Queen, Defender of the Faith :

"Whereas, for diverse weighty reasons, we have resolved by and with the advice and consent of the

Lords, spiritual and temporal, and Commons in Parliament assembled, to take upon ourselves the government of territories in India, heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company :

“Now, therefore, we do, by these presents, notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, we have taken upon ourselves the said government and we hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful, and to bear full allegiance to us, our heirs and successors and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom we may hereafter from time to time see fit to appoint to administer the Government of our said territories in our name and on our behalf.

“And we, reposing special trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgement of our right trusty and well beloved cousin Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories and to administer the government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall from time to time receive from us through one of our principal secretaries of State.

“And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

“We hereby announce to the native princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

“We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions and while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others.

“We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of native princes as our own, and we desire that they as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government. We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects and those obligations, by the Blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously.

“Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law ; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of

any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

“And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, for the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.

“We know and respect the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the land inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith subject to the equitable demands of the State, and we will that generally in framing and administering the land, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India.

“We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived the countrymen by false reports, and led them to open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field ; we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the offences of those who have been misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty.

“Already in one province, with a desire to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the pacification of our Indian Dominions, our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of pardon on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against our government, and has declared the punishment

which will be inflicted on those whose crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of our Viceroy and Governor-General and do further announce and proclaim as follows :-

• “Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been and shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects. With regard to such, the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

“To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators of revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration shall be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance ; and large indulgence shall be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in a too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men.

“To all others in arms against the government, we hereby promise unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion of all offences against ourselves, our crown and dignity, on their return to their homes, and peaceful pursuits.

“It is our Royal pleasure that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the first day of January next. •

“When by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all Powers grant us and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.”

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