# EIGHTEEN FIFTY-SEVEN

BY

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*With a Foreword*
*by*
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Misc A

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# FOREWORD

It is now almost five years ago that during the annual session of the Indian Historical Records Commission, I drew the attention of its members to the need of writing a new history of the great uprising of 1857, generally described as the Sepoy Mutiny. I did not overlook the fact that there were already many studies, long or short, on the subject. Even if we consider the work only of recognised historians, the number of books on the uprising can be counted in hundreds. In spite of this I felt that no objective history of the struggle had yet been written. Almost all these books were written from one point of view, viz., that of the British.

The nature and scope of this great struggle was for long the subject of controversy both within and outside India. Almost all books dealing with the struggle represent it as a rebellion of the Indian Army against the constituted government of the day. Some Indian states, they concede, also joined in the revolt but these were states which nursed a grievance because of their annexation by Lord Dalhousie. The British Government, as the constituted authority of the land, suppressed the revolt and restored law and order.

Not one of the many books written on the subject has sought to interpret the events of 1857 in any other way. It may, however, be pointed out that the only legal title of the East India Company was to act as the Dewan or agent of the Moghul Emperor in revenue matters in respect of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The territories the Company had since acquired were by military conquest but nowhere had the Company challenged the suzerainty of the Emperor. When the army denied the authority of the Company, it appealed to the Emperor to resume his sway. It is, therefore, a debatable point if the revolt of the Indian Army can be regarded as a simple case of mutiny against the sovereign of the land. It may also be mentioned that while most of these authors describe in detail the atrocities perpetrated by Indians on European men, women, and children, very few refer to the equal crimes against Indians committed by the British.

I think special mention may be made of a three-volume history of the uprising published early in the twentieth century. This was based on official records contained in the archives of

the Imperial Records Department, now called the National Archives of India. It is now a general practice that official records are thrown open to research workers after about 50 years. This custom grew out of a decision of the United Kingdom about the records of the wars with Napoleon. Other countries of Europe have by and large accepted this convention. 1907 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Indian revolt and perhaps the then Government of India felt that a history of 1857 should be written on the basis of official papers which were about to be released for research.

This history, though based on official records, deals with the struggle in the same spirit as books by other British authors. Only one new point came out in this publication. The author has clearly stated that so far as Oudh was concerned, the struggle had in it the elements of a national uprising. Oudh had only recently been taken over by the Company from an Indian king, and the people were resentful of this act of aggression. They therefore felt justified in rising against the Company which had acted unjustly towards Oudh. The national character of the rising in Oudh was however no new discovery. Lord Canning, in his official despatches, had himself stated that the struggle in Oudh was in a real sense a national uprising. The author of the book had therefore no difficulty in repeating what Lord Canning had already admitted. The author has also pointed out that the lenient treatment meted out to the Talukdars of Oudh after the suppression of the uprising was at least in part due to the recognition of this fact.

As I have already said, I felt that the time had now come to write a new and objective history of the movement of 1857. During the autumn of 1954, my thoughts returned to this topic and I felt that the centenary of the uprising would be an appropriate occasion for bringing out a new and authoritative account of the tumultuous happenings of the times. The first shots of the so-called Mutiny were fired on 10th May, 1857. There can, therefore, be no better occasion than May 10, 1957, to bring out a comprehensive history of the struggle.

## II

I realise how difficult it is to write an objective account of events which have aroused so much passion in the past. It is not easy for an individual to hold the balance even, as he is influenced by personal, racial, or national feelings. Nevertheless, this must be his constant endeavour if he is to be a historian in

the true sense. I also concede that an objective history of the uprising was more difficult to write before India became free. There are two factors which make the task more feasible today. The events we are to study are already a hundred years old. The poignancy which attached to them when they were fresh has been largely lost. We can look today on the hates and strifes of the actors with the detachment born out of distance in time. In addition, the incentive to make political capital out of these far-off events is gone. The political problem between India and Britain has been resolved, and resolved through negotiation and agreement which have created a new feeling of friendship between the two countries. The bitterness which characterised Indo-British relations in the past is no more. The atmosphere today is such that the events of 1857 can be studied dispassionately and objectively and without seeking to condemn or condone the faults of either party to the struggle.

It is noteworthy that no Indian of that period has written anything which can be regarded as an account of the struggle from an Indian point of view; but if we think over the matter, this is not surprising. We know that the struggle was suppressed with great violence and for many years there was an atmosphere of terror in the country. Hundreds were executed without trial. There was hardly any region in Northern India where corpses, hanging from gibbets, did not remind the people of the vengeance of the Government. No Indian dared at that time to speak or write freely about the events of 1857. A few Indians who were servants or supporters of the Government have left some account but nobody who wanted to write freely and frankly had the courage to do so.

Evidence of how the Indian mind was terrorised is clear from the case of one man, Mirza Mainuddin. He was a Sub-Inspector of Police in the suburbs of Delhi during the uprising. He fled to Persia and returned after two years. At the request of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, whose life he had saved during the uprising, he wrote an account of his experiences but handed over the manuscript to Metcalfe on the express condition that it must not be published so long as he was alive. There is hardly one word against the Government in his book which only describes how he himself fared during this period. Even then the fear which possessed him was so great that it was only under the condition mentioned above that he would hand over the manuscript to Sir Theophilus Metcalfe. He kept his word and prepared an English translation of the book only after he heard of Mainuddin's death. The book could not however be published during Metcalfe's life.

## III

The question has often been asked as to who were responsible for the uprising. Suggestions have sometimes been made that there was a group of planners who prepared a scheme according to which the Movement was launched. I must confess that I have grave doubts on the point. During the struggle and in the years immediately thereafter, the British Government carried out careful enquiries into the origin and causes of the uprising. Lord Salisbury said in the House of Commons that he for one was not prepared to admit that such a widespread and powerful movement could take place on an issue like the greased cartridge. He was convinced that there was more in the uprising than appeared on the surface. The Government of India as well as the Government of Punjab appointed several Commissions and Boards to study this question. All the legends and rumours current in those days were carefully examined. There was the story about the circulation of messages through *chapatis*. There was also the prophecy that British rule in India would last only a hundred years and would come to an end in June 1857, one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey. In spite of long and searching enquiry, there is so far no evidence that the uprising had been pre-planned or that the army and the Indian people had entered into a conspiracy to overthrow the rule of the Company. This has been my belief for a long time and researches undertaken recently have yielded no new facts to make me change my view.

During the trial of Bahadur Shah, efforts were made to prove that he was a party to a pre-planned conspiracy. The evidence which was adduced did not convince even the British officers who conducted the trial and will be dismissed as frivolous by any man with common sense. In fact the course of the trial made it clear that the uprising was as much a surprise to Bahadur Shah as to the British.

## IV

Some Indians have written on the struggle in the early years of this century. If the truth is to be told, we have to admit that the books they have written are not history but mere political propaganda. These authors wanted to represent the uprising as a planned war of independence organized by the nobility of India against the British Government. They have also tried to paint

certain individuals as the organizers of the revolt. It has been said that Nana Saheb, the successor to the last Peshwa Baji Rao, was the master-mind behind the uprising and established contacts with all Indian military establishments. As evidence of this, it is said that Nana Saheb went to Lucknow and Ambala in March and April 1857, and the struggle started in May 1857. This can hardly be regarded as conclusive evidence. The mere fact that Nana Saheb toured Lucknow and Ambala some time before the uprising cannot be regarded as evidence that he planned it.

How baseless some of these conjectures are becomes clear when we find that these historians regard Ali Naqi Khan, Wazir of Oudh, as one of the chief conspirators. Any one who has made a study of the history of Oudh will regard this suggestion as ridiculous. Ali Naqi Khan was completely the henchman of the East India Company. He was the man on whom the British relied in their efforts to persuade Wajid Ali Shah to give up his kingdom voluntarily. General Outram, the British Resident, had promised generous rewards to Ali Naqi Khan if he succeeded in his mission. Ali Naqi Khan was so persistent in his efforts that Wajid Ali Shah's mother became apprehensive that he might secure his end by some subterfuge. She, therefore, took the state seal in her own possession, kept it in the zenana and issued orders that it should not go out without her orders. All these facts are well known in Lucknow and people there look upon Ali Naqi Khan as a traitor. To suggest that such a man was one of the master-minds behind the struggle is, on the face of it, absurd.

It has also been said of Munshi Azimullah Khan and Rango Bapuji that they had prepared the plans for the uprising. Azimullah Khan was the agent of Nana Saheb and had been sent by him to London to plead his cause and secure for him the pension paid to Baji Rao. On his way back to India, he visited Turkey where he met Omar Pasha on the battlefield of Crimea. Similarly, Rango Bapuji had gone to appeal against another decision of Dalhousie regarding the incorporation of Satara into British India.

The fact that they had both been in London on such missions is regarded as pointing to their participation in the conspiracy. It is, however, clear that such suppositions are not evidence. Besides, even if they had talked about these matters in London, this could not by itself justify us in describing them as the architects of the Revolt unless we can connect them with the events in India. There is no evidence of such connection and in the absence of records or testimony, we cannot regard them as having planned the uprising. After the capture of Bithur near Kanpur,

the British secured possession of all the papers of Nana Saheb. The papers of Azimullah Khan also came into their possession. Among his papers, there was a letter addressed to but never sent to Omar Pasha, informing him that Indian soldiers had revolted against the British. Neither this letter nor any other paper of Azimullah Khan gives any indication that he had at any time prepared plans for any uprising in India.

In the light of the available evidence, we are therefore forced to the conclusion that the uprising of 1857 was not the result of careful planning nor were there any master-minds behind it. What happened was that in the course of a hundred years the Indian people developed a distaste for the Company's rule. Since the Company had at first acted in the name of the Nawabs or the Emperor, Indians did not for a long time realise that power had been captured by a foreign race, and they had been reduced to the position of slaves in their own country. Once this realization became widespread, the conditions were created for an outburst. This when it took place was due not to the conspiracy of a few individuals or groups but to the growing discontent of large numbers of people.

## V

If it be asked why the revolt of the Indian people was delayed for almost a hundred years, the explanation may be found in the following facts. The growth of British power in India has perhaps no parallel in history. It was not a case of outright conquest of one country by another, but a story of slow penetration in which the people of the land themselves helped the intruders. The fact that the incursion of the British into India was not in the name of the Crown helped to conceal the true nature of their activities. If the British Crown had from the beginning taken any direct part in Indian affairs, the Indians would have realised that a foreign power was entering the country. Because it was a trading Company, they did not think of it as a potential ruler. It also enabled the agents of the Company to behave in a way which no agent of the Crown could have done. An agent of the British Crown would have felt some hesitation in kowtowing to princelings and local potentates or officers of the Moghul Court. The agents of the Company had no such scruples. They bowed to the pettiest officials with the same readiness as any Indian trader. They indulged in bribery and corruption without any fear of being pulled up by their own ruler.

It is also noteworthy that for a long time the Company never acted in its own name. It always sided with some local Chief in order to advance its own interests. Thus the Company established its position in the South by supporting the claims of the Nawab of the Carnatic. Similarly in Bengal, it acted in the name and under the authority of the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. Even after the Company became the virtual ruler of Bengal, it did not claim sovereignty. Clive approached the Emperor for the grant of Diwani rights and for decades the Company acted as the agents of the Emperor. Not only so but the Company followed the conventions of other Subadars and Governors of Provinces. These Governors in Provinces had their own seals, but always described themselves as the servants of the Moghul Emperor. The Governor-General of the Company also had his own seal, but described himself as the servant of Shah Alam, the Emperor of Delhi. The other Governors and Subadars waited on the Emperor in audience, made presents to him and received in return rewards from the Emperor. The Governor-General also waited on the Emperor and made a *nazar* of 101 guineas. In return the Emperor gave him a Khilat and Titles, and these titles were used by the Governor-General in all official documents. In this way the appearance of the sovereignty of the Emperor was kept up. The people did not for a long time realise how the Company was gradually becoming the real ruler of the land.

This process continued till about the second decade of the 19th century. By that time the rule of the Company had spread to the Sutlej. The Governor-General of the day, Lord Hastings, felt that the time had come to assert his power and gradually disown the Emperor. His first move was to request the Emperor that he should be allowed to sit down during his audience with the Emperor. He also asked for an exemption from the payment of *nazar*. The Emperor rejected these requests, and, for the time being, the Governor-General did not press the point.

The Company then sought to undermine the prestige of the Emperor by encouraging the growth of kingdoms independent of Delhi. An approach was made to the Nizam of Hyderabad to declare himself a king. The Nizam did not agree, but the British found a more willing agent in the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh. Oudh thus ceased to be a province of the empire and became a kingdom disowning its allegiance to the Emperor.

By 1835, the Company felt strong enough to strike coins in which the Emperor's name was left out. This came to many people as a shock. They realised that from being mere traders

or agents of the Emperor, the Company had, in fact, become the ruler of vast territories in India. 1835 also saw a decision to replace Persian by English as the language of the Court. All these had a cumulative effect and made the people aware of the change in the status of the Company. The shock of the discovery created a great disturbance in their minds and affected not only the civil population but also members of the armed forces.

We can get an idea of the situation as it existed in the thirties of the nineteenth century from a study undertaken by a distinguished British civilian of the day. The Hon'ble Frederick John Shore was the son of Sir John Shore and served in various capacities in the Police, the Revenues and the Judicial departments in the North-Western region of the Bengal Presidency. He contributed a series of articles anonymously to the *India Gazette,* one of the Calcutta daily papers, and later in 1837 published them in book form under the title, *Notes on Indian Affairs.* Shore has left us in no doubt about his appraisal of the public mind. He has repeatedly pointed out that even though outwardly everything was calm, the situation was charged with dynamite and it needed only a spark to start a violent conflagration. It was this simmering discontent which ultimately broke out in the outburst of 1857.

The growing discontent was aggravated by two measures which may be regarded as immediately responsible for the revolt of 1857. One of these was the new policy which was initiated by Mr. Thomason, Lt.-Governor of the North-Western Province (afterwards Agra and Oudh). At first the Company had favoured a policy of maintaining or creating a class of landlords who would be natural allies of the Government. Thomason was of a different view. He believed that the existence of big nobles and landlords could be a source of danger to the Company. He was therefore of the view that the landlords, as a class, should be eliminated and the Government should establish direct contact with the rayats. As a result of this new policy, the Company used every possible plea to dispossess nobles and landlords and bring their tenants directly under it.

The second and perhaps the decisive factor was Dalhousie's policy by which he incorporated into British territory one Indian state after another. India was at that time passing through the last phase of feudalism. Under the feudal system, loyalty was to the immediate superior, who was a landlord or a noble. There was no sense of allegiance to the nation or the country. When people saw that the Indian states were being liquidated one after another and landlords were being eliminated as a class, it came

as a great shock to them. They felt that the Company was at last showing itself in its true colours and seeking to change the very structure of Indian social and political life. The discontent reached its peak when Oudh was taken over by the Company. Oudh was a state which, for 70 years, had been a faithful ally of the Company. Never once during this period had Oudh acted against the Company's interests. When in spite of this, the king was forced to abdicate and the State taken over by the Company, the people recieved a rude shock.

The effect of the dissolution of the kingdom of Oudh was the greater as a large proportion of the soldiers in the Bengal Army was drawn from this area. They had served the Company faithfully and been one of the major factors for extending its sway in different parts of the land. They suddenly realised that the power which the Company had acquired through their service and sacrifice was utilised to liquidate their own king. I have little doubt in my mind that 1856, when Oudh was annexed, marked the beginning of a rebellious mood in the army generally and in the Bengal Army in particular. It was from this time that they began to think that the Company's rule must be brought to an end. During the uprising, Lawrence and others who sought to find out the feelings of the ordinary sepoy have left ample evidence in support of this view. The affair of the greased cartridge did not create a new cause of discontent in the Army, but supplied the occasion when the underground discontent came out in the open.

## VI

In the beginning, the East India Company had shown a great deal of regard for Indian susceptibilities. It sought to respect Indian feeling and treated the upper classes with great consideration. It was customary for members of the Governor-General's Council to receive and see off at the door not only noblemen but any Indian of a high social standing. As it became more powerful, its attitude changed and the Company paid less and less attention to Indian feeling. New laws were enacted without pausing to consider what the reaction would be on the Indian people. It must, however, be admitted that the Company often acted more in ignorance than in wilful contempt. Its affairs were administered by the Governor-General aided by a Council which consisted exclusively of Britishers. In fact, the idea of an Indian sitting on the Council would have shocked the Company. Nor was there any representative institution through which the rulers

could sense the feeling of their subjects. In these circumstances, it had no means of knowing what the local people felt. The gulf between the Company and its subjects thus continually increased.

## VII

After reading the various accounts of 1857, certain conclusions appear to be inescapable. The question naturally arises if the uprising was the result of a nationalist upsurge alone. The answer cannot be an unqualified affirmative if nationalism is understood in its modern sense. There is no doubt that the participants were moved by patriotic considerations, but these were not strong enough to provoke a revolt. Patriotism had to be reinforced by an appeal to religious passion before the people rose. The propaganda about the greased cartridges is only one instance of this. In other ways also the religious feelings of the soldiers had to be wounded before they were roused against their foreign masters.

Regarding the greased cartridges, it is clear from the papers of Fort William that the charge levelled against the Company was justified. Many of the other charges of religious interference were however baseless. It was freely rumoured that the Company had prohibited Sati because of its animus against the Hindu religion. There seems no justification for such a charge. Sati was stopped because the rulers as well as enlightened Indian opinion of the day led by Raja Rammohan Roy realised that it was an inhuman institution. No civilized Government could tolerate that human beings should be burnt alive. Now that the passions of the struggle have subsided, no Indian would regard the prohibition of the Sati as a reasonable ground for revolt against the Company.

Equally baseless was the canard that the Company ground cow bone and mixed it with flour to violate the religious beliefs of Hindu soldiers. No one with common sense will today accept such a charge but at the time the canard was spread, a large number of credulous soldiers believed in it and were aroused to frenzy against the Company.

The East India Company had decided to provide western education to the Indian people and opened colleges and schools for the purpose. This again was done mainly in response to enlightened Indian opinion. Nevertheless, the general public regarded such measures as a means of converting Indians to Christianity. The teachers in these institutions were called *Kala Padres* and subjected to social contempt. No one will today regard

these measures for the introduction of western education as a cause for revolt.

## VIII

As I read about the events of 1857 I am forced to the sad conclusion that Indian national character had sunk very low. The leaders of the revolt could never agree. They were mutually jealous and continually intrigued against one another. They seemed to have little regard for the effects of such disagreement on the common cause. In fact, these personal jealousies and intrigues were largely responsible for the Indian defeat.

Bakht Khan who assumed command in Delhi during the last stage of the struggle was an honest man. He was sincere in his efforts to win but all the other military leaders tried to engineer his defeat. When he went out to fight, they gave him little or no support.

The same situation was in evidence at Lucknow. The Residency was surrounded by Indian troops but the soldiers felt that once they captured it, they would no longer be needed by the Government of the Queen of Oudh. Their services were of value only so long as the struggle continued. In consequence, these soldiers never tried for an outright victory.

In contrast, the British fought with loyalty to their Queen. Men and women felt that it was a national calamity against which they must fight wholeheartedly for survival and victory.

Equally significant is the fact that with a few honourable exceptions—of whom the most distinguished were Ahmad Ullah and Tatya Tope—most of the leaders who took part in the struggle did so for personal reasons. They did not rise against the British till their personal interests had beeen damaged. Even after the revolt had begun Nana Saheb declared that if Dalhousie's decisions were reversed and his own demands met, he would be willing to come to terms. The Rani of Jhansi had also her own grievances, but once she joined the fight, she never faltered and laid down her life in the cause she had espoused.

If this was the condition of the leaders of the uprising, one can easily imagine what would be the condition of the masses. They were very often mere spectators of the struggle and lent their support to whichever side was more powerful at the moment. An idea of their attitude may be gained from the fate which overtook Tatya Tope. When he was finally defeated, he resolved to struggle back across the Narmada into Madhya Pradesh. He was convinced that once he reached the Maratha region, the

people would offer him support. With almost superhuman courage and tenacity, he eluded his pursuers and did cross the Narmada. When he reached the other bank, he could not find one village which would give him shelter. Everybody turned against him so that he had to fly again and resort to the forests. It was a professed friend who finally betrayed him while he was asleep.

## IX

One word about the atrocities that were perpetrated during this great uprising. British authors have often described in detail the many inhuman acts done by Indian soldiers and their leaders. It must be admitted with regret that some of these charges are justified. There is no defence whatever for the murder of European women and in some cases children in Delhi, Kanpur or Lucknow. Nana Saheb cannot perhaps be held responsible for not honouring the undertaking he had given to General Wheeler. He had lost control over the soldiers who took matters into their own hands. British historians have admitted that he was shocked when he found the dead body of a child floating in the water. None the less, Indian soldiers who professed to obey him committed these crimes. Also, he has a special responsibility for the prisoners who were killed just before Havelock reached the scene. It is said that he had them murdered in retaliation for the atrocities perpetrated by the British in Allahabad. One wrong does not however justify another. Nana Saheb must be held responsible for the murder of these helpless prisoners.

If the record of the Indians was tarnished by dark deeds, the British fared no better. British historians have generally sought to gloss over the British atrocities but some of them have left on record their sense of disgust at the terrible crimes perpetrated in the name of revenge. Hodson became a byword for bloodthirsty deeds. Neill prided himself on the fact that he strung hundreds of Indians without the semblance of a trial. Around Allahabad, there was hardly a single tree without the corpse of an unfortunate Indian hanging from it. It may be that the British were gravely provoked but that was exactly what the Indians also said. If the conduct of many of the Indians was inexcusable, that of many of the British was equally so. Muslim noblemen were sewn alive in pigskin and pork forced down their gullets. Hindus were compelled to take beef under threat of death. Wounded prisoners were burnt alive. British soldiers went out to capture unfortunate villagers who were then tortured till death

put an end to their misery. No nation or individual can indulge in such horrible atrocities and yet claim to be civilised.

## X

Two facts stand out clearly in the midst of the tangled story of the Rising of 1857. The first is the remarkable sense of unity among the Hindus and the Muslims of India in this period. The other is the deep loyalty which the people felt for the Moghul Crown.

The movement started on May 10, 1857, and continued for about two years. During this period there were many glorious as well as dark deeds perpetrated by combatants on either side. There are instances of shining heroism and almost unbelievable cruelty. We do not, however, find during the whole of this period a single instance when there was a clash or conflict on a communal basis. All Indians—whether Muslim or Hindu—looked at things from the same point of view and judged events by the same standards.

This freedom from communal feeling was not the result of any special effort on the part of the leaders. There is no indication whatever that the leaders of 1857 made any conscious attempt to stress Hindu-Muslim unity. Hindus and Muslims had developed friendly relations on a permanent basis as a result of the common life of centuries. There was therefore no occasion or need to make any appeal for unity for a particular cause. When one remembers that it was a time of high feelings and passionate excitement this absence of any communal conflict becomes even more significant. One may safely conclude that before the days of British rule, there was no such thing as the Hindu-Muslim problem in India.

Even before 1857 the British had tried to introduce the principle of 'divide and rule'. It is true that the British Crown had not assumed responsibility for governing India but since the Battle of Plassey a hundred years ago, the East India Company had become the paramount power in India. During these hundred years British officers had often stressed the differences between the different Indian communities. In the Despatches of the Directors of the Company it is again and again said that a distinction must be drawn between Hindus and Muslims. They felt that no reliance could be placed on the Muslims as their loyalty was open to question.

Todd's *Annals of Rajasthan* and Elliot's Introduction to his *History of India* make it clear that the East India Company

wanted to stress the divisions between Hindus and Muslims. Both these men were high officials of the East India Company and they refer with contempt to Hindu historians who spoke highly of Muslim kings. They have even expressed their surprise that a Hindu historian should praise the sense of justice and fairness of a Muslim ruler.

There is enough material in Todd's *Annals* to colour the history of the middle ages in a way which would poison the relations of Hindus and Muslims. Wherever there are two versions of a story, the one which is likely to embitter relations is preferred. Nevertheless, the incidents of 1857 prove that these attempts had not met with the desired result. Common life had developed among Hindus and Muslims a sense of brotherhood and sympathy which was able to resist the indoctrination of hundred years. That is why the Struggle of 1857 took a national and racial but not a communal turn. In the fight for freedom, Hindus and Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder. Their common effort was to liberate themselves from the British yoke.

This feeling of unity was found not only in the army but also among the civil population. There is no record of a single incident of conflict or clash on a religious basis even though there are instances where British officers tried to weaken the Indian camp by stressing such differences.

India faced the trial of 1857 as a united community. How is it then that within a few decades communal differences became an obstacle to Indian nationhood? It is a tragedy of Indian history that this problem became more and more serious till at last a solution had to be found by partitioning the country on a communal basis.

The only explanation of these phenomena is to be found in the British policy after 1857. When the British found that the communities stood shoulder to shoulder during these days of trial, they realised that the continuance of British rule depended on the breach of that unity. This conclusion becomes inescapable if one reads the contemporary British Despatches. It is also clearly seen in the re-organization of the army after the Rising had been suppressed. Not only was the division of martial and non-martial races introduced, but the army was re-organized on a new basis of checks and balances. Steps were taken to ensure that common action by Hindus and Muslims would in future be altogether impossible. The civil population was also subjected to a general policy which gradually turned Hindus against Muslims and Muslims against Hindus. Whenever any opportunity came

to emphasize their differences, it was never ignored. How this principle worked in the army is clear from the autobiography of Lord Roberts.

## XI

The second important fact which attracts our attention during this uprising is the way in which Muslims and Hindus without doubt or debate looked to Delhi and Bahadur Shah. There was unanimous and spontaneous agreement that he alone had the right to become the Emperor of India. It must be remembered that so far as the army was concerned the majority of the rebels were in the beginning Hindus. When on the 10th of May they rebelled at Meerut, their first cry was 'March to Delhi'. This was not the result of debate or discussion but the spontaneous reaction of the common soldier. Whenever there was a revolt in any cantonment, the same thing happened again and again. Even where the army could not reach Delhi, they all proclaimed their allegiance to the Moghul Emperor.

In Kanpur, Nana Saheb played a leading part in the revolt. He also declared himself as the Peshwa. The story of the old conflict between the Marathas and the Moghuls was however forgotten and he did not for a moment hesitate to declare himself a Subadar or Governor of the Moghul Court. The real ruler, he proclaimed, was the Emperor of Delhi. The coins struck were in the name of the Emperor and all orders were issued in his name. Some of these orders of Nana Saheb are preserved in the Archives in Hyderabad-Dn. Every one of them is issued in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. The date is Hijri followed by the Samvat as was the custom of the Moghul Court.

We have to remember that in 1857 Bahadur Shah was hardly anything more than a puppet. His sway did not extend beyond the Delhi fort. Even the city of Delhi was largely outside his control. He lived on a monthly grant of rupees one lakh paid to him by the East India Company. Not only he but his immediate predecessors had been mere titular rulers. He had neither army nor treasure. Nor had he any influence or power. The only thing in his favour was that he was a descendant of Akbar and Shah Jahan.

The loyalty which the people of India offered to Bahadur Shah was not to him as a person but to the descendant of the great Moghuls. The Moghul Court had made such an abiding impression on the Indian mind that when the question arose who should take over power from the British, Hindus and Muslims

with one voice selected Bahadur Shah. This gives us an idea of the deep roots the empire established by Babur and consolidated by Akbar had struck in India. Indians obviously looked upon the Moghuls not as foreign rulers but as their own King Emperors.

Unfortunately for India, Bahadur Shah was not fit to serve even as a symbol. He was so weak that he could not control either the soldiers or the nobility. In spite of his personal failings, no one thought of an alternative to him. Till the very end, the soldiers and the people looked to Bahadur Shah as the Head of the State. In September 1857, the British again captured Delhi. Bakht Khan then appealed to Bahadur Shah to leave the city and rally forces outside. He pleaded with the Emperor that the cause was not yet lost. Rohilkhand was still intact and so was Oudh. Bahadur Shah could not however rise to the occasion and again failed. Besides, the British had got hold of the traitor Ilahi Baksh who persuaded Bahadur Shah to stay on. In the end, he was arrested and this was the end of the nation-wide organized resistance.

## XII

In January 1955, I decided that the work of preparing a new history of the Indian struggle of 1857 should be immediately taken in hand. It was clear in my mind that it must be a true history of the struggle and not any partisan interpretation of the events. It must be based on facts and facts alone, and avoid all appeal to passion or sentiment. I decided to invite Dr. S. N. Sen, a well-known Indian historian, to undertake this task and made an announcement to this effect during the annual meeting of the Indian Historical Records Commission. All records on the subject were placed at his disposal and he was also given facilities to secure necessary data from the India Office in London. I also agreed that he may visit London in person and look into historical records which were otherwise inaccessible to him.

The present book is the result of the work which Dr. Sen has undertaken at the commission of the Government of India. The only directive I issued was that he should write the book from the standpoint of a true historian. Beyond this general instruction, there was no attempt to interfere with his work or influence his conclusions. The responsibility for the selection and interpretation of events is therefore exclusively his. The Government of India are not in any way committed by any expression of his opinions.

I am glad to find that Dr. Sen has treated the subject objectively and dispassionately. He has sought neither to condemn nor to condone and treated the British and the Indian participants in the struggle in a truly historical perspective. I may not agree with all the statements that he has made but I would like to place on record my appreciation of the objectivity with which he has carried out a difficult task.

A. K. AZAD
Minister for Education,
Natural Resources and Scientific Research,
Government of India

New Delhi,
February 9th, 1957

# PREFACE

Early in 1955 the Government of India commissioned me to produce a volume on the Revolt of 1857. They wanted the press copy by the 30th June 1956. The time allowed was by no means adequate, the source materials, though one-sided, were voluminous, the subject itself bristled with controversies. But I thought that a fresh review of the causes, character, and consequences of the Sepoy war was well worth attempting.

Much of the original bitterness has by now subsided, but some of the prejudices unfortunately still survive both in Britain and in India. There are Englishmen who find it difficult to persuade themselves that the ruling race might have been guilty of some lapses and errors. Indians are not wanting who are reluctant to admit that some of the rebel leaders might have been inspired by motives other than patriotic. The student of history therefore finds himself confronted with preconceived theories and deep-rooted convictions.

Time however is a great healer. Independent India may well afford to ignore many of the shortcomings of the former rulers and Englishmen do not any longer feel obliged to defend everything that colonial imperialism dictated. The time is therefore opportune for a dispassionate study of a controversial subject on which opinion is still widely, if not sharply, divided. I was particularly encouraged to undertake the task by the liberal attitude of the Government of India. They recognised that a re-examination of the history of 1857 can be justified only if it is purely objective and scrupulously impartial and the investigator be conceded complete liberty to state his conclusions fully and freely without any fear of official interference. I should like to make it clear that the Government of India are in no way responsible for such views as I may have expressed in the following pages. It should not be inferred that the Government are in agreement with me because they have sponsored this publication. It is not an 'authorised version' in any sense.

It has not been possible for me to attempt a detailed history of the war within the space at my disposal. Most readers are, I believe, familiar with the main events and a review only is offered here.

I should like to record my deep sense of obligations

to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for the facilities he granted me. I had full and free access to the National Archives of India and National Library of Calcutta. The Education Minister further financed my researches in England. He appointed three research assistants to help me. Mr. V. C. Joshi worked under my instructions in the National Archives and he unearthed many of the contemporary records published in the Appendices. But for his labours it would have been impossible for me to complete my work within the allotted time. The index is also his. Dr. Miss Niharkana Majumdar worked with me at Calcutta and to her fell the tedious task of verifying references and correcting the typescript. Sardar Pirthipal Singh Kapur examined the mutiny records, particularly the papers of Maulavi Rajab Ali in the Punjab Government Records office. As a member of the Board of Editors, History of Freedom Movement in India, I had access to the materials the Board had brought together. Mr. B. B. Bagchi of the National Archives Library went out of his way to hunt for rare publications available in other libraries of Delhi. Mr. Balak Ram of Kanpur, whose great grandfather suffered the extreme penalty during the mutiny, volunteered historical and topographical information about his locality. To Mr. B. S. Kesavan and his colleagues of the National Library I am indebted for the unfailing courtesy and ungrudging co-operation I have always received from them. Mr. F. C. Sutton of the India Office Library and the members of his staff not only helped me in the same way but sent a rare manuscript to Calcutta for my use. Maharajkumar Somendra Nath Nandi of the historic house of Cossimbazar lent me many rare publications from his family library. Prof C. H. Philips placed me under deep obligations by permitting me to go through three big bundles of newspaper cuttings and notes deposited in his seminar Library. My old friend M. M. Dattopant Potdar got for me valuable information about the Thatte family and a copy of the statement of Balusare. Mr. V. S. Suri of the Punjab Government Record Office devoted his scanty leisure to a search for hitherto unnoticed documents in his custody. Lt.-Col. Pandit Kunjilal Dubey, then Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University, not only sent me a popular ballad of Beni Madho but lent me for an indefinite period a dozen rare publications from the University Library. Thakur Batuk Singh prepared for my use an account of the atrocities committed in his village and its neighbourhood. I have to thank the Editor of *The Illustrated London News* for his kind permission to reproduce the portrait of Begam Hazrat Mahal. It is not possible for me to acknowledge here many unexpected offers of co-operation that

I received from different parties in India and Britain. Their kindness shines all the brighter in contrast with the rebuff I received from the head of a missionary institution who refused me access to the library attached to his college.

Prof. N. K. Sinha read the typescript and offered me many valuable suggestions. Dr. P. C. Gupta saw the book through the press when I was physically unable to look after it owing to prolonged ill health.

6 Ekdalia Place
Calcutta-19
25th April, 1957

SURENDRA NATH SEN

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## Chapter One

# THE CAUSES

WHAT caused the Revolt of 1857? 'Assuredly the greased cartridge' is the general reply with just a few dissidents. The obnoxious grease, by itself, could hardly cause such a mighty conflagration, had it not been suspected to be a covert instrument of conversion. We have ungrudgingly shed our blood in the service of our foreign masters, complained the disaffected sepoys, we have conquered for them kingdom after kingdom until nothing remained to be annexed within the four corners of the country, but what has been the return?—spoliation of our people, degradation of our princes, and worst of all,—inconceivable insults to our religion. "The Armies of Hindoostan have fought faithfully in behalf of the King of London, and the Hon'ble Company and conquered for them the Countries extending from Calcutta to Peshawur. For those services the said King and English rulers have bestowed the following rewards. Firstly, in Hindoostan they have exacted as revenue Rupees 300/- where only 200/- were due, and Rupees 500/- where but 400/- were demandable, and still they are solicitous to raise their demands. The people must therefore be ruined and beggared. Secondly, they have doubled and quadrupled and raised tenfold the Chowkeedaree Tax and have wished to ruin the people. Thirdly, the occupation of all respectable and learned men is gone, and millions are destitute of the necessaries of Life. When any one in search of employment determines on proceeding from one Zillah to another, every soul is charged six pie as toll on roads, and has to pay from 4 to 8 annas for each cart. Those only who pay are permitted to travel on the public roads. How far can we detail the oppression of the Tyrants! Gradually matters arrived at such a pitch that the Government had determined to subvert everyone's religion."[1] So ran a proclamation issued in the name of the Hindus and Muslims of Delhi to the people of Hindustan. Nor were the sepoys alone in their denunciation of the Company's Government. The Emperor of Delhi, the Wali of Lucknow, and

[1] Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 14, 30 April, 1858

the heir of the Peshwa were at one with them. The cartridge was the culmination, the proverbial last straw.

Yet the Englishman did not deliberately go out of his way to hurt the susceptibilities of the Indian. He had conquered the country by the sword, but he did not want to hold it by the sword alone. He honestly believed that he represented a superior race and a superior culture and was anxious to share the blessings of western civilization with the 'backward' people of the east. He would like to invest his administration with a moral sanction, forgetting that the motives of an alien government are always liable to be misconstrued. Oblivious of the difficulties inherent in his position, he proceeded to introduce reforms which appeared to him unexceptionable. In his zeal for reform and improvement he left the feelings of the people affected severely out of account, and strangely enough, he did not always discriminate between the essential and the non-essential.

The first offence to the religious prejudices of the sepoy was committed as early as 1806 when Sir George Barlow, an inoffensive civilian, was the Governor-General. In those days each of the three Presidencies had its independent military establishment and the Madras officers felt that the men they commanded should not only prove smart in action but look smart as well. To them the distinctive caste marks which the sepoy used to bear on his brow looked ungainly and odd; they felt that the luxurious beards in which the Indian soldier took special pride marred his martial appearance, and it was ordained that the manly moustaches should be trimmed to a standard proportion. This was not all; his old turban was to be replaced by one with a leather cockade. Today these reforms, if reforms they were, may appear innocuous though not imperative; but one hundred and fifty years ago the Hindu and the Muslim had a different outlook. They were not familiar with the English ways and of what little they had seen of the Englishman, they did not approve. The mark on his brow indicated the sepoy's creed and could not be dispensed with, a Muslim would not like to shave his beard which was commonly associated with his faith; but the most obnoxious innovation was the leather cockade in the new turban. What was the origin of the leather? Some Hindus would not touch any leather at all, to all Hindus cows' hide was objectionable; no Mahomedan would knowingly wear anything made of pig skin and it was widely suspected that the cockades were made of these highly objectionable materials. The slightest contact with the cockade would, therefore, defile and pollute the sepoy and degrade him in the eyes of the only people

who mattered, his relatives and kinsmen. To the English officers such scruples were incomprehensible. The sepoy detected in these unnecessary innovations the Englishman's crafty attempt to make a Christian of him. He was a mercenary and had enlisted in the Company's army because it provided him with an honest and honourable living; but he was not prepared to abjure his forefathers' faith on any account and turn an apostate. His master had no better claim on his loyalty and he was prepared to transfer his services to any one else without any compunction, the traditions of his country only demanded that he should remain true to his salt. But he could not place his salt above his religion. Englishmen might in their ignorance dismiss his daily ablutions and modes of worship as meaningless mummery, but to him they were the only means of salvation. If he stood firm in his faith he would command the respect of his fellow men, irrespective of their religion. A devout Muslim would honour a devout Hindu, but both would look askance at people who deviated from the ways of their ancestors. If the cockade led to loss of caste and consequently to tacit conversion to Christianity, no power in the world could force him to wear it. So the cockade proved to be the prelude to a mutiny at Vellore as the cartridge was destined to be the precursor of the revolt fifty years later. Unaware of the working of the sepoy mind, the Englishman was taken by surprise, but he did not lose his head. Colonel Gillespie who commanded the station rose to the occasion and promptly suppressed the rising. It should be noted that Indian troops followed him in his assault on the mutineers; and though terrible vengeance was taken on the rebels, quiet was not immediately restored and signs of discontent were perceived at three other stations in the Presidency. The obnoxious regulations were withdrawn and the Governor issued a proclamation disclaiming any intention to interfere with the religion of the Indian troops. The Vellore mutiny was given a political colour as the sons of Tipu Sultan were residing in the fort with a large retinue. But one thing was obvious and it was that the British officer did not understand the psychology of the Indian soldier and that the native soldier had no confidence in the good intentions of his officers. No political machination could possibly affect the loyalty of the sepoy, if he found no reasonable ground to suspect the good faith of the Government.

Hardly eighteen years had passed when the loyalty of the sepoy was tried for a second time. Troubles had been brewing in the eastern frontier of India since the Burmese annexation of Assam, and war ultimately broke out in 1824. The sepoy had

no objection to march through Assam and Arakan and travel overland to Burma, but age-old customs forbade the Hindu to make a sea voyage and custom had with him the force of law. By the terms of his enlistment the Bengal sepoy was not required to cross the sea. The Madras troops had sailed to Rangoon without demur but the Bengal Army had to be marched to Chittagong and from there massed against the Burmese land frontier. The resources of the Government had been taxed to their utmost limits to find the necessary transport; and at last the 47th Regiment, stationed at Barrackpur and told off for the expedition, was ordered to find their own cart and bullocks. Obviously the sepoy could not hope to succeed where the Government had failed and the order was patently unfair.[2] At this juncture a rumour spread that once at Chittagong, the regiment would have to embark, whether it liked it or not, and the men were reluctant to leave the station, not knowing that one of the officers had offered to make the transport arrangements.[3] Whether the news of the disaster at Ramu influenced their attitude remains a subject of conjecture, but it is an admitted fact that the sepoys were disaffected and refused to march. The sepoy dreaded the loss of his caste and the sufferings it involved and argued that he was not bound to do anything outside the terms of his agreement. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edward Paget, was a strong man. He was not prepared to stand any nonsense about social customs and religious superstitions. Nor was he willing to make any allowance for unreasonable fears. An order was an order and must be obeyed, and if the sepoy refused to obey he was guilty of indiscipline. Indiscipline in the army could not be tolerated at any time; in time of war it must be suppressed with an iron hand. The Commander-in-Chief marched in person to Barrackpur with European troops, paraded the regiments, admonished them for their folly and offered them the alternative of marching or grounding their arms. The sepoys however placed religion above discipline. They felt that they committed no offence in disobeying an order which was contrary to their contract. At the same time they did not contemplate any armed resistance.[4] But

[2] The sepoy was required to find his own transport "When it was known that not an animal was procurable far and wide at any price." *The Mutiny in the Bengal Army* by a Retired Officer, p 12. Also Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India*, Vol. I, p 267

[3] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, pp 267-268

[4] "The illfated regiment was drawn up in a close column. In their front were two European regiments in line a few yards distant and a battery of guns, hidden most unfortunately, for had they seen the guns they would probably have yielded. They were torn to pieces by grape and musketry. Their muskets were found unloaded." *The Mutiny in the Bengal Army*, p 12

their recalcitrance was not to go unpunished. At Paget's orders fire was opened upon the unfortunate men. They had not even loaded their muskets and they fled pell-mell in surprised terror. The matter did not end there. The ring-leaders were hanged, the 47th Regiment was disbanded, and its name was removed from the army list. Discipline was thus sternly enforced, no further trouble immediately followed, but Barrackpur provided another instance of British indifference to the religious feelings of the sepoy. Technically, the sepoy had simply stood on his rights and gone no further. The authorities were certainly logical in their attitude but they forgot that logic does not always hold good in human affairs.

Five years later the orthodox section of the Hindu community discovered another instance of British antagonism to their religious practices in the abolition of Sati. Nobody would now deny that the reform had been long overdue and the practice was abhorrent to all human principles. Anxious to maintain a strict neutrality in religious matters, the East India Company's Government at first not only refrained from all measures likely to alienate their Hindu and Muslim subjects but went to the length of discountenancing missionary activities within their jurisdiction. But no civilized administration could tolerate immolation of human beings and the Directors were anxious to remove this disgrace. Lord Amherst, however, shrank from the responsibility, for he rightly feared that the reform, imperative as it was, would prove highly unpopular. Lord William Bentinck, to his eternal credit, took courage in both hands and prohibited the practice and made it a capital offence. He had the support of enlightened Hindu opinion led by Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Dwarakanath Tagore, but they formed a microscopic minority while the great multitude still laboured under the delusion that all old practices had the sanction of the scriptures. The rebel leaders later made capital of this salutary reform. In one of his proclamations Khan Bahadur Khan complained, "the self-immolation of wives on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands was an ancient religious custom ; the English had it discontinued, and enacted their own regulations prohibiting it."[5]

The abolition of Sati not only gave offence to the Hindu masses in general, but it caused some disquiet in the Muslim mind as well. If the Christian Government could interfere with Hindu customs and practices with impunity, they asked themselves, how long would they leave the Muslims alone? Before a decade

[5] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 22-23, 30 April, 1858

was over, something happened to worry both the Muslim and the Hindu alike. Sardar Bahadur Hedayet Ali, Subadar of Rattray's Sikhs, had a distinguished military record. His loyalty to his employers was beyond doubt. Son of one Subadar and grandson of another, he represented the third generation of his family in the Company's service. He, like his father before him, was born in the army and claimed to belong entirely to the army not having a country to call his own. He submitted to the Government a brief memorandum entitled 'A few words relative to the late mutiny of the Bengal Army, and the rebellion in the Bengal Presidency'[6], in which he traced the causes of the Mutiny to the first Afghan War. The sepoys could not legitimately claim exemption from the Kabul expedition, though their destination lay outside India, but they apprehended that the campaign in that far-off land would lead to their excommunication for breach of caste rules. Hedayet Ali points out that while at Kabul Hindu sepoys could not perform their daily ablutions and had to purchase their food from Muslims in contravention of the common practice in India. Many of them were taken prisoners and forcibly converted. On their return home they found that they were outcastes; not only the ignorant village folk but even brother sepoys refused to dine or smoke with them. Nor did the Muslim soldier feel happy though he recognised no caste and had no fear of excommunication. He was reluctant to fight against a brother in faith and Hedayet Ali tells us that "the Mahomedans always boasted among themselves how they had evaded the English order by never taking aim when they fired."

Sitaram, a Hindu Subadar, also testified to the same effect. His uncle was a Jamadar and his son a sepoy. While Sitaram remained staunch and true to his salt, his son rebelled during the Mutiny and paid the extreme penalty for his offence. Unfortunately the father was told off to command the shooting squad, but from this inhuman duty he was exempted by a considerate officer. Sitaram served in Afghanistan and his account of the fears and sufferings of his Hindu comrades can be safely accepted as trustworthy. He writes, "Great fears were felt by the sepoys at the idea of having to go across the Indus. Many people said the Sirkar's army would be beaten. Others, again, said that the English would take Cabool, as there was a strong party in favour of the deposed king. The sepoys dreaded passing the Indus, because it was out of Hindustan. This is forbidden in our reli-

[6] Published by the Government of Bengal in 1858. The English translation is by Colonel Rattray. It has been reprinted in Appendix 12 of Gubbins' *The Mutinies in Oudh*, 3rd edition

gion: the very act is loss of caste. In consequence of this many sepoys obtained their discharge, and many deserted."[7] They had to march across the deserts and on their way to Kandahar pass through 'a vile country' that 'was on the confines of hell'. "When a Hindu died, there was no wood to perform *dar* (*dāh*, i.e., burning) with, and he was far from holy Kasee or pure Gunga; his lot was sad, for he was conveyed about in diverse places in the bellies of hungry jackals!"[8] After the Kabul disaster, the unfortunate man fell into enemy hands and was sold into slavery. It was long after the British evacuation that he succeeded in effecting his escape with the help of a trader whom he had to pay five hundred rupees, a considerable sum by the standard of those days. At Ferozepur he waited upon the Commissioner who advanced him half his ransom while the other half was found by an old acquaintance at the station. Next comes the sad tale of the cruel treatment he received at the hands of his brothers in service. "I went to the lines of one of the regiments, but when I informed the sepoys who I was, they all declared I was unclean and defiled—some even accused me of having been made a Mussulman; therefore, until I could regain my caste, I could look for no *mohubut* (friendship) from my own people! This greatly mortified me, and I almost wished I had remained in Cabool, where at any rate I was not treated unkindly."[9] Until he could perform a purifying ceremony, says he, "I was treated by the Brahmins as an outcaste, and could only associate with Mussulmans, and Christian drummers and musicians, who were the only people that would speak to me. The officers knew this and were very kind to me ; but as I had no money, I could not regain my caste just then."[10] The same treatment awaited him at his native village. "The news of my having been made a slave had reached my village, and I was not allowed to remain in my father's house. I found my brother my enemy, as he had long supposed me to be dead, and looked forward to succeeding to the estate. My father paid for my regaining my caste, which I proved was forcibly taken away."[11] His father of course did his best to

[7] *From Sepoy to Subadar : Being the Life and Adventures of a Native Officer of the Bengal Army*, translated by Lieutenant-Colonel Norgate, 3rd edition, edited by Lieutenant-Colonel D. C. Phillott, p 60

Hedayet Ali confirms Sitaram: "None of the Hindoos in Hindostan would eat with their comrades who went to Afghanistan, nor would they even allow them to touch their cooking utensils ; they looked upon them all as outcasts, and treated them accordingly".

[8] *Idem*, p 66

[9] *Idem*, p 89

[10] *Idem*, p 90

[11] *Idem*, pp 90-91

persuade Sitaram to leave the army but he had still to find his wife and son, and he could not expect to meet them if he remained at home.

The Afghan War taught the sepoy that the profession of arms did not always lead to glory and that a foreign expedition might entail losses for which there was no recompense. Except during the Burmese War he had not been required to go abroad and that war had ended in a victory. The sympathy of his officers was no compensation for slavery in a strange land and excommunication at home. At the same time the Indian troops discovered for the third time that the British generals were not invincible and could be worsted by a purely Asian force led by Asian officers. It revived the memory of Bharatpur and Nepal War in which also the Company's troops did not fare well. The sepoy had little reason to contemplate the prospects of another foreign expedition with satisfaction. A Hindu state might provide some redress for such social and religious disabilities, as indeed in the Maratha days prisoners, forcibly converted to Islam, were at the injunction of the king readily re-admitted to their original status in society, but a Christian Government was helpless in this respect. Any interference in behalf of the victims would put the foreign rulers in the wrong.

In 1839, a significant change was perceived in the Government's attitude towards religions other than their own. In India the state was the traditional guardian of the holy places of all communities and in religious disputes the ruler of the day was called upon to adjudicate irrespective of his own belief. Thus Aurangzib was expected to give his verdict on a disputed point relating to Hindu society and the Brahman Peshwa gave his decision on the rights of a Roman Catholic priest. According to this time-honoured custom the East India Company's officers had taken upon themselves the management of Hindu temples and even the famous shrine of Jagannath at Puri had been placed under government supervision. Christian opinion at home was scandalised by this unholy association and resented the very idea of supporting idolatrous establishments out of public funds. As a matter of fact, the temples were a source of financial gain to the Government and only a small fraction of the income derived from the pilgrims was spent for their preservation and maintenance. But it was a question of principle and not a matter of worldly gain or loss, and the Company's Government had to yield to the growing pressure of public opinion in Britain and to leave the management of the Hindu and Muslim places of worship to their natural custodians. This was quite in accordance

with the policy of strict religious neutrality and should have given nothing but satisfaction to the people of India, if they had not noticed at the same time an alarming increase in missionary activities. The missionary was to be seen everywhere—in the schools, in the hospitals, in the prisons, and at the market place.

He gave most offence at the market place. His right of propagating his own doctrines was not questioned, but he was not content with the explanation of Christ's message to his audience, he ridiculed the rites and practices of their ancestors without making any distinction between the pagan Hindu and the monotheistic Muslim who acknowledged Christ as one of the prophets. The outraged people identified the Christian missionary with the Christian government because the missionary was sometimes attended by the police. Sir Syed Ahmed says that "it has been commonly believed that Government appointed missionaries and maintained them at its own cost". He adds that while the Hindus and the Muslims gave discourses on their respective creeds at their private residences, temples or mosques, the missionary went to public places to denounce other people's creeds in the most violent terms. The sepoy could not have been unaware that the chaplains in the army were in the pay of the state and the term *padre lat,* then in common use, also assigned by implication a recognised place to the clergy in the official hierarchy.

The missionary was an excellent teacher, but his very efficiency as an educationist was a source of grave anxiety to the orthodox Indian, as the missionary did not confine his efforts to the improvement of the student's mind alone but strove for what was to him of far greater importance—the reclamation of the latter's soul. In his opinion there was only one way of salvation, for Christianity claimed a monopoly of truth; and according to his way of thinking conversion was the inevitable corollary of western education. The enlightened Hindu in his tolerant attitude might concede that ultimately all religions led to God, but the Muslim who firmly believed that his was the only true faith could not logically make that concession. And the great multitude of Hindus, unfamiliar with the ancient philosophy of their ancestors, honestly believed that only strict adherence to the rites and rituals sanctioned by custom could save them from eternal perdition. While the Muslim did not consider himself morally responsible for any heresy or lapse on the part of his progeny, the Hindu feared that his soul could never be redeemed unless his son performed the customary rites after his death. The conflict between the missionary and the non-Christian masses of India, therefore,

admitted of no compromise. The Indian felt that his religious adversary had an unfair advantage over him, as he had the tacit and sometimes open support of the state. Some of the officers, civilian and military, were inspired by evangelical zeal[12] and they might conscientiously argue that they would have failed in their duty if they had withheld the most valuable gift they had to offer from the misguided people whose lot it was their task to improve. Others were perhaps influenced by considerations of political expediency, for Christianity was expected to supply that bond of union between the ruler and the ruled which had hitherto been lacking. In any case, the Bible was introduced not only in Missionary institutions but in some of the Government schools as well. Henry Carre Tucker, an evangelist himself, was an advocate of this step and cited the example of Cawnpore free school and "Jye Nurain's school at Benares, which are mainly supported by Government, and yet carried on by clergymen, on a strictly Christian basis."[13] Sir Syed Ahmed did not object so much to the teaching of the Bible as to the manner in which it was taught. In some mission schools, he complained, such questions were asked as 'Who is your God? Who is your redeemer?', and the answer expected presupposed the student's subscription to Christian doctrines. He further asserted that many covenanted officers and military men were in the habit of talking to their subordinates about religion.

The missionary activities were not, however, confined to educational institutions. Rev. Gopinath Nandi, a Bengali clergyman who worked at Fatehpur when R. T. Tucker was the district judge there, says, "The prisoners in the jail were also daily instructed in Christianity and general knowledge by a Christian teacher, and every Sabbath morning the Gospel was preached by me. This privilege was granted by our pious magistrate. . . The judge and the magistrate, as well as other gentlemen, took

[12] They even had conscientious objection to some of their official duties. A Kazi used to be appointed for, among other purposes, celebrating marriages and performing religious duties and ceremonies prescribed by Mahomedan Law. The Judge of the District was required to recommend a qualified man in case of a vacancy. Robertson, Judge of Bareilly, had conscientious scruples about this particular duty and made them known to the Government. *A letter from a Layman in India on the Policy of the East India Company in Matters of Religion,* pp 6-7. Robertson was murdered when the Mutiny broke out in Bareilly.

[13] Tucker, *A letter to an official concerned in the Education of India,* p 4. The Benares school was founded by Jaya Narayan Ghosal, a Bengalee Hindu. Major Mercer says that the Evangelist party wanted "to Christianise India all at once" through educational institutions. "The natives have now good reason for supposing this to be done when the Government school is suppressed or stifled by some Evangelical official, or English is not taught there ; all this being done to fill the Missionary school so that the priest may have some opportunity of hooking some stray fish." *A Letter to the Earl of Ellenborough,* p 5

a deep interest in the mission, and helped us with their prayers, good advice, and pecuniary aid. When the number of native converts began to increase, six of them, at the suggestion of the late Honourable Mr Colvin, became small farmers".[14] So the magistrate and the judge of Fatehpur allowed proselytisation of prisoners, and the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces interested himself in the welfare of the new converts. Naturally the common man ran away with the idea that the Government were intent on making Christians of their subjects.

This suspicion received further confirmation in a new regulation which introduced common messing in the jails (1845). It is a common practice today in an Indian prison to employ some prisoners to cook for the rest. In the old days the caste rules were scrupulously observed even by the convicts and each of them was permitted to prepare his own food. The system had obvious disadvantages and the new rule laid down that a Brahman cook should thenceforth be employed for all the Hindus detained in a particular prison. It naturally hurt the susceptibilities of the high caste Hindu, for there were different sections among the Brahmans and they could not interdine with each other without loss of caste.[15] The new system was misinterpreted as a subtle means of conversion and the fear was not confined to the civil population only. It was widely rumoured that common messing would be extended to the army as well. The Patna Conspiracy of 1845-46 was the result. The new regulation was none the less introduced into some prisons. It must have gravely offended public opinion, for Khan Bahadur Khan accused the English "of compelling prisoners with the forcible exercise of their authority to eat their bread" with a view to converting them.

Gopinath Nandi further tells us that when all Patwaris or village accountants were required to learn Hindi in the Nagari script, they were sent to the Missionary school despite the objection of the Muslim Deputy Collector, Hikmatullah Khan. Their instruction was not limited to the language or the script. As Gopinath adds, "I am happy to say, upwards of three hundred grown-up men not only read the Gospel and attended

[14] Sherring, *The Indian Church during the Great rebellion,* pp 184-85

[15] Hedayet Ali says, "When any Hindoo is released from prison, he is always tabooed by his family, and looked upon as having lost caste." He informs us further that the prison regulations were offensive to the Muslims as well. "When any one is sentenced to imprisonment, immediately on his reaching the prison his beard and moustache are cut ; this to us is a great insult." Gubbins, *op. cit.,* Appendix 12, p 556. A Native of Northern India says, "the common messing of the prisoners was enforced in spite of the riots in Benares"

prayers, but each of them was furnished with a copy of the New Testament to carry home."[16] With the 'Missionary Colonels and Padre Lieutenants' preaching Christianity to the sepoys under their command, with the magistrate and the judge permitting native clergymen (renegades in the eyes of their countrymen) to pay daily visits to the prisoners and to instruct them in the Gospel, with grown-up Patwaris returning home with the Christian Holy book, was it unnatural that unfair motives should be attributed to the Government by the common people? Even the better informed section of the Indian public found it difficult to make a distinction between the administrator and the administration. Sir Syed Ahmed tells us that Deputy Inspectors of Schools were popularly known as native clergymen.

It is against this background that we must view Act XXI of 1850 which enabled converts to inherit their ancestral property. In principle there could be no objection to this law, for no man should suffer for his honest conviction so long as he does nothing contrary to the laws of the land. Both the Hindu and the Muslim, however, regarded it as a concession to the Christian convert. Hinduism is a non-proselytising religion and derived no benefit from the new Act; to the Muslim convert it offered no advantage either, for his religion forbade him to inherit the property of an infidel. The law was, therefore, regarded as a blow against both the communities. To the Hindu the Act was particularly offensive, as an apostate was thereby invested with a right without the inherent obligations. It enabled him to inherit the ancestral acres without rendering to the deceased fathers the religious services required of him. The Hindu, therefore, felt that the law inflicted on him a double loss, the loss of a son in this life and the loss of his religious services hereafter. To the Muslim it appeared as an incentive to apostasy, for his community was not immune from the missionary peril. No less than ten of Gopinath's twenty-four converts were Muslims by birth.

In this atmosphere even charitable institutions and works of public utility acquired a sinister character. In the building of roads and highways a temple or two might occasionally be knocked down, but the benevolent object of improving communication was lost sight of, and the ignorant rustics regarded the public roads as a clever contrivance to do away with their sacred buildings. The hospitals also adversely affected public opinion in a similar manner. There the time-honoured custom of *purda* was violated, as we learn from Hedayet Ali, and no distinction was

[16] Sherring, *op. cit.*, p 186

made in respect of caste in the accommodation of patients.[17] Helpless children during famines were taken to the orphanage and there brought up as Christians.

In 1852 war was declared against Burma for a second time and the services of the sepoys were once again needed beyond the seas. Lord Dalhousie, however, did not force the Bengal sepoys to cross the dark waters against their will but invited them to volunteer their services. Despite the lesson taught by Paget, the 38th Native Infantry refused to go. Lord Dalhousie wisely refrained from any harsh measures for he could not legally accuse the regiment of recusancy, and a strong man alone could risk the imputation of weakness for the sake of justice. But the memory of the Afghan War was still fresh and the sepoy suspected that the Government had not yet given up their design of tampering with his religion.

In 1855 came a warning which should have put the Government on their guard. A murderous assault on Colonel Colin Mackenzie was made at Bolarum near Hyderabad by some Muslim horsemen, because they thought that he had prohibited the Muharram procession. Under a misapprehension Brigadier Mackenzie had issued a cantonment order on the 20th September that "no procession, music, or noise, would be allowed on any account whatever from twelve o'clock on Saturday night the 22nd, to twelve o'clock on Sunday night the 23rd of September. On the 31st a subsidiary order was issued modifying this declaration; it having been ascertained that Sunday, the 23rd, was a day of the Festival on which processions were indispensable to its due celebration." The Governor-General-in-Council observed that the orders "were unusually stringent". "The first order was not only unusual, but objectionable in that it put forward the Mohurram in direct conflict with the Christian Sabbath, and so introduced a religious element into the prohibition."[18] The order was withdrawn on the day following, but the mischief had already been done. The new order had not got sufficient publicity and processions had been prohibited in the principal thoroughfares.

[17] "In 1849 or 1850 the authorities at Shaharunpore caused a large hospital to be built for the sick of all creeds and persuasions. The principal authorities (I purposely abstain from giving names, although I could do so) issued a proclamation, saying that all sick men or women, high or low, 'purdah nisheen' (those who never go out in public), or others, must resort to this hospital for treatment, and all native practitioners were forbidden to prescribe or attend sick people . . . . people imagined in their ignorance that it was the intention of the British to take away the dignity and honour of all." Hedayet Ali, Gubbins, *op. cit.*, Appendix 12, pp 555-56

[18] General order, dated Fort William, January 23, 1856 quoted in *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, pp 47-48. *The Thoughts of a Native of Northern India on the Rebellion*, p 17

The cavalry men in their indignation not only took the procession out on Sunday, which the revised order permitted, but proceeded along the forbidden route that ran by the Brigadier's bungalow. He was then sitting on his lawn with a few officers and ladies; and annoyed by the noise, for such processions are accompanied by noisy music and loud lamentations, Colonel Mackenzie personally confronted the processionists, and ordered them to disperse. Some of the processionists insolently asserted that the road was theirs and the Colonel in his wrath snatched away two of their flags. The angry men dispersed but shortly afterwards a murderous attack was made not only on him but upon some ladies and gentlemen taking their evening drive. The horsemen later told Colonel Carpenter that "they were the servants of the State, and would lay down their lives for the Government, but that their religion was dearer to them than their lives; that it had been insulted, and that they never would take off their kummerbands (i.e. lay down their arms) until they had brought the Brigadier and the Brigade Major to a court".[19] A Court of Enquiry was later appointed which did not go into the conduct of the Brigadier but Lord Dalhousie was of opinion that the Brigadier had acted indiscreetly. The native commissioned officers of the 3rd Cavalry were with two exceptions dismissed and two Hindu officers of the Brigadier's guard were similarly punished for their failure to resist the mutineers.

The incident illustrates the casual manner in which orders affecting the religion of the sepoys were sometimes promulgated On the 20th the Brigade Major was unaware that 23rd was the most important day of the festival and the Brigadier did not realise that to snatch away the flags from the processionists was to offer a gross insult to their religious belief. It did not matter whether the Muharram was originally a Shia festival and whether the Shias formed a numerical minority in the army, for in India the Sunnis and, in some places, the Hindus as well participated in it in large numbers. The British officers had obviously failed to keep in close touch with their men, otherwise they would have known how high feelings ran among them due to suspicions caused by successive administrative and legislative measures of the last fifty years. Apparently nothing had been done to allay their fear and to remove their suspicion or to conciliate and educate public opinion.

In the very year of the Bolarum incident fresh fuel was unwittingly added to the smouldering fire. While people looked with

[19] *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum,* p 25

suspicion upon any work of public utility, the railway and the telegraph among others, as a subtle means of subverting the social order, their apprehension unfortunately found confirmation in a circular letter issued by Mr Edmond from Calcutta in 1855. In the railway train no caste distinction was made in the seating arrangements and the high caste Brahman had to sit in the contaminating proximity of the low caste untouchable. During the journey he had either to fast or to break the customs that governed his daily meals and to omit the rituals attending them; and this constituted a serious lapse requiring a ceremonial penance which sometimes taxed his purse. It was believed that this was the prelude to the casteless society of the accursed *Kali* age which the *mleccha* rulers were predicted to sponsor. Mr Edmond proclaimed in his letter that as the different parts of the country had been brought nearer by rapid means of communication and the structure of society was being gradually modified under the influence of western education, it was time for the entire people to profess a common faith and attain salvation.[20] This was perhaps the height of missionary indiscretion and it was commonly believed that the circular had been issued by the Government particularly as it had been posted to all officers of the state. The Lieutenant-Governor had to disavow in a public proclamation any intention on the part of the Government to interfere with the religious rites and practices of the people. He made it clear that the Government did not share the views of Mr Edmond, but suspicion still lingered in the public mind, for ignorance identified every Englishman with the Government. But the very next year witnessed two legislative measures which considerably disturbed the orthodox mind.

After an eventful term of Governor-Generalship, Lord Dalhousie left India in 1856 and was succeeded by Lord Canning. Not much was known about the new Governor-General, and the great qualities of head and heart that later enabled him to save India for England, and to win the gratitude of the Indian people,

[20] The letter begins as follows: "The time appears to have come when earnest consideration should be given to the subject, whether or not all men should embrace the same system of Religion. Railways, Steam Vessels and the Electric Telegraph, are rapidly uniting all the nations of the earth: the more they are brought together, the more certain does the conclusion become, that all have the same wants, the same anxieties, the same hopes, the same fears, and therefore, the same nature and the same origin. It is also very certain that death universally closes the scene. . . . . Is it rational to suppose that each nation is to find out a way for itself, by mere guess? or has the one God, who made all, appointed different methods of obtaining present and future happiness to different portions of His family? Surely, this cannot be." Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, translated by his two European friends. Appendix I, P 55

were not yet in evidence. The first two measures of his Government made him unpopular with the masses and gave some semblance of truth to the unfounded and unjust rumour that he had been sent on the special mission of converting the Hindus and Muslims of India to Christianity. Lord Dalhousie had drafted the Hindu Widows Re-marriage Act before relinquishing office but it came into force with Lord Canning's approval in the first year of his regime. It might have been dismissed as a natural sequel of the abolition of Sati. The reform had been advocated by a great Bengalee Hindu scholar, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and his plea was based on old scriptures. It could reasonably be argued that the Act was not likely to offend orthodox opinion as it was only permissive and caused no hardship to those who preferred the old ways. It only brought relief to a few widows who might be inclined to remarry and start a new life but were debarred from doing so by the prevalent custom. It should be noted that in many parts of India non-Brahman widows could and did contract fresh marriages and were not doomed to lifelong celibacy. But the reformers had little influence with the common people who regarded the slightest deviation from the current social practices with unconcealed disfavour. As a matter of fact very few widows have taken advantage of this permissive law but people were carried away by vague fears about the future. The intention of the Christian Government was already suspected and the orthodox masses readily interpreted the Act as unwarranted interference with their social and religious practices. The strong feelings the new law aroused found expression in numerous satires, and the Sanskrit texts cited by its advocates were dismissed with ridicule. But satires and ridicule did not exhaust popular passion. The matter was too serious to be laughed away. Religion in danger was the common cry in the countryside and in the sepoy lines.

In July of the same year an order was passed that hit hard the martial classes that had so long furnished recruits to the Bengal Army. On two occasions the high caste Bengal sepoy had refused to cross the sea. The Madras Army had given no such trouble, because the terms of recruitment there did not preclude overseas services, though there was no lack of Brahman sepoys there. Six regiments of the Bengal Army had been recruited on similar terms. They had no objection to garrison duties in Burma and it was unintelligible why the same rule should not apply to all future recruits. It was not intended to interfere with the existing rights. Lord Dalhousie's Government had scrupulously respected the contract and no Paget came to bespatter the

Brahmans and Rajputs of the 38th Native Infantry with grapes when they refused to sail for Burma. The Government sometimes found it difficult to relieve the regiments stationed in Burma, and Canning felt that the only solution to this difficulty would be to refuse the new recruits any option in this respect. He did not apprehend that the revised rule would cause any offence to the religious feelings of the sepoy, for it was left entirely to the intending recruit whether he would enlist on those terms or not. But having once enlisted he would not be permitted to offer any objection to going overseas or marching to Afghanistan. But the sepoy viewed the General Order with unfeigned alarm. Though he himself was not immediately affected, he felt that the avenue to military service would be indirectly closed to his son. He would have no other alternative but to forego his paternal profession or to be false to the faith of his fathers. It seemed to him that the Sarkar was determined to refuse honourable employment to all but the renegades and in future apostasy would be the price of his daily bread. If he had been spared, his son and grandson would have to eat the bread of sin and would thus be lost to him in this life and hereafter. Applications from high caste young men for enlistment in the army were fewer than before; the service had ceased to be popular with them. Fifty years of ill-timed and ill-judged legislation drove the people crazy and convinced them that there was no infamy of which the faithless Firinghi was incapable.

An officer, who had retired twenty-five years earlier and claimed to know the Bengal Army well, asserted that all mutinies were caused by some injustice or breach of faith on the part of the Government. "Almost all the mutinies of India, whether in Bengal or elsewhere, have been more or less produced, or at least have had in some sort the initiative, from ourselves. There has usually been some departure from contract, some disregard of the feelings, health or convenience of the native soldiers, when at the same moment the utmost care was lavished on a European regiment; some unwise tampering with their religious views or prejudices; some interference with their pay or rights, or what they supposed to be their rights."[21] As a pertinent instance, he cited the mutiny in Java. Men volunteered to go overseas on a positive promise that they would be recalled after a specified period. The authorities failed to keep their promise and troubles followed. He might have added other instances, (the Vellore mutiny) where religious prejudices were disregarded, (the

[21] *The Mutiny in the Bengal Army*, p 4

Barrackpur mutiny) and the convenience of the sepoy was ignored and promises made by subordinate authorities were overlooked or repudiated. The sepoy considered himself cheated of his rightful dues when unauthorised assurances were ignored; and as he failed to make a distinction between the Supreme Government and their subordinate officers, he lost faith in the bona fides of both. This had the most harmful effect on his morale.

The troubles of 1843 and 1844 in which both the Bengal and Madras Armies were involved were due to breach of promises, actual or implied, and led to irreparable loss of prestige on the part of the Government. The sepoy did not like foreign service and was very parochial in his outlook. He expected financial compensation for the hardships likely to be encountered in an unfamiliar region. To him India was not one country and fighting or garrison duty in Sind or the Punjab was equivalent to foreign service. During the first Afghan War General Pollock had paid his troops a special *batta* when they crossed the Indus. This was treated as a precedent and the sepoy expected similar inducements when he was called upon to undergo the hardship of trans-Indus employment. But in 1843 Sind had been annexed and become an integral part of the British Indian empire. The sepoy could not, therefore, legally claim any special compensation for serving in an Indian province however distant it might be from his usual station. This was a piece of legal casuistry he could not understand. The Indus was still there, life in Sind was as hard as it had been in 1842, and if his claim was legitimate in 1842 how could it lose its validity in 1844? The 34th Bengal Regiment refused to march to Sind unless the Indus *batta* was paid. The 7th Bengal Cavalry followed suit but their obduracy could not be immediately punished. It was rumoured that the European troops sympathised with the sepoy as he was demanding no more than his rights. The mutineers, therefore, were left alone for the time being. Then the 69th and the 4th Regiments followed the example of the 34th and refused to cross the Indus unless the special allowance was guaranteed to them. The 64th made the same demand and the Commander-in-Chief found it necessary to grant it. "In addition to the full or marching batta always allowed to regiments serving in Scinde, still higher advantages in regard to pay, together with the benefits of the regulated family pension to the heirs of those who may die from disease contracted on service" were to be conceded in recognition of their good conduct. But Moseley, their commanding officer, gave them to understand that they might expect Pollock's *batta*. The regiment had technically forfeited the Commander-in-

Chief's favour as they had been guilty of mutinous conduct on the way even before the concession could be formally announced. Moseley, however, omitted to report this outbreak to the headquarters and persuaded the regiment to march into Sind by reiterating the previous promise. When they reached Shikarpur the sepoys to a man refused to accept their pay when they found that the stipulated allowance was not forthcoming. They complained of deliberate deception and the whole affair had undoubtedly an unsavoury look. But the situation was manfully handled by George Hunter, who persuaded the disaffected men to accept their legitimate pay with the usual *batta,* marched them to Sukkur where the presence of European troops helped to cool their temper and pardoned all but the worst offenders apparently without any loss of prestige. But the damage done was irreparable. The sepoy found that he could trust his officers no more. No wonder that when the crisis came in 1857 the assurances of commanding officers had little or no weight with him.

The case of the Madras Army was worse, if possible. While the family of the Bengal sepoy was left in his native village, the wife and children of the Madras man marched and lived with him. Transfer to distant stations was, therefore, a hardship to him in more than one sense. The 6th Madras Cavalry was in 1843 ordered from Kampti to Jabbalpur which was outside Madras. They were given to understand that their stay there would be but short and they would be allowed to return to their Presidency before long. To their utter amazement the troopers learnt that not only were they to be permanently stationed at Jabbalpur whence they would be transferred to Arkot nine hundred miles away but, worse still, they were to serve on a lower allowance. Naturally their discontent manifested itself in open complaints and unfair motives were attributed to their unpopular commander, Major Litchfield. They ultimately returned to duty and nothing more serious than a violent demonstration of their dislike for their commander took place. The Jabbalpur disturbance offered another instance of breach of promise on the part of the authorities.

Unfortunately the discontent was not limited to the cavalry alone. The infantry also had been given cause for legitimate grievance. Sind had to be garrisoned and when regiment after regiment of the Bengal Army refused to serve there without a special allowance, the Government of Madras offered to send two infantry regiments to that province. The Governor of Madras, who held also the office of the Commander-in-Chief of that Presidency, guaranteed to the selected regiments the same ad-

vantages to which they would have been entitled if they had gone to Burma. It was under this assurance that the Madras sepoys had made necessary provision for their families whom they left behind and arrived at Bombay with little funds for their own expenses. While far from home they learnt to their dismay that the Government of India were not prepared to make good the promise made by the Governor of Madras, for it was contrary to the Bengal regulations. "It was not strange", observes Kaye, "that they should have regarded this as a cruel breach of faith; and that they should have resented it."[22] They clamoured for food in a disorderly manner, and order was not restored until some money was advanced which they received with a certain amount of truculence. Here the matter ended but it did no credit to the Governor-General who refused to honour the promise of a Governor and thus put the entire Government in the wrong. The sepoy was not competent to apportion the blame. He only found that a promise made by the Government he served was not to be relied on. Lord Ellenborough also contributed in his own way to the Revolt of 1857.

The same thing happened once again in 1849 when Dalhousie was at the helm of affairs. Some regiments at Rawalpindi demanded additional allowance without which they refused to accept their pay. Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief, would not yield to force and made adequate arrangements for suppression of mutiny, should it break out. Not content with precautionary measures alone, he went out on a tour of inspection and discovered sufficient evidence of widespread disaffection. In December, the 66th Regiment mutinied at Govindgarh but the native cavalry suppressed the outbreak. Napier felt that the sepoy had a just grievance and it was unfair to ask him to serve in the newly annexed province without compensating him for the inconvenience it entailed and, pending the sanction of the Governor-General, ordered payment of dearness allowance at a higher rate according to an old regulation. Dalhousie did not approve of Napier's action and reprimanded him for transcending his authority. Napier resented this humiliation and resigned. It is unnecessary to examine the validity of Napier's action. The Commander-in-Chief honestly believed that a mutiny on a wide scale was imminent and he exceeded the limits of his legal authority to meet an emergency in anticipation of the Governor-General's approval. It is not difficult to imagine the reaction on the sepoy. He was asking for financial relief to which he was

[22] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, p 295

accustomed before the annexation of the Punjab. Some of his comrades tried to force their demands at the point of the sword. The rising was suppressed not by a European regiment but by the loyal 1st Native Cavalry. The Commander-in-Chief, convinced of the injustice done to the loyal sepoys, granted some relief, but as soon as the crisis was over the concession was vetoed. He did not understand that the Commander-in-Chief had gone beyond his powers and that the Governor-General was not bound to validate an unauthorised act. He felt that he had been cheated of his legitimate dues, the Government had reluctantly yielded to force and had reversed their decision as soon as they felt that there was no further apprehension of mutiny.

The sepoy had many grievances apart from religious fears. The only bond between him and the Government was his pay and pension, and his pay and prospects were far from attractive. In the infantry it was seven rupees per month, in the cavalry a sowar drew twenty-seven rupees per mensem but he had to find his own mount. This compared unfavourably with the emoluments of his white comrade-in-arms. Holmes observes, "Though he might give signs of the military genius of a Hyder, he knew that he could never attain the pay of an English subaltern." A retired officer noted, "The entire army of India amounts to 315,520 men costing £9,802,235. Out of this sum no less than £5,668,110 are expended on 51,316 European officers and soldiers."[23] Moreover, "The European corps take no share in the rough ordinary duties of the service. . . They are lodged, fed, and paid in a manner unknown to other soldiers".[24] This contrast could not but adversely affect the sepoy's morale.

It has been contended that though his pay was small the sepoy was financially well off because his needs were few and his standard of living was low. But the first few months' pay had to be spent in illegal gratifications. Sitaram says that the drill Havildar and the European Sergeant of his company took a dislike to him because he had not paid the usual fee. "This fee was Rs. 16/-, some five or six of which went to the European sergeant of the company the recruit was posted to."[25] He adds that "seven rupees a month will not support either Punjabee, Sikh or Mussulman". But this remark applied to the post-mutiny period when prices had gone up. In the easier days before the Mutiny the sepoy did not fare better. We learn from a Bengalee clerk attach-

[23] *The Mutiny in the Bengal Army*, p 25
[24] *Idem*, p 6
[25] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 14

ed to the cavalry regiment at Bareilly in 1857 that the sepoy had to pay for his uniform and he bought his daily ration on credit from the bania in the regimental bazar. On the pay day his account was settled and after the deduction for his ration etc., the balance was paid to him. Some sepoys got at the end of the month no more than a rupee or a rupee and a half, in other cases the monthly saving did not exceed a few annas.[26] His daily meal consisted of dal and roti, and with his limited credit he could not indulge in any luxuries except an occasional dish of Taro. His life was hard indeed, for the maximum pay that he could expect did not exceed nine rupees unless he was promoted, and promotion went by seniority and not by merit. The sowar was not much better off than the sepoy, for the former's pay varied from twenty-one to thirty rupees and many more deductions were made therefrom.

The scale of salary was not without its effect on the sepoy's psychology. He observed that the better paid European troops formed but a small proportion of the army and he realised that the military expenses could be considerably reduced if his services were available in countries overseas. He therefore readily accepted the current stories of British design against his religion. In a letter dated May 9, 1857, Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to Lord Canning, "Last night I held a conversation with a Jemadar of the Oude artillery . . . and was startled by the dogged persistence of the man . . . in the belief that for ten years past Government has been engaged in measures for the forcible, or rather fraudulent, conversion of all the natives. . . . When I told him of our power in Europe, . . . he replied he knew we had plenty of men and money, but that Europeans were expensive, and that therefore we wished to take Hindoos to sea to conquer the world for us . . . 'You want us all to eat what you like that we may be stronger and go anywhere'. He gave us credit for nothing. He often repeated, 'I tell you what everybody says'." The Jamadar was a person of good character, adds Lawrence.[27]

There was no fellow-feeling between the white minority and the dark majority in the army and the good understanding that had prevailed in the early days of the Company gradually became a thing of the past. Sitaram tells us, "I always was good friends with the English soldiery, and they formerly used to treat the sepoy with great kindness. Did we not do all their hard work? We took all their guards in the heat; we stood sentry over

[26] Bandyopadhyaya, *Bidrohe Bangali*, pp 65-67
[27] Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, Vol. II, pp 322-23

their rum casks; we gave them of our own food. Well, these soldiers are a different caste now—neither so fine nor so tall as they were: they seldom can speak one word of our language, except abuse; . . . The 17th foot called us *bahies* (brothers); the 16th lancers never walked near our *chulas* (cooking places), nor spat on our food; and we were together for years."[28] Very likely every sepoy did not make friends with Tommy Atkins, as Sitaram did, but when a white soldier was rude, his bad manners were liable to be attributed to racial arrogance; and Sitaram complained that even in the old days the sepoy did not get fair play at the hands of the Adjutant when a European sergeant happened to be the person offending. "At this time [1812] there was a European sergeant with each company of sepoys: some of these knew our language pretty well, and generally were very kind to us, but many of them could not express themselves, or make the men understand their meaning, and these sort of men had recourse to low abuse, and were in the habit of striking the sepoys, and cuffing them about. Numerous complaints were made to the Adjutant, but he nearly always took the part of the sergeant against the sepoy, and very little or no redress at all was obtained."[29]

The commissioned officers did not behave better. Says an anonymous resident of North-West India, obviously an Englishman, "The officers and men have not been friends but strangers to one another." "The sepoy is esteemed an inferior creature. He is sworn at. He is treated roughly. He is spoken of as a 'nigger'. He is addressed as a 'suar' or pig, an epithet most opprobrious to a respectable native, especially the Mussalman, and which cuts him to the quick. The old men are less guilty as they sober down. But the younger men seem to regard it as an excellent joke, and as an evidence of spirit and as a praiseworthy sense of superiority over the sepoy to treat him as an inferior animal."[30] Another pamphleteer asserts, "A great cause of complaint is the foul language which their officers use. I have heard the vilest language used on a parade ground, by a commanding officer, while exercising his troop. High caste Brahmins and Mahomedans, such as we have in our regiments, writhe under abuse from a European." To anonymous testimony which loses

[28] *From Sepoy to Subadar,* p 17
[29] *Idem,* p 14
[30] *The Rebellion in India,* by a Resident in the North-Western Provinces of India, p 34. Capt. Medley goes further: "Subalterns, fresh from school, often called natives 'niggers', and addressed the *argumentum ad hominem* rather oftener than was, perhaps, needful: these things were never denied." Medley, *A Year's Campaigning in India from March 1857 to March 1858,* p 197

some of its force from the uncertainty of the author's identity we may add that of Lieutenant-Colonel William Hunter of the Bengal Army who refers to sepoy discontent arising from the permanent position of inferiority to which Indian officers had been relegated,—a discontent augmented by the discourtesy he experienced at the hands of European non-commissioned officers. He states that the existing system "always keeps them in the background, and subjects them to the authority, not only of the youngest and the most inexperienced European subaltern in the regiment, but, what appears a strange anomaly, also to the authority, and not unfrequently to the vulgar and unmerited rebukes of the European non-commissioned officers."[31] This necessarily caused jealousy and no wonder General John Jacob noticed a lamentable absence of proper confidence between officers and native troops.

A foreign government cannot afford to base its authority on brute-force alone, it has to be reinforced by the goodwill of the governed. Discipline in the army was bound to suffer if the sepoy lost his respect for his officer. In the early days the officers were the best friends of their men and took a personal interest in their welfare. The sepoy was free to call on them and seek their advice when he needed it. "When I was a sepoy," says Sitaram, "the Captain of my company would have some of his men at his house all day, and talked to them." "In those days the Sahebs often gave nautches to the regiment, and attended all games; they had the men out with them while hunting". If the sepoy noticed the eccentricities of his officers, he also learnt to appreciate their good qualities, but Sitaram lived to witness great changes in the 'Saheb *log*' and so did Hedayet Ali. The latter observes, "When any sepoy goes to see or speak to them at their Bungalows they get much displeased." Sitaram attributed this indifference to the influence of the Padres who "have done, and still are doing, many things to estrange the Saheb from the sepoy".[32] Hedayet Ali had no explanation to offer for this unwholesome change but counts it as one of the causes that led to the Mutiny.

But close intimacy between the officer and his men did not always contribute to the improvement of discipline. An indiscreet officer might easily lower the Government in the estimation of the sepoy by ventilating his own grievances in the presence of his men. Lord William Bentinck's economy measures had caused great discontent among the European officers and they openly

[31] *Suggestions relative to the Re-organization, Discipline, and Future Management of the Bengal Army*, p 2
[32] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 16

talked of mutiny and this was no secret to the ordinary troops, Indian and European. Sitaram's account throws considerable light on the sepoy reaction: "There now came a new Lad Saheb to India, who was much disliked by all the officers. He wished to reduce their pay; and the Sahebs nearly mutinied. They had many meetings at their own houses, and were very disturbed in mind; many of them declared they would serve the Sirkar no longer. This Lad Saheb was sent by the Company Bahadoor to save money, as, from the great expense of the wars, they said they were very poor: but who can believe this was the reason?—what want of money had ever the Sirkar Company? I heard that the officers of one regiment asked the officers of another whether their men would stand by them if they marched to Calcutta to force the Lad Saheb to give them their *huck* (rights). I also was told that the European soldiers said they would not act against the officers of the Native army, as long as their object was the *batta* alone. At this time every Saheb was enraged, and spoke much against the Sirkar; but more blame was given to the new Lad Saheb, who, they said, was doing this injustice without orders, and only because he wished to make *khooshamut* (favour) with the Company."[33] The sepoys were actuated by similar feelings in 1843, 1844, and 1849 when they stood up for their rights and contemplated the use of force against their employers for the realisation of extra allowance. If mutiny by white officers was morally justified and if they found nothing wrong in seeking the support of their men in their fight for pay, could not the sepoy argue that he had greater justification when he rose in defence of a better cause—his religion?

Sometimes the improvidence of the junior officers of the Bengal Army led to direct violation of military rules and open breach of discipline. John Jacob noticed a lamentable lack of the high moral tone and the traditional Anglo-Saxon honesty among the officers. A junior officer used to maintain a huge staff of menials. "He must not go out in the sunshine, he must travel in a palki instead of on horseback, he must be punkaed, and tattied, and God knows what else; he must have a *khansamaun*, a *kidmutgar*, a sirdar bearer and bearers, and a host of other servants, one for his pipe, another for his umbrella, another for his bottle, another for his chair, etc., all to do the work of one man".[34] Even "a private in India cannot draw his own water, nor cook his own victuals, nor could he, till lately, clean his own

[33] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, pp 51-52
[34] *A Few Remarks on the Bengal Army*, p 7

boots, nor shave his chin".[35] An officer expected the barber to shave early in the morning while still in bed half awake and half asleep. A life of such luxury, comfort and ease meant lavish expenditure and even if he had refrained from cards and other forms of gambling, so common in the mess house, the subaltern would find it impossible to pay his way out with his legitimate income. He, therefore, found himself in a state of chronic indebtedness and could not always afford to be discreet in the choice of his creditor. The Bengalee clerk of Bareilly, whom I have quoted earlier, used to lend money not only to the sepoy and the sowar but to the European officers as well at a high rate of interest. In India the debtor is commonly regarded as an object of contempt and even if the officer did not lose prestige with his men he could not but treat his creditor with a certain amount of leniency. The clerk did not lend out of the army chest, but if Sitaram is to be believed, it was a common practice for the Pay Havildar to lend out of the funds entrusted to him and his officers winked at his lapse for they did not hesitate to draw on him in times of need. "Pay Havildars used to lend the Sahebs money; and as all the officers' pay went through their hands, there was little fear of losing it, unless when a Saheb died, in which case we dare not bring it forward as a claim. The practice was forbidden, but I seldom heard of anyone being punished for doing it. The officers' pay, although large, seldom sufficed for their wants, and there were only two officers in my regiment who were not in debt; many owed large sums. They spent a great part of their pay in giving feasts; some gambled; others lost large sums on the race-course—a sport they are passionately fond of. All the Sahebs who were married were always in debt".[36] Sitaram as a Pay Havildar had made about five hundred rupees by investing the savings of the sepoys entrusted to his care. The Captain of his Company had lost everything by an accident and had no money at the moment. Sitaram was persuaded to lend him five hundred rupees, but as part of his own saving had already been invested, he had to misappropriate some of the money the sepoys left with him. He could not meet their demand when it was made, as the Captain was unable to make good the deficit and Sitaram was reported to his Colonel and in due course court-martialled. He does not blame the Captain for his misfortune but his comments on the native officers who found him guilty are illuminating. "I was found guilty by a number of Native officers of my own regi-

[35] Jones, *Recollections of a Winter Campaign in India*, p 122
[36] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 53

ment, not one of whom really thought what I had done to be in any way wrong, and every one of them would have acted in the same manner had they been in my situation; yet, because they imagined it was the Colonel's desire I should be punished, they found me guilty. The European officers also knew quite well; but it was the custom of the service."[37] The custom was not conducive to discipline.

The European officer's harem might have served as a friendly link between him and his men in the early days but it tended to be in course of time a source of corruption. "Most of our officers had Hindustanee women living with them, and these had great influence in the regiment; and they always pretended to have more than they really had, in order that they might be bribed to ask the Sahebs for indulgences for the sepoy. The sepoys themselves were sometimes instrumental in inducing the officers to take into their service some of their female relations, but these were men of low caste, or else Mahomedans."[38]

It has been alleged that discipline had suffered from the abolition of flogging. Military discipline rests upon something nobler, something subtler, something indefinable in the leaders that appeals to the finer sense of the men. It cannot be enforced by infliction of physical sufferings alone or the humiliation it connotes. Experienced native officers attributed the growing indiscipline in the Bengal Army to mild treatment, and Hedayet Ali advocated more severe punishment. But discipline is inspired by example and not by precept. Where the officers and men belong to different races, profess different religions, come from different countries and speak different languages, moral qualities rather than severe penalties command the personal regard which is the best guarantee of discipline. In the Bengal Army the men were alienated by the bad manners of their junior officers, they became accustomed to the seditious talks of their disgruntled commanders, and repeated instances of breach of faith or, what appeared to be so, led to the loss of that moral hold which a good leader ordinarily has over his men. When a foreign power dominates over a country with the help of an indigenous mercenary army, mutiny and rebellion are bound to follow sooner or later.

[37] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 54

[38] *Idem*, p 15. Hedayet Ali, however, held different views on the subject. He says, "In former times the officers used to keep native women, and constantly had the native officers and sepoys in their society, and did more to please them. These women exercised a good deal of influence in the regiment. This was all in accordance with the feelings of the sepoys. By acting in this way the officers did good service to the Government, because they became better acquainted with the character of their men, and with what was going on in the lines." Gubbins, *op. cit.*, Appendix 12. p 563

It did not come earlier because the sepoy had been so long busy fighting his master's wars. It was not the cat but the professional pride inspired by some heaven-born generals that had sustained the sepoy in his loyalty so long. Bad manners, bad morals, and bad faith had gone a long way to undermine it.

The best officers were lost to the army when it needed them most. Political and civil appointments offered much better prospects and the more promising young men sought a career outside the army. Though individual regiments suffered in this manner the army as a whole was not completely denuded of talents, for many subalterns proved their worth during the critical years of 1857-59 and quite a few of them later rose to the rank of Field Marshal. The new rules also placed fresh officers in charge of regiments to which they were strangers and they had not sufficient weight with their men to influence their decision when the crisis came. If a man like Brasyer could keep the Sikhs at Allahabad steady, it may be argued that officers with similar ability and stamina could stem the tide of revolt at other places. The best civilians had also been transferred to the newly annexed province of the Punjab and only the second best were available for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

The native officers were not of much use except in normal times. Many of them remained true to their salt but they were, all of them, thanks to the system of promotion by seniority, men of advanced years and lacked the physical energy and vigour which was expected of them. Sitaram was sixty-five when he was promoted Subadar after forty-eight years of service. "I was an old man of sixty-five years of age, and had arrived at the highest rank to be gained in the native army: but for this position I was much better fitted thirty years before. What could I now do at the head of my Company? How could I double, or do *laight infantree* (light infantry)? But I was expected to be just as *chulak* (active) as ever; no allowance made for forty-eight years of service."[39] Sitaram speaks of his physical weakness but does not say anything about his mental alertness. He had at least some pretension to education but many of the Subadars could neither read nor write and there were cases where a native officer condemned by his own commander as mentally unfit had not been invalided by the Medical Board. By a policy of false economy sepoys and their Indian officers were not permitted to retire when they were past the years of their usefulness. So, with European officers reluctant to associate with their men and Indian officers,

[39] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 121

physically infirm and mentally inert, discipline in many regiments sadly deteriorated. Things were further complicated by the Kala Admi's habit of giving "an answer to a question, such as shall please the askers,—exactly the one he thinks he is wished to give". The commanding officer therefore remained absolutely in the dark as to the real feelings of his men, because the Subadar or the Jamadar would not freely speak out his mind but would frame his answer in a manner calculated to please his official superior.

If the sepoy was wavering between apathy and antipathy, the people in general were not better disposed towards the Government. Only a small educated minority in the Presidency towns welcomed the social legislation of the Government and the introduction of western education, but a native of Northern India ridiculed the Babus of Calcutta as thoroughly anglicised and "fit only to be employed as attorneys or teachers of Milton and Shakespeare".[40] Even this small minority were not unanimous in their support of the Government. An educated Hindu of Bengal complained of "a hundred years of unmitigated active tyranny unrelieved by any trait of generosity". "A century and more of intercourse between each other," he adds, "has not made the Hindu and the Englishman friends or even peaceful fellow subjects."[41] The social isolation of the ruling race generated contempt for the ruled, which contributed not a little to the general discontent that prevailed at the time of the Mutiny. Lieutenant Verney of the Shannon observes, "The English residents generally appear to me very prejudiced against the natives, and show this in their behaviour". "I think that a cause of the mutiny *may* be that in every British mind in India contempt for the natives is deeply rooted. When a kindness is done to a native by an Englishman, it is often accompanied by a contemptuous thought which appears only too clearly in the countenance; the terms in which I have heard even clergymen and others, who would desire to do good to the Hindoos, speak of them, convinces me that this is the case; it must be most trying to a people who consider us as outcasts."[42] We should not forget that a handful of foreigners, stationed in a distant country, ruling over a vast

[40] *The Thoughts of a Native of Northern India on the Rebellion,* p 29

[41] *Causes of the Indian Revolt* by a Hindu of Bengal. Edited by Malcolm Lewin, pp 18 & 21

[42] Verney, *The Shannon's Brigade in India,* pp 41-42. A military officer says that the greater part of the population did not come in contact with Englishmen and those who did, a great part encountered the Englishman in some unpleasant way, either as a magistrate or a tax gatherer. The very great majority never saw an Englishman and heard uncomplimentary stories about him. Prichard, *The Mutinies in Rajpootana,* p 278

multitude, must act as a compact unit and form themselves into a superior caste unless they are prepared to merge themselves and get lost in the indigenous masses. On the other hand they cannot win the good opinion of the governed if they always keep themselves in studied seclusion. It is extremely difficult to discover a *via media,* and when the rulers and the ruled belong to two different races it is not always possible to eradicate racial arrogance arising out of a sense of racial superiority. The Indian could not but bitterly feel any discourtesy that he received from the Englishman. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a loyal officer of the Company, says that in the first years of the British rule in India, the Government was highly popular and enjoyed the good feeling of the people. "This good feeling", he asserts, "the Government has now forfeited and the natives very generally say that they are treated with contempt. A native gentleman is in the eyes of any petty Official, as much lower than that Official as that same Official esteems himself lower than a Duke." "Is it not well-known to Government that even natives of the highest rank never come into the presence of officials, but with an inward fear and trembling?"[43] Sir Richard Temple, commenting on Sir Syed's complaint, discounts the idea that Indians of high rank were afraid of approaching English officials but admits that "much of our old personal popularity has departed" and "the estrangement between our officers and the people is more and more increasing".[44] Kissory Chand Mitra, who could legitimately claim to be a loyal citizen and an exponent of educated opinion at Calcutta, also thought the hauteur of the European officers and isolation from their native subordinates "created a gulf of severance between the two classes, and prevented them from entering into the feelings of each other".[45] There were certain instances of intimacy between English officials and the Indian gentry. Tayler of Patna, for instance, had a friend in Shah Kabiruddin, the yellow hammer, whose portrait he sketched, and Lockwood speaks warmly of one of his Bengalee clerks, Trailokyanath Lahiri. But every story of rudeness and discourtesy gained in circulation and individual lapses were attributed to the race as a whole. In any case the Englishman did much to alienate the Indians and Russell on his way to Benares found that "in no instance is a friendly glance directed to the white man's carriage". "Oh, that language of the eye!" he exclaims, "Who can doubt? who can misinterpret it? It is by it alone that I have

[43] Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt,* pp 41-43
[44] Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* translated by W. N. Lees, p 67
[45] *The Mutinies, the Government, and the People* by a Hindu, p 39

learned our race is not even feared at times by many, and that by all it is disliked."[46]

Not a little of the Indian discontent was caused by the systematic exclusion of the natives from official employment of a superior character.[47] The highest office to which an Indian could aspire was that of a Deputy Collector in the executive, and of Sadr Amin in the judicial branch of the administration. Yet there was no lack of talent among the Indians. Within living memory their fathers and grand fathers had governed provinces and commanded armies. It was most galling to find no alternative betweeen unemployment and minor offices of no consequence. Another grievance of the Indian aristocracy arose from the equality of all persons in the eye of law. British law made no distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the Raja and his tenant. Birjis Qadr, Wali of Lucknow, laid special emphasis on this point in one of his proclamations, "'All the Hindoos and Mahomedans are aware that four things are dear to every man. 1st Religion, 2nd Honor, 3rd Life, 4th Property. All these four things are safe under a native government." He goes on to elucidate how Hindus and Muslims of noble birth and high castes were treated with honour under the old regime and how "the English have become enemies of the four things above named". "The honor and respectability of every person of the higher orders are considered by them equal, to the honor and respectability of the lower orders, nay comparatively with the latter they treat the former with contempt and disrespect." The charge was not without foundation but it redounds to the credit rather than to the discredit of the English that he aimed at dealing equal justice to all irrespective of caste, creed, and rank. The principle however did not find favour with most Indians and even some Englishmen resented it. Russell speaks of a Briton who wanted to 'lick' his creditor for serving him with a writ. "The whole country's going to the d . . . l!" he said. "How can you expect gentlemen to come here to be insulted by those bazaar black-guards and those confounded summons servers?" The Lucknow proclamation reflects similar sentiments. The English, it complains, at the instance of a chamar, forced the attendance

[46] Russell, *My Diary in India*, Vol. I, p 146. Prichard, *op. cit.*, p 277 "The population of the country had no love for us. It would have been strange if they had. What did they owe to us? Nothing."

[47] One of the proximate causes of the Mutiny "some of which . . . . are inherent in the constitution of all military despotisms however beneficent, . . . . is the systematic exclusion of the natives from official employment of a superior character." *The Mutinies, the Government and the People*, p 36. Also, Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, p 35

of a Nawab or a Rajah and subjected him to indignity. The law was no respecter of persons and was, therefore, unpopular with those who had been so long above it, but it was not popular even with the poor peasant whose rights it was designed to protect; not because the law was bad but because the law-courts were corrupt. Prichard complains of "the corruption and venality of our law-courts"[48] and he was not alone in his criticism. Moreover, the complexity of the English legal procedure was beyond the intelligence of an ignorant cultivator. He could not employ a lawyer to represent his case. According to the old tradition the court was open to all and the poorest peasant could present his suit there without let or hindrance. Sitaram entered a Deputy Commissioner's office because he had been told that it was an open court of justice. He did not listen to the remonstrances of the chaprasis in attendance and had to pay a fine of ten rupees in consequence. He could not understand how he had offended the law by resorting to a law court.[49] The police and the petty officers were notoriously corrupt and their venal conduct also brought the law court to disrepute. The country people in their ignorance believed that the presiding officer shared in the illegal gratifications secured by their subordinates. Sitaram writes, "A Burra Saheb (a civilian) is very angry when he hears a petitioner gave a bribe; he asks him why he did it. He, perhaps, does not know that the man firmly believes that a part of the bribe went to the Saheb himself."[50] The courts of law, therefore, became in the hands of the rich and the crafty an instrument of unjust oppression, for false witnesses could be purchased and false documents could be fabricated to establish a false claim. Raikes, a judge of the Sadr Court at Agra, says, "They (the people of the North-Western Provinces) disliked, for very sufficient reason, our system of civil procedure."[51]

But the most unpopular law was that of sale. Under the old system land was for all practicable purposes inalienable. If a proprietor fell in arrears he might be seized and kept under durance until his people purchased his release. Moreover, rent was

[48] Prichard, *op. cit.*, p 278. "The corruption and venality of our law-courts and subordinate law officers has of late years begun to be exposed; had the natives anything to thank us for on that score?" Sitaram says that the Santal rebellion was also due to the malpractice of minor law officers—"I was informed by some of the Sountal people the chief reason they rebelled was they could get no justice in the civil courts as they had no money to bribe the *amlahs* (native officials) and their complaints were all against the rich *mahajuns* and moneylenders, who had managed to get these simple people into their clutches and ruined them all." *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 111

[49] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, pp 127-128

[50] *Idem*, p 127

[51] Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces of India*, p 7

paid in kind and not in cash and collection was made by a division of the standing crops. This method was undoubtedly crude and cumbrous. The Company's Government substituted it by the simpler and more effective method of selling the defaulter's lands. In theory, the system was unexceptionable; if he found his holding unprofitable the proprietor would in his own interest like to part with it but 'he loved his land for its own sake', irrespective of the rentals it brought and he had a strong community of interests with the cultivators who were his co-villagers and, not unoften,his kin. The loss of the land was not merely a financial loss, it affected his social status as well. The law of sale would not have operated so harshly if the rent had been moderate. The Government had laid down fair rules of assessment and no hardship should have been caused if they were strictly adhered to. But, observes Thornhill, Collector of Mathura, "It was discovered that a too implicit obedience to these instructions had a tendency to retard promotion. The settlement of the revenue was entrusted to young officers whose careers were before them. It is not surprising that it was fixed at an amount which the zemindars were not long able to pay. In good seasons they made little, in bad seasons they were ruined."[52] William Edwards, Magistrate and Collector of Budaon, also testifies to the same effect. During the Mutiny he had found asylum with Hardeo Baksh, a friendly zamindar, and his kinsmen and learnt from one of them how difficult they found it to meet the government demands. "Old Kussuree told me that he had paid a thousand rupees in petitions alone, not one of which ever reached Christian (Commissioner of Sitapur), and more than six thousand rupees in bribes; notwithstanding which he had lost the villages farmed by him and his ancestors for many generations, and had been assessed so highly for those he had left, that he had only been able to pay his rent the preceding year by the sale of some of his family jewels and a mare he highly valued; and this year he said he would no doubt have been a defaulter, and been sold up, had not the bulwah (rebellion) fortunately occurred."[53] Christian was a popular Commissioner and was fully aware of the evils of over-assessment but even in his division of Sitapur proprietors were reduced to such straits as to sell their jewels to save the remnant of their ancestral property. To many of them the Mutiny brought long-needed respite and relief. The bigger proprietors,

[52] Thornhill, *The Personal Adventures and Experiences of a Magistrate during the Rise, Progress, and Suppression of the Indian Mutiny*, p 33
[53] Edwards, *Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion in Rohilcund, Futtehghur and Oude*, p 167

the talukdars, from whom the zamindars held, were deprived of most of their rights and granted a life annuity in lieu of the revenue they had hitherto been in receipt.[54] Both the classes were hard hit. The zamindar's property was purchased by the bania and the talukdars were reduced by an act of expropriation, as Thornhill points out, "from the position of nobles and princes to that of mere life pensioners". So in times of trouble when the Government was inoperative there remained none to maintain peace and order in the rural area. The bania was the only party to profit by the new system and he was universally detested.

Robertson, Magistrate of Saharanpur, observes: "There is nothing amongst the agricultural population that creates a greater hatred of our rule than the facilities offered to the most unprincipled class of money-lenders in the world in oppressing an ignorant and careless peasantry." "I found that no class seem to have acted with so vindictive a hate against us as the smaller class of landholders whom the bunyahs had dispossessed through the medium of our courts."[55]

But the zamindars and talukdars were not the only persons to lose their ancestral occupation. The new law of sale caused equal hardship to the peasant as well. He was in chronic debt and the bania, who was the village money-lender, was not an honest creditor. He practised usury as a rule and did not always shrink from fraud. Under the protection of their feudal lords the illiterate debtors were previously safe but the new law permitted sale of land for unpaid debts, and with land the peasant also lost his occupation. The dispossessed peasant and the dispossessed landlord were united not only by the bond of common adversity but also by feudal ties of protection and loyalty. The zamindar lived in his village and, although the peasant often suffered at his hands, he could none the less count upon his master's support and sympathy in times of difficulty. The bania, however, was an outsider. He purchased the proprietary rights and the peasant's holding for the sake of the financial gains likely to accrue. Between him and the peasant therefore no sentimental

[54] Such expropriations were not limited to the North-Western Provinces only. Dr. Lowe who served with Sir Hugh Rose in Central India says: "Confiscation after confiscation had been made, which appeared to have thoroughly aroused their long dormant passions to a pitch hard to be restrained." An old villager told Lowe: "The jungles, sahib, the trees, the rivers, the wells, all the villages, and all holy cities belong to the Sircar; they have taken all—everything—very good, what can we do?" Lowe, *Central India During the Rebellion of 1857 and 1858*, pp 326-327

[55] Robertson, *District Duties during the Revolt in the North-West Provinces of India in 1857*, pp 135, 137

tie of affection or loyalty was ordinarily possible, and the peasant still felt bound to stand by his former feudal chief.[56]

Even the Pasi, the traditional village watchman, had a grievance against the Government, for like the landed classes he was also deprived of his hereditary occupation. "Be it known to the Passees", ran a proclamation of Birjis Qadr, "that the office of watching every town and village is their hereditary profession, but the English appoint Burkundazes in their stead and thus deprive the Passees of their livelihood."[57] Thus was the rural economy upset and a social revolution effected by the reforming zeal of the English which caused widespread distress and discontent in every walk of life. Time and education would probably reconcile the sufferers to their loss, but the new institutions had in their eyes not a single redeeming feature. When the troubles broke out, G. J. Christian, Commissioner of Sitapur, wrote to Raikes, "The village system, which makes all men equal in their poverty, is now fairly on its trial in the disturbed districts, and government has hardly a single man of influence to look to in them. Their army is the same, a dead level; no gentlemen, no difference save in military rank."[58]

The new law and the legal procedure not only brought into existence an indigent class of men to whom general anarchy and lawlessness offered a chance of retrieving what belonged to them of right (for so they thought), but the resulting impoverishment was construed to be part of a deliberate policy calculated to further the proselytising activities of the missionary. Sir Syed Ahmed observed that during the famine of 1837 a large number of starving orphans were given food and shelter and were later converted to Christianity and this led people to suspect that the Government wanted to reduce the entire population to poverty first, so that they might be persuaded to change their faith later. "At length," he says, "the Hindustanees fell into the habit of thinking that all the laws were passed with a view to degrade and

[56] Edwards points out how the bania's unpopularity and lack of scruples recoiled on the Government when its authority was challenged by its own army. "By fraud or chicanery, a vast number of the estates of families of rank and influence have been alienated, either wholly or in part, and have been purchased by new men—chiefly traders or Government officials—without character or influence over their tenantry." Edwards says that they were looked upon as interlopers by the tenants over whom the old proprietors maintained their hereditary hold. The tenants were prepared to join their old feudal lords in their attempts to recover their lost estates. Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp 12-13

[57] A printed proclamation found among the papers of Khan Bahadur Khan, Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 69, 25 June, 1858

[58] Raikes, *op. cit.*, p 22

ruin them, and to deprive them and their fellows of their religion."[59]

This feeling was reflected in one of the proclamations issued by the Azamgarh rebels calling upon Indians of all classes to rise against the faithless British whose sole object was to ruin them all. The zemindars were told, "It is very well known that the British assess lands very highly and this has been the cause of your ruin. Besides, when sued by a mean laborer, or a male or female servant, you are summoned without investigation to attend to their Court and are thus dishonored and degraded, and when you have to prosecute a case in their Court you are put to the expense of doing so on stamp paper and have to pay Court fees which are ruinous. Besides which you have to pay a percentage for roads and schools." The merchants were reminded, "You are also well aware that the faithless British have appropriated to themselves the monopoly of all lucrative trade such as indigo, opium cloth etc. and left the less remunerative merchandise to you and when you have to resort to their Courts you have to pay large sums for stamp papers and Court fees. Moreover, they realize money from the public in the shape of postage and school funds and you like the zemindars are degraded by being summoned to their Courts and imprisoned or fined on the assertion of mean and low people." The officials could not but be aware "that in the Civil and Military Department all the less lucrative and dignified situations are given to the natives, and the wellpaid and honorable ones to Europeans. For instance, in the Military Line the highest post that a native attains is that of a Subadar on a salary of Rs. 60 or 70 a month and in the Civil that of a Sudder Ameen on a salary of 500 Rupees, and Jagheers, rewards maafees etc. are not known to be in existence". The artisans doubtless knew "that the Europeans import every sort of article from Europe leaving but a small trade in your hands". And lastly the "Scholars of both creeds of Hindus and Mosulmans (Moulvees and Pundits)" should not forget "that the British are opposed to your religion", "you should join us and gain the goodwill of your Creator, otherwise you will be considered 'sinners.' "[60]

Only the princely order is omitted, and they were also threatened with ruin and extinction. The Punjab was annexed in 1849 though the boy Raja was in fact a ward of the East India Company and was not personally responsible for the Multan

[59] Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, p 14
[60] Foreign Political Consultations, No 197, 8 Oct., 1858.

rising that finally led to the second Sikh War. The small states of Satara, Jhansi, and Tanjore were annexed because of the failure of natural heirs. The principality of Satara was created, when the Peshwa's territories were annexed, with a view to offering a suitable outlet for Maratha ambition. In this small state the scions of old aristocratic families might still aspire to high offices in the civil and military establishments of the government. The rulers of Jhansi owed their royal status to the Company's favour and a brother had been permitted to succeed a childless brother more than once. Tanjore had for many years been a subordinate ally. The royal house was of Maratha origin. But these were not the only Maratha states to suffer extinction. The last ruler of Nagpur had also died without a lawful issue of his body and in pursuance of the doctrine of lapse his state was absorbed into the Company's empire. In the last instance, not only the principle but the manner of implementing it gave grave offence to public feeling. Despite the protests of the ladies of the royal house, "the live stock and dead stock of the Bonslah were sent to the hammer. It must have been a great day for speculative cattle-dealers at Seetabaldee when the royal elephants, horses, and bullocks were sold off at the price of carrion; and a sad day, indeed, in the royal household, when the venerable Bankha Baee, with all the wisdom and moderation of fourscore well-spent years upon her, was so stung by a sense of the indignity offered to her, that she threatened to fire the palace if the furniture were removed. But the furniture was removed, and the jewels of the Bonslah family, with a few propitiatory exceptions, were sent to the Calcutta market. And I have heard it said that these seizures, these sales, created a worse impression, not only in Berar, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself."[61]

The small principality of Sambalpur that once acknowledged the overlordship of Nagpur had been annexed earlier. The Nawabs of the Carnatic, like the Nawabs of Murshidabad, had long ceased to be rulers of their states, but the title also became extinct in 1854; and the Hindu house of Tanjore followed suit a year later. It is needless to discuss the validity of the doctrine of lapse. In the case of the Rajput state of Karauli it was not enforced, and a distinction was made between states, however small, that were not British creations, and states like Satara and Jhansi that were. Dalhousie was anxious to extend the benefits of the British rule whenever a legitimate opportunity came

[61] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, pp 83-84

and he did not approach the problem in the same spirit as some of his more conservative colleagues. It is hard to find fault with his intention, and his policy of annexation undoubtedly contributed to the political unification of India which was to serve as the foundation of Indian nationhood, though such was certainly not the intention of Dalhousie. But the immediate reaction to Dalhousie's benevolent imperialism was far from favourable. The Rani of Jhansi did not consider the annexation of her state final and irrevocable, and continued to make representations to the supreme Government. Rango Bapuji proceeded to London to plead the cause of Satara. The representatives of the Sambalpur family, less opulent and probably less sophisticated, rose in arms. But what was so astounding and shocked Indian opinion most was the fate of the Carnatic and Tanjore. The house of Nagpur had openly defied the British power and more than once challenged it in armed contests, but the princes of Tanjore and the Carnatic had always been loyal and submissive. Yet they all came to the same end and Indians were concerned to find friends and foes condemned to the common doom. If there was still a vestige of lingering faith in British fairness, the annexation of Oudh in 1856 completely removed it.

To justify the annexation is probably not impossible or even difficult, but the Board of Control and the Court of Directors should also share the responsibility with Dalhousie, for the majority accorded their approval to this unpopular measure after a careful consideration of the arguments of the dissenting minority. It cannot, therefore, be argued that the maxim of the good of the governed was not adequately weighed against the impolicy of annexing the territories of an unresisting ally. In fact the position of the annexing authorities would have been considerably strengthened if the king had not yielded without resistance. But if he was not prepared to oppose force with force he was equally resolved not to sign away his rights by voluntary abdication. Strong in his weakness, he lost his crown but gained the sympathy of his subjects. Muhammad Hasan professed to fight for him and Hanumant Singh of Dharupur still regarded him as his lawful sovereign though both of them chivalrously extended their hospitality to the English refugees when they sought their protection. Even the most loyal servants of the Company's Government could find no justification for an act so palpably iniquitous.

Sitaram was of opinion that the annexation alienated all the talukdars and headmen who held that the Government "had

acted without honor, and had been very hard on the Nawab."[62] Hedayet Ali was more outspoken. He says, "At the time of annexation it was the talk of the whole of Hindostan that the British Government had promised the ruler of Oudh (I believe there was a treaty to the same effect) that the kingdom of Oudh should never be taken by the English, because in former times the kings of Oudh had rendered valuable assistance to the British Government." "The people of Hindostan likewise said, 'The country of Oudh belongs to the king, and, whether he has done well or ill as regards his own Government, he has not injured or broken faith with the English in any way; if the British Government dethrones a king who has ever been so faithful to them, what independent nawab or rajah is safe?"[63] Even Englishmen and women felt uneasy in their conscience, and while besieged at Lucknow, attributed their misfortunes to this unjust act. Mrs. Harris records "———was speaking at dinner today of the iniquity of the annexation of Oude and thinks the tribulation we are now in is a just punishment to our nation for the grasping spirit in which we have governed India; The unjust appropriation of Oude being a finishing stroke to a long course of selfish seeking of our own benefit and aggrandisement."[64]

The revolt was attributed to the enlistment of high caste Brahmans and Rajputs in the Bengal Army; but, as Colonel Hunter points out, caste did not cause the Mutiny. The Santals are a casteless tribe, the Bhils acknowledge no caste distinction, but they also fraternised in some areas with the mutinous sepoy. The low caste sappers rose in arms at Meerut. The humble Pasi joined the religious war as did the highborn Brahman. An atmosphere of distrust and suspicion had been created by a series of well-intentioned but ill-judged legislative and administrative measures which shook to its very core the sepoy's faith in the *bona fides* of the Sarkar, and successive Governor-Generals contributed unconsciously to the steady deterioration of public confidence in their good faith. Lord Dalhousie has generally been held responsible for the outbreak, but no single act of his by itself would have caused the revolt. Lord William Bentinck, Lord Amherst, Lord Auckland, and Lord Ellenborough had each by some act of omission or commission either alienated orthodox opinion in the country or interfered with ancient rights and privileges dearly cherished by the people. The alien government was based not on the loyalty of the people but upon its

[62] *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p 112
[63] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, Appendix 12, pp 557-58
[64] Harris, *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow*, p 60

armed forces. The sepoy felt that his was the strong arm that had sustained it so long, and he could overthrow it whenever he wanted. He had hitherto remained loyal to his salt, but when he thought that his employers aimed at nothing less than his ancestral faith, the very basis of that loyalty was shattered. The educated Indians might have bridged the gulf between the uneducated masses and the Government but they did not enjoy the confidence of their rulers. They formed a very small minority and had little contact with the rural population. Moreover, their ways gave as much offence to the orthodox opinion as those of their Christian masters. Even if a few educated Indians had been appointed to high offices of responsibility and trust it is doubtful whether they could have stemmed the tide. The revolt had been long brewing, the greased cartridge only hastened it.

## Chapter Two

# THE PRELUDE

An army must be equipped with up-to-date weapons. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Brown Bess had been the favourite fire-arm of the sepoy. In 1852, experiments were made at Enfield under the orders of Viscount Hardinge, Master-General of the Ordnance, and all the latest improvements were embodied in a new rifle. In 1853, the new rifle was tried in the Crimean war with good results and late in 1856 it was introduced in India. With the rifle came some greased cartridges from England and fresh ones were manufactured at Calcutta, Dum Dum, and Meerut for the use of troops serving in India. Selected sepoys were sent to three training centres—Dum Dum, Ambala, and Sialkot—to learn the use of the improved weapon. Nothing untoward happened until a high caste Brahman learnt from a low caste laskar at Dum Dum that the grease used contained highly objectionable animal fat. The news spread like wild fire and caused no little consternation among the sepoys. The Dharma Sabha of Calcutta heard the story and spread the alarm and the English officers were not long in the dark about it.

On 22nd January, 1857, Lieutenant Wright brought the report to the notice of Major Bontein, commanding the Dum Dum Musketry Depot. The next day Major Bontein wrote to his official superior, "I, last evening, paraded all the native portion of the depot, and called for any complaints that the men might wish to prefer; at least twothirds of the detachment immediately stepped to the front, including all the native commissioned officers. In a manner perfectly respectful, they very distinctly stated their objection to the present method of preparing cartridges for the new rifle musket: the mixture employed for greasing cartridges was opposed to their religious feeling, and as a remedy they begged to suggest the employment of wax and oil in such proportion as in their opinion would answer the purpose required."[1] It is clear that the first reaction among the sepoys was one of fear and not of anger. They respectfully represented to Bontein why

[1] *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, p 3 Encl. 6 in Letter to Court, Feb. 7, 1857

they could not use the grease and suggested an alternative. Apart from the rumours then prevalent, the sepoy had good grounds to suspect that there was something wrong with the cartridge, for it reeked with grease. In a letter to Colonel Keith Young the Commander-in-Chief himself observed—"I am not surprised at the objection of the Sepoys, after seeing the quantity of grease (literally fat) which is upon the cartridges."[2] This letter was dated 23rd March, but it had been ascertained earlier that the sepoy's suspicion was not unfounded. The Inspector-General of Ordnance, Fort William, could give no assurance that the fat used was derived from unexceptionable sources. On 29th January, he wrote, "As soon as I heard of objections having been made to the use of grease by the native soldiers of the Practice Depot at Dum Dum, I inquired at the arsenal as to the nature of the composition that had been used, and found that it was precisely that which the instructions received from the Court of Directors directed to be used, viz., a mixture of tallow and bees' wax. No extraordinary precaution appears to have been taken to insure the absence of any objectionable fat."[3] It has been argued that this statement does not prove that any beef fat had been actually used and Brahman boys had handled the grease at Meerut without any objection. But there is no evidence that the Brahman boys had any knowledge of what they were using for preparing the grease. The tallow and grease were supplied by a Bengali Brahman contractor but even that does not preclude the possibility of his men having supplied the cheapest material available in the market. Even Englishmen believed at the time that the contractor had supplied objectionable tallow since he was not specifically instructed to do otherwise. The correspondent of *The Times* wrote on 23rd February, "The cartridges of the new Enfield rifle are greased at one end to make them slip readily into the barrel. The government ordered mutton fat for the purpose. Some contractors, to save a few shillings, gave pigs' and bullocks' fat instead."[4] The Inspector-General of Ordnance, while deposing in Saligram Singh's case, had nothing more to say than that the tallow was what the contractor had supplied.[5] Some sepoys had suggested to the Fort Major of Calcutta that

[2] Keith Young, *Delhi, 1857*, p 2

[3] *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, p 7 Encl. 15 in Letter to Court, Feb. 7, 1857

[4] There is no evidence to show that the Government ordered mutton fat.

[5] Lieutenant Currie also deposed that "No enquiry is made as to the fat of what animal is used."

Keith Young wrote to Colonel H. B. Henderson on the 24th March, "I believe that there was some foundation for the report—hog's lard being the proper thing, I fancy, to use." Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 3

they would be satisfied if a high-caste Hindu and a Mahomedan were appointed to superintend the manufacture of cartridges. He had no objection to the suggestion as it would allay the suspicion of the alarmed sepoys and he readily agreed, but the arsenal authorities had other views and they objected to the arrangement which was accordingly countermanded.[6] Naturally the sepoys suspected that the authorities had a secret to conceal and were therefore reluctant to accept a fair suggestion which the Fort Major had found unexceptionable.

The greased cartridge was indeed no novelty. It was first imported in 1853 not for use but for experiments to find out how the climate affected it. Colonel Tucker at that time had warned the Military Board of the possible reaction their distribution among the Indians might cause and suggested that they should be issued to European troops only. His warning went unheeded and the sepoys also carried the greased cartridges in their pouch. It is, however, not known whether they suspected the nature of the grease, and in any case there was no trouble at the time. But in 1857 the sepoys had expressed their concern in a lawful manner about the social hardships to which they were likely to be subjected if they were forced to bite the cartridge. The Government had to decide whether their fear was genuine and if so whether the objectionable cartridge should be withdrawn or in the alternative the sepoys should be permitted to prepare their own grease, for there is no doubt that the ammunition was issued to the Dum Dum depot. Abbot says, "The first ammunition made in the arsenal was intended for Her Majesty's 60th Rifles, who, it was believed, would come to the Presidency to embark for foreign service. It is probable that some of this was issued to the depot at Dum Dum.'" The ordnance department was guilty

[6] Cavenagh, *Reminiscences of an Indian Official,* p 203. It is also to be noted that in a memorandum dated February 7, 1857 it was pointed out, "that it is of little use greasing the cartridges (in the process of making up), if they are to be kept for any time in a hot climate, as the whole of the grease is very soon absorbed by the paper of the cartridge." *Parl. Papers,* Vol. 30, 1857, p 3

[7] *Parl. Papers,* Vol. 30, 1857, p 7 Encl. 15 in Letter to Court Feb. 7, 1857. It has sometimes been denied that the greased cartridge was issued to the sepoys, but even responsible British officers believed that it was. Lieutenant Currie in his evidence says—"No cartridges have ever been issued from the Arsenal here ; *but some have been sent from the Arsenal to Delhi, and to the depots of instruction up country.*" (Italics mine.) Keith Young writes to Colonel Henderson on the 2nd May—"There is no doubt of the fact of the Enfield rifle cartridges having been served out in the first instance, reeking with all kinds of abominable grease stuff". Keith Young, *op. cit.,* pp 9-10

Col. Chester's letter to the Secretary to Govt. of India, dated Simla, May 4, leaves no doubt that the new cartridge was issued to the sepoys at practice depots. He writes, "The Commander-in-chief considers it will be satisfactory to the Right Honorable The Governor-General in Council to learn that at all three

of culpable carelessness in not taking all possible precautions against the introduction of any objectionable fat. Obviously the warning of Colonel Tucker given three years earlier had been forgotten.[8]

The Government decision was fairly prompt. General Hearsey, who commanded at Barrackpur, had suggested that the sepoys should be permitted to grease their cartridges as they liked, and by the 28th January the Government had accorded their approval to his suggestion. But during the six days that intervened between Lieutenant Wright's report and the receipt of the Government's answer from Calcutta the sepoy grew more and more uneasy and it was openly alleged that the polluted cartridge was deliberately issued to deprive him of his caste and to make a Christian of him. Meanwhile, the Adjutant-General was instructed to see that no greased cartridge was issued from Meerut and to inform the sepoys at Ambala and Sialkot that they were free to use lubricants of their own choice. It was also decided that the Commander-in-Chief should assure the army by a general proclamation that no greased cartridge would be issued to them but these instructions were countermanded at the representation of the Adjutant-General. He pointed out that sepoys armed with Minie rifles had been for some time past using cartridges greased with inoffensive mutton fat and that the proposed proclamation might lead them to think that they had unconsciously committed an offence against their caste and the Government had deliberately foisted offensive materials on them.[9] Nothing was therefore done and the suspicion of the sepoy was consequently permitted to persist. This was a grave error, for the Meerut men never learnt that they would not be called upon to handle contaminated cartridges.

It is difficult to judge at this distance of time whether the sepoy would have felt relieved if a different course had been pursued. He had learnt from sources, he considered reliable, that the grease was polluted with objectionable fat, the very touch

depots the practice has been commenced, and that the men of all grades have unhesitatingly and cheerfully used the new cartridges." *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, p 370 Encl. 228 in No. 19

[8] "It appears truly wonderful that it should not have occurred to any of the authorities in Calcutta, charged with the issuing of those cartridges, that tallow made of the fat of all kinds of animals, a filthy composition at the best, would seriously outrage the feelings and prejudices of all the native troops, whether Moslems or Hindoos," Tucker's letter quoted by Crawshay, *The immediate Cause of the Indian Mutiny, as set forth in the Official Correspondence*, p 9. Also see *Friend of India*, Aug. 20, 1857, p 801

[9] Kaye however points out that no animal fat was used in the preparation of cartridges for Minie rifles. The grease consisted of country linseed oil and bees' wax only. Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, p 656

of which was interdicted by his religion. If the Hindu regarded beef with horror, to the Muslim the pig was equally obnoxious. And the authorities could not honestly deny that the grease was not free from that filthy combination. Under the circumstances the most straightforward course would have been to admit frankly that an error had been unintentionally committed, but the confession might further aggravate fear and add to the tension instead of easing it. Another alternative was to stop the musketry drill for the time being. But that might be, the responsible authorities had feared, misconstrued as a concession to insubordination and might affect military discipline. As a matter of fact, in March General Hearsey was informed that "the musketry-practice at Dum Dum is to stop short of loading, Major Bontein being . . . . desired to prolong the previous portion of the instruction until he shall receive orders on the subject of loading from the Commander-in-chief."[10] But it was too late. The earlier concession, Martin complained, was "both tardy and insufficient". "Instead of withdrawing the cause of contention at once and entirely, the government resolved that the sepoys at the depots should be allowed to use any mixture they might think fit; but that the question of the state in which cartridges should be issued under other circumstances, and especially for service in the field, must remain open for further consideration."[11]

It may be argued against Martin's objection that the change in the drill to avoid biting the cartridge should have satisfied the most punctilious conscience, but this was hardly a concession to the sepoy's scruples, as the very touch of beef and pork was pollution to him. He further feared that the force of habit might still prevail and in time of action he might use his teeth instead of his fingers in spite of his best intention not to do so. In any case this change in the drill was not made earlier than March and sepoys at many centres had no knowledge of this. Excitement therefore continued unabated and suspicion now extended to the unusual glaze of the paper of the cartridge. The paper contained no grease but man after man appeared before a Court of Enquiry to give vent to their suspicion that it did. Last of all, an absurd though disquieting rumour gained currency that bones had been powdered and mixed with atta and the water of wells contaminated so that none might escape the pollution which was so diabolically planned.[12]

Military officers were no idle spectators of this steady deterio-

[10] *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, pp 38-39
[11] Martin, *The Indian Empire*, Vol. II, p 127
[12] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, pp 639-44

ration of morale. General Hearsey, who commanded the Presidency division, was a man of tact and courage. In his younger days he had successfully handled mutinous troops in the Punjab. He spoke the language of his men and sympathised with their fear which he perceived was quite genuine. He told them that the English were Protestants and could not admit anybody to their fold unless he had made himself conversant with their doctrines and voluntarily sought conversion. The sepoy was not to be blamed if General Hearsey's arguments did not carry conviction, for at the very station of Barrackpur was then posted an officer, Colonel Wheler, who had other views on the subject, and made no secret of them. He frankly admitted that for twenty years he had been preaching the Gospel to all classes of natives, sepoys included. "As to the question whether I have endeavoured to convert Sepoys and others to Christianity," he wrote to the Government, "I would humbly reply that this has been my object, and I conceive is the aim and end of every Christian who speaks the word of God to another—merely that the Lord would make him the happy instrument of converting his neighbour to God, or, in other words, of rescuing him from eternal destruction." "On matters connected with religion, I feel myself called upon to act in two capacities—'to render unto Caesar (or the Government) the things that are Caesar's, and to render unto God the things that are God's' ".[13]

Colonel Wheler was not the only officer in the army who was prepared to render to God the things that were God's and to rescue the heathen from utter destruction. Confronted with the precepts of Hearsey and the practice of his evangelist colleagues, the sepoy attached more importance to the practice and dismissed the precepts as idle words. Similarly his later invitation to the sepoys to go to Serampore and see with their own eyes how the paper was made carried little weight, for it does not appear that the invitation was followed by an actual visit while it is not unlikely that the sepoys had already learnt that the paper of the greased cartridge was made in England and not in India.[14] It is true that Wheler had been but recently posted to the 34th Regiment N.I., but this particular regiment proved to be the most restless of the whole lot, and Wheler's contribution to their disquiet can only be surmised.

[13] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, pp 480-81

[14] See Lieutenant Currie's evidence. *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, p 222. He says "The cartridge is prepared with a particular sort of paper sent out from England." Again, "Another disadvantage attendant on the new cartridges is, that paper fit to make them cannot be manufactured in India."*Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, p 6 Encl. 14 in Letter to Court, Feb. 7, 1857

It need not be added that once rumours were afloat about the grease and the paper, they could not be confined to any specified region and the atmosphere became heavy with suspicion. Barrackpur and its neighbourhood witnessed several cases of incendiarism which were attributed to sepoy discontent. Similar acts occurred at Raniganj about a hundred miles away, and though the offender could not be traced they could not be dismissed as accidents. But more serious symptoms were perceived at Berhampur near Murshidabad, the seat of the titular Nawab. Two detachments of the 34th N.I. were sent from Barrackpur on special duty to Berhampur where the 19th N.I. were stationed with Colonel Mitchell as their commander. Unlike Hearsey, Mitchell was not the man for an emergency and the story of the greased cartridge had already reached his men and a Brahman Havildar had already enquired whether it was true. Nothing however happened until the arrival of the men of the 34th who might or might not have confirmed their fears and the 19th N.I. refused to accept the percussion caps because "there was a doubt how the cartridge was prepared". Obviously they did not intend violence, for their fire-arms would be of no use without the percussion caps and the cartridge, and their objection was evidently based on genuine fears. "Had Mitchell possessed the confidence of his men," remarked Keith Young, "or had he acted judiciously in the first instance, there would have been no row",[15] but Mitchell preferred to use strong language and to threaten dire penalties. He went to the lines, summoned all the native officers, and told them in no uncertain terms that if the cartridge, which was made more than a year ago, was refused the next morning the men would make themselves liable to the severest punishment. Sheikh Karim Baksh, Subadar of the 4th Company, deposed that he heard the Colonel say that "they must take the cartridges, otherwise they would be sent to China and Burmah, where they would all die".[16] Unfortunately the cartridges did not look harmless, they were made of two different kinds of paper; stores had arrived from Calcutta shortly before; and the sepoy suspected that new cartridges had been mixed with the old and that the Colonel was determined to force them to use the objectionable ammunition. His violent speech confirmed their suspicion

[15] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 2

[16] He is corroborated by other witnesses. Subadar Major Murad Baksh deposed, "Upon this the Colonel got very angry and said, if the sepoys will not take their cartridges I will take them to Rangoon or China, where they will suffer many privations, and all die." Lieutenant J. F. MacAndrew also testified that he had heard something to that effect, when the question was put to him. *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, pp 50, 271, 278, 290.

and troubles broke out long before the morning parade. The sepoys broke open the bell of arms and forcibly took possession of their weapons and loaded their muskets. Mitchell was no coward and he decided to meet force with force but he had no European troops near at hand. Nothing daunted, he summoned the native cavalry and artillery to his aid and proceeded to the infantry lines. The native officers explained that the disorderly conduct of their men was due to fear, not to disloyalty, and advised their Colonel to send away the artillery and cavalry whose presence would only inflame their feelings. Had Mitchell been obdurate the situation might have deteriorated further, but he listened to the advice of the native officers and retired to bed after ordering a morning parade. With the dawn the sepoys had regained their mental balance and the parade passed off without a sign of insubordination.

The 19th quieted down as unexpectedly as they had risen and henceforth their conduct conformed to the best traditions of the army. If they had persisted in their insubordination they would have deserved the most condign punishment, but their conduct could not be overlooked. They had actually taken forcible possession of arms and for a short while defied the lawful authority of their commander. They had therefore been guilty of a mutinous act which could not be condoned if discipline in the army was to be maintained. The Governor-General was not prepared to make any allowance for their fear and an example was to be made of the regiment.[17] All the men could not have been equally guilty, some distinction should have been made between the active leaders and their passive followers. It was suggested that, if penitent, the regiment might be given the option of volunteering for service in China or Persia. Keith Young, the Judge Advocate-General, was of opinion that transfer overseas would sufficiently meet the exigencies of the case.[18] This suggestion was not seriously considered as it was felt that the prevalent temper of the army did not permit any leniency on the part of the authorities. The Governor-General-in-Council therefore decided that nothing short of disbanding the regiment would have any salutary effect but the decision could not be immediately implement-

[17] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp 22-23. The Governor-General noted "Mutiny so open and defiant cannot be excused by any sensitiveness of religion or caste, by fear of coercion, or by the seductions and deceptions of others." Forrest, *Indian Mutiny* (*State Papers*), Vol. I, p 93

[18] "I am clear for letting the corps, if repentant, volunteer for Persia". Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 2. In their appeal to the Government the 19th N.I. said "as long as we live we will faithfully obey all orders, wherever in the field of battle, we are ordered to go, there shall we be found."

ed. The native cavalry and artillery had indeed betrayed no sign of indiscipline, but could they be expected to fire on their own comrades if the 19th offered resistance? The Government felt that the sentence could only be executed in the presence of European troops and European troops had to be called from across the Bay. Her Majesty's 84th Regiment were then at Rangoon and a steamer was sent to bring them to Bengal. This order was no secret and caused considerable alarm among the sepoys. The story of Sir Edward Paget had not obviously been forgotten and it was feared that the entire brigade would be disarmed and forced to apostatize when the 84th arrived. General Hearsey had therefore to address his men once again. He assured them that the Government had no design against their caste and religion and none but the guilty had anything to fear. When the 84th arrived he would be called upon to disband the 19th N.I. and strike off their names from the army list. The 84th arrived soon afterwards and were stationed at Chinsura, while Mitchell was directed to march the 19th to Barrackpur. While on their way they not only caused no trouble but, it is said, resisted temptation of concerted mutiny,[19] but in the eyes of their brother sepoys they had already become heroes and martyrs. In refusing the accursed cartridge they had done no wrong. Their only offence was loyalty to their faith and a faithless government was on that account going to inflict on them the greatest humiliation that a soldier could suffer.

The outbreak at Berhampur had taken place on the 26th February; on the 29th March occurred a still more serious incident at Barrackpur which demonstrated to what desperation the sepoys had been driven by fear and misapprehension. Mangal Pande was a young sepoy of the 34th Infantry. His record was good but he had been evidently brooding over recent events. Only a few days back, two sepoys of the 2nd N.I. Grenadiers had been found guilty of treasonable conspiracy and sentenced to fourteen years of hard labour. Jamadar Saligram Singh had been court-martialled and dismissed for denouncing the greased cartridge to his comrades. For the sake of religion the 19th N.I. had forfeited everything that a soldier valued. It is obvious that these incidents got wide publicity among the sepoys and it will not be unreasonable to assume that Mangal Pande was not a little influenced by the stories of what had been going on. On

[19] It is said that some emissaries of the 34th N.I. met them at Barasat and asked them to make a joint attack on the European officers. Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, p 87

Sunday, the 29th March, in the afternoon, Lieutenant Baugh, Adjutant of the 34th N.I., heard that a sepoy of his regiment had run amuck and fired at the Sergeant Major. He at once hurried to the scene and before he could do anything his horse was shot under him. Baugh, seconded by the Sergeant Major, rushed at their assailant but the sepoy was a match for both of them ; and but for the intervention of Sheikh Paltu, a Muslim sepoy, they would have been killed. The quarter guard then on duty were not far off but they remained indifferent spectators, while some of the sepoys went to the length of striking the wounded officers. Baugh's remonstrances left them unmoved and he retired from the conflict. Meanwhile, news of the turmoil had reached General Hearsey and there was an impression that the entire brigade had mutinied. He rode to the parade ground with his two sons, and the guard, overawed by the stern demeanour of the general, followed him. Mangal Pande was convinced that his end was near, he had called upon his co-religionists to come to his aid but none had responded, the odds against him were too heavy and he tried to commit suicide by turning his musket upon his chest and shooting himself. But the wound was not fatal. He was sent to the hospital and in due course court-martialled and hanged. Iswari Pande, Jamadar of the recalcitrant guard, was also condemned to death but his execution had to be postponed for technical reasons. Before he died he expressed his penitence at the foot of the gallows and warned his comrades to take a lesson from his death.

The recent record of the 34th was by no means bad. Wheler, their commander, had given them a good character and it was one of their Subadars who had arrested the two sepoys of the second Grenadiers who came to him with treasonable proposals. The Court of Enquiry did not find any evidence that the men of the 34th had anything to do with the troubles at Berhampur. It was an unfortunate coincidence that an *émeute* broke out immediately after their arrival. But the murderous assault by Mangal Pande and the culpable indifference of Iswari Pande and his men convinced the authorities that the whole regiment was tainted. It is unnecessary to discuss whether Mangal Pande was under the influence of *bhang* at the time. Obviously, there was no antecedent conspiracy and he had not taken other sepoys into his confidence; but if his comrades had failed to respond to his summons, their antipathy against their white officers was so strong that they preferred to remain idle spectators of a murderous assault on Lieutenant Baugh and if one of them intervened it was on behalf of the assailant. The greased cartridge had

poisoned the mind of the sepoy and it was useless to remind him of his military obligations.

The 19th Infantry were disarmed and disbanded without any untoward incident. If the Government were stern in their resolution they were not altogether blind to the blunders of the commanding officer. Anxious to prove that the sepoy had misjudged the intentions of a benevolent master, they made some generous gestures. If the sepoy had forfeited the right of bearing arms he was not to be deprived of his uniform. He lost his pay and pension but the Government paid his passage home. On his way home he could, if he liked, visit any shrine and make pilgrimage to any holy place he liked. The Government had no design against his religion and was prepared as ever to tolerate the free performance of his religious rites.[20] It has been contended that the disbandment of the 19th Regiment let loose in the widely scattered villages of Northern India hundreds of discontented men to carry the dismal tale of the diabolical cartridge and to sow seeds of sedition among the rural population. It is easy to be wise after the event. The sepoys might have been sent to China or Persia but it may be logically argued that the prospects of service overseas had twice led to troubles, and the General Service Enlistment Act had caused no little fear about the ulterior motives of the Christian Government. General Sir Orfeur Cavenagh discovered that many sepoys believed that "the generality of the native regiments would prefer being employed upon service even beyond the seas to remaining unarmed, and consequently, as they considered, disgraced". "I suggested", he adds, "that their services should be utilised in China, where troops were evidently needed. This suggestion was ultimately acted upon with beneficial effect."[21] It is unsafe to dogmatise, but it cannot be ignored that the success of a measure depends not a little upon the temper of the times. What succeeded later might not have met even with a modicum of success at an earlier stage. So long as the good faith of the Government was in question and the fear of conversion persisted no permanent solution of the existing difficulties could be found and every error, however slight, served as fresh incentive to mutiny.

It was soon evident that popular disapproval could devise punishments more humiliating than loss of arms from which

[20] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 24, Also, *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, pp 57-58

[21] Cavenagh, *op. cit.*, pp 225-26

the Government in all their might could afford no relief. In March 1857 the Commander-in-Chief passed through Ambala on his way to Simla. Obviously the Government did not assign much importance to the angry murmurs near Calcutta and the Commander-in-Chief did not consider it necessary to stay with the Governor-General. Ambala was one of the three training depots to which a few men from different regiments had been detailed to be instructed in the use of the new rifle. Among them were Kasiram Tewari, a Havildar, and Jiulal Dube, a Naik of the 36th N.I. It was the 36th N.I. that formed part of the Commander-in-Chief's escort and the two non-commissioned officers naturally called on the Subadar. What was their consternation when the Subadar treated them as apostates who had touched the cartridge and thereby become Christian. In tears they went to their Instructor, Lieutenant Martineau, and explained to him the troubles that awaited them in their villages when a Subadar of their own regiment denounced them as converts. Lieutenant Martineau brought the incident to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief and General Anson inspected the Musketry Depot and assured the men assembled that the rumour about the cartridge was absolutely false. He asked Lieutenant Martineau to report on the effect of his address, and on the 23rd March that officer wrote to the Assistant Adjutant-General of the Army: "The native officers of this depot have expressed to me, through the medium of three of their number, their sense of the high honour done them by His Excellency, who condescended himself today to personally address them, for the purpose of quieting both their minds and those of their comrades in the army at large on the subject of rifle cartridges. They respectfully beg to urge that they do not attribute any of the evil intentions to the Government of this country, as described in His Excellency's address. They know that the rumour is false; but they equally know, that for one man in Hindostan who disbelieves it, ten thousand believe it, and that it is universally credited, not only in their regiment, but in their villages and their homes. They are all ready to a man to fire when ordered, but they would wish to represent, for the paternal consideration of His Excellency, the social consequence of military obedience to themselves. They become outcasts for ever, unacknowledged, not only in their corps but also in their families and their homes. Their devotion to the service, and submission to the military authority, will inflict on them the direst and most terrible punishment they can undergo in this world. Their being selected as men of intelligence and fidelity thus becomes to them the most fatal curse. They will obey the

orders of their military superiors, and socially perish through their instinct of obedience."[22]

Lieutenant Martineau added that their fears were neither unfounded nor exaggerated. The trainees had explained their difficulties in unambiguous but respectful language and Lieutenant Martineau recommended an immediate enquiry into the complaints brought against the Subadar. No enquiry was made. On the 16th April the sepoys learnt that the conduct of Subadar Drigpal Singh had been pronounced "unbecoming and unsoldier-like" but the two complainants were not so easily let off. They had created excitement in the depot by giving publicity to the unsoldier-like conduct of the accused and caused in the minds of the men of other regiments apprehension that similar taunts awaited them on their return to their corps. For this 'very reprehensible' act they were publicly censured and the Havildar was privately informed that his promotion was stopped "for having brought discredit on his own regiment". Cave-Browne comments: "Nor was this all; it was resolved that, *coute que coute,* the sepoys should be compelled to fire the cartridges in defiance of their prejudices and their fears".[23] And the very next morning they had to use the cartridge. Had they not themselves confessed through their representatives that they had no conscientious objection to the cartridges and declared their readiness to use them! The paternal consideration of His Excellency to which they had appealed so confidently took notice of their loyalty but ignored their fear. The sepoy could not be blamed hereafter if he concluded that he must choose between his employers and his religion.

The order of the Commander-in-Chief was all the more reprehensible as the Government had already decided to alter the drill in such a manner as to render biting of the cartridge unnecessary. Lieutenant-Colonel Hogge of Meerut had pointed out in the last week of February that biting could be conveniently dispensed with if the end of the cartridge was pinched off, and his suggestion had the support of other experienced officers. The Governor-General had already referred it to the Commander-in-Chief, and pending his answer instruction had been issued to stop the musketry practice at Dum Dum short of loading.[24] On the 5th March the Government had actually ordered the discontinuance of biting but curiously enough this order was concealed from the sepoy. Early in May, symptoms of trouble were perceived at

[22] Cave-Browne, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857,* Vol. I, p 45
[23] *Idem,* p 48
[24] *Parl. Papers,* Vol. 30, 1857, pp 34-39

Lucknow. It is not known whether the story of Ambala had reached Oudh by that time. But the sepoys despite the protests of their officers still viewed the cartridge with suspicion and stubbornly refused to bite it. It has not been explained why they were required to bite while the practice had been discountenanced full two months earlier.[25] It is all the more strange that the loyalty of the Oudh soldiers whose association with the Company's Government was all too recent should be subjected to such a violent strain under the administration of so considerate a Chief Commissioner as Sir Henry Lawrence who knew India and Indians well. But it should be noted that the 7th Oudh Irregular Infantry were not unwilling to *accept* or to *use* the cartridge but they refused to *bite* it. On the 3rd of May it was reported to Sir Henry that the 7th Oudh Irregular Infantry had threatened violence and murder and he accepted the challenge. Confronted with loaded guns, most of the 'mutineers' ran away, about one hundred and twenty grounded their arms and the Government settled down to the routine consideration of suitable punishment.

On the 4th of May, Mangal Pande's regiment, the 34th N.I. were disbanded at Barrackpur. The sepoys were not permitted to keep their uniform but, says Holmes, "suffered to retain the Kilmarnock caps which they had paid for themselves, contemptuously trampled under foot these only remaining tokens of their former allegiance to the Company, and welcoming their so-called punishment as a happy release from bondage, went off with light hearts to swell the number of our enemies."[26] Their punish-

[25] Holmes writes, "On the 1st of that month the recruits of the 7th Oudh Irregular Infantry refused to *accept* their cartridges". (Italics mine). Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 95. This is an understatement which cannot be accounted for. Strangely enough, the 7th Oudh Irregulars were required to bite the cartridge. The Governor-General's minute of the 10th May leaves no room for doubt on this point. "It appears", the G.-G., writes, "the revised instructions for the platoon exercise, by which the biting of the cartridge is dispensed with, had not come into operation at Lucknow when the event took place. Explanation of this should be asked." From the Parliamentary Papers it does not appear that any explanation was ever offered. Grant's minute is couched in stronger terms; "there is no saying what extreme mismanagement there may have been on the part of the Commandant and Officers in the origin of the affair; the mere fact of making cartridge-biting a point after it had been purposely dropped from the authorized system of drill, merely for rifle practice, is a presumption for any imaginable degree of perverse management." The Secretary to the Govt. of India addressed the following enquiry to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh on May 13, 1857, "A book containing the practice with rifles, recently printed by order of Government, is understood to have been dispatched to the regiments of Oude Local Infantry, on or about the 14th ultimo. In that book it is directed that the cartridge shall be torn open, and no allusion is made to the old practice of biting it. The Governor-General in Council wishes to know when that book was received by the corps at Lucknow." *Parl. Papers*, Vol. 30, 1857, pp 210, 212, 216. Crawshay observes, "Not one word is there in this book in answer". Crawshay, *op. cit.*, p 20

[26] Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 94

ment was tardy and the order of disbandment was read out at every military station. It was not realised that it might make heroes of the disbanded men instead of discrediting them in the eyes of their brothers, for they too had sacrificed their earthly prospects for the sake of their religion. The 34th, it should not be forgotten, was commanded by the Missionary Colonel, S. G. Wheler.

In January 1857 began the first whisperings about the new weapon for destroying caste. It is idle to speculate about what might have happened if the Government had confined themselves to peaceful persuasion only. A foreign government cannot allow its authority to be flouted without loss of prestige, likely to affect the very source of its power. Many officers honestly felt that no allowance should be made for the sepoy's feelings and any concession might be construed as weakness. While Hearsey tried his logic with his incredulous audience, individual sepoys and native officers were prosecuted and punished even for talking about the cartridge. Wholesale disbandment, as in the case of the 19th N.I., only added to the fear of conversion instead of allaying the suspicion, for there is no reason to assume that the sepoy did not know that the tallow, of which the grease was made, could not be guaranteed pure. What concession the Government made to the natural fear and not altogether unfounded suspicion of the Indian troops came too late and lost a good deal of its effect in transmission. In the Ambala affair the Commander-in-Chief behaved with undue haste and betrayed not only lack of discretion but lack of fairness as well. The sepoys were convinced that in their difficulties they could not expect any sympathy from the highest authorities, though individual officers like Martineau, Hogge and Bontein were obviously considerate. They could not be blamed if they thought that the Government were determined to force the cartridge on them. It was all the more unfortunate that indiscreet officers were often permitted to have their own way and early in May, Sir Henry Lawrence's hands had probably been forced by some over-zealous subordinates. In the preceding month the train was laid by a professed champion of discipline, which exploded with tremendous violence at Meerut on Sunday, the 10th of May.

Colonel Carmichael Smyth commanded the 3rd Native Cavalry at Meerut. Self-opinionated and obstinate, he was not particularly popular with his men and in the light of subsequent events it becomes difficult to credit him with the redeeming virtue of courage. He later claimed to have saved the empire by disconcerting the plan of a simultaneous rising throughout the entire

sub-continent, scheduled for the 31st May. If he discovered any such conspiracy he did not share the secret with his brother officers and the General Commanding. On the 23rd April he ordered a parade to be held the next morning, not of the whole regiment, but of ninety skirmishers from different troops. The object was laudable enough. The Colonel wanted to demonstrate to his men "the new mode by which they might load their carbines without biting their cartridges".[27] The troops had not been served with new weapons or new ammunition: there was therefore no reasonable fear of pollution. Moreover, it had been so long assumed that the superstitious Hindu alone regarded the greased cartridge as an instrument of conversion and that the Muslim was free from all such foolishness. If the disbanded 19th were predominantly Hindu, Smyth's sowars were predominantly Muslim. The demonstration was therefore neither ill-judged nor ill-timed. But the incredulous sowars might ask why this new method was being tried if the ammunition was really old and harmless, for the cartridge had been recently a subject of anxious discussion at the station. A man called Brijmohan had been accused of using the new cartridge. He was an unsavoury character. Son of a low-born swineherd he had been dismissed from the infantry for committing theft. He later enlisted in the cavalry under a different name and wormed himself into the confidence of Colonel Carmichael Smyth at whose bungalow he spent the major part of his time. The low-born favourite of the commanding officer not only brazenly admitted his guilt but tauntingly retorted that every Jack in the regiment would have to do before long what he had done. The sowars then took a solemn oath not to touch the obnoxious thing so long as the rest of the army abstained from it.

The Colonel was not altogether unaware of these circumstances, for he had been requested to postpone the parade.[28] He remained firm in his decision for he had heard that the whole army was going to mutiny. Meerut was the most unlikely place for an outbreak as it was one of the very few stations with an

[27] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 31

[28] Captain Craigie wrote to the Adjutant: "Go at once to Smyth, and tell him that the men of my troop have requested in a body that the skirmishing *tomorrow morning may be countermanded, as there is a commotion throughout* the native troops about cartridges, and that the regiment will become 'budnam' if they fire any cartridges. I understand that in all six troops a report of the same kind is being made. This is a most serious matter, and we may have the whole regiment in mutiny in half-an-hour if this be not attended to. Pray don't lose a moment, but go to Smyth at once." Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 32. Colonel Smyth says that Craigie received a severe reprimand from the Commander-in-Chief for this

adequate European force of all arms. The Colonel therefore thought that it would be an act of cowardice to call off the parade in the face of threats. Again he kept the General Commanding in the dark about the possibility of a rising. The ninety men only assembled in the parade ground in the morning and the Colonel explained to them how the new regulations had been drawn in consideration of their scruples. His exhortation fell on deaf ears, for all but five refused to receive the cartridges. The parade was broken. A Court of Enquiry was appointed and they found that the sowars' conduct was due to fear of public opinion only. The Commander-in-Chief ordered the culprits to be tried by a Native Court Martial.[29] The British law knows no fairer method of trial than that by the peers of the accused, but the Indian troops regarded a native Court Martial as a supine implement of injustice. They gave the verdict that would please their commander and never spoke out their mind. General Sir Hugh Gough who was then at Meerut says that the Court "was assisted by one British officer, under the title of 'Superintending Officer,' whose advice and legal knowledge probably considerably influenced their opinion".[30] The prisoners pleaded not guilty but there was no cross-examination of the witnesses to speak of, though in one excited voice they gave the lie direct to Lieutenant Melville Clarke.[31] The Court was not unanimous, for one of the fifteen members had the temerity to register dissent and though the prisoners were found guilty and sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment, a recommendation was made to take into consideration their long record of good conduct and fear caused by vague rumours. The Divisional Commander, General Hewitt, was an easy-going man but he found nothing to extenuate their offence and reduced the sentence of eleven only in consideration of their age.[32]

"On the morning of the 9th of May," says Holmes, "beneath

[29] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 33

[30] Gough, *Old Memories*, pp 12-13

[31] *Idem*, p 14. Gough is not quite correct when he says there was no cross-examination. Naik Kudrat Ali, one of the accused, put a few questions to Colonel Carmichael Smyth

[32] Gough was obviously suffering from a lapse of memory when he wrote "The older soldiers were sentenced to transportation or imprisonment for life, the remainder for fifteen, twenty and ten years, but none less than ten years." Gough, *op. cit.*, p 17. It is obvious that General Hewitt was not prepared to make any allowance for the fears of the sepoys. "Some of them", he wrote, "even had the insolence to desire that firing parades might be deferred till the agitation about cartridges among the native troops had come to a close . . . . Even now they attempt to justify so gross an outrage upon discipline, by alleging that they had doubts of the cartridges: there has been no acknowledgement of error, no expression of regret, no pleading for mercy. . . . I remit one half of the sentence passed upon the following men who have not been more than five years in the service". *Further Papers (No. 8A) relative to the Insurrection in the East Indies*, pp 4-5

a sunless sky darkened by rolling storm-clouds, the whole brigade was assembled to see the culprits disgraced. Stripped of their uniforms, these miserable felons were handed over to the smiths, who riveted fetters on their arms and legs."[33] The smiths did their work slowly and for more than an hour the troops silently witnessed the humiliation of their comrades. Technically they might have been felons but so far they had done nothing wicked or depraved. They were "more or less picked men, and quite the *élite* of the corps."[34] General Gough says that "there was a good deal of murmuring in our ranks, and had it not been for the presence of the British troops it is impossible to say what might not have taken place."[35] But the parade broke up quietly. If some of the sepoys looked sullen there was no disorder. "Once they (the prisoners) began to realise all they were losing," says Gough, ". . . they broke down completely. Old soldiers, with many medals gained in desperately-fought battles for their English masters, wept bitterly, lamenting their sad fate, and imploring their officers to save them from their future; young soldiers, too, joined in, and I have seldom, if ever, in all my life, experienced a more touching scene. To me, a young soldier of barely four years' service, it came with the deepest effect, and I believe I was weak enough almost to share their sorrow. It was very evident they, at any rate, knew but little of the events that would follow—as indeed did any of us."[36]

The long summer day wore on but there was no sign of trouble. The night witnessed no fresh act of incendiarism. The morning found the sepoy still quiet. Some of them had been to lawyers to find out whether an appeal was permissible.[37] A native officer of Gough's troop had told him on the evening of the 9th that a mutiny would take place the next day but Colonel Carmichael Smyth treated the report with contempt and reproved the young subaltern for "listening to such idle words". Brigadier Wilson was equally incredulous. In the evening the sepoys as usual were lazily lounging in the bazar, their favourite place of resort.

[33] Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 97
[34] Gough, *op. cit.*, p 19
[35] *Idem*, p 18
[36] *Idem*, pp 20-21
[37] Resaldar J. Hawes deposed that some men of the 3rd Cavalry told him on the 10th May that they were going "to give in an application the next morning to the Colonel, and request him to forward it to the General Commanding, to beg the release from confinement of the 85 prisoners, and that . . . . . they would be willing to obey any orders whatever that might be given to them." Depositions, No. 20, p 14. Major Williams says that from an unrecorded statement of Wajir Ali Khan "it would appear, the troopers first thought of obtaining legal redress for their comrades," pp 5-6 of Major Williams' *Memorandum*

The prisoners loaded with iron had been safely lodged in the civil jail and there was no premonition of the impending storm. The tongue of rumour was not however idle. A maid servant heard from a Kashmiri girl or her mother that the sepoys were contemplating an armed rising, and the sepoys heard that two thousand pairs of iron had been made ready and it was intended to disarm all the Indian troops. But the city people took no notice of these rumours, the shops opened as usual and business went on as smoothly as ever and the normal crowds thronged the city roads and thoroughfares.

The storm suddenly broke out after five. A cook-boy rushed to the sepoy lines with the news that the Artillery and the Rifles were on their way to seize the regimental arms. Caught unawares, the sepoys were panic-struck. Still in undress and without arms, they hurried back to their lines, not knowing what to do. As happens at such crises, the instinct of self-preservation asserted itself. The sowars of the 3rd Cavalry rode to the old prison and released their comrades. Some of them were in their uniform, some without. The 20th N.I. gained their parade ground and broke into the bell of arms. The 11th N.I. were equally frightened but were less disorderly. The shopkeepers promptly shut their doors and fastened their windows. The bad characters of the bazar willingly joined the fray, but it was not before four hours had elapsed that the lawless Gujars of the neighbouring villages scented trouble and poured into the city. The valiant Colonel Carmichael Smyth was conspicuous by his absence. Leaving his subordinates to take care of his regiment, he hurried first to the Commissioner, then to the Brigadier, and finally to the General Commanding and spent the night in the safety of the cantonment under the protection of the Artillery. There was no lack of daring among the officers. The Artillery was commanded by Major Tombs who later played a heroic part before the walls of Delhi. There was young Gough who subsequently won the Victoria Cross and shared the adventures of the indomitable Hodson. There was Jones who commanded one of the assaulting columns at Delhi. Archdale Wilson, the Brigadier, was not a man of conspicuous resolution but he brought the siege of Delhi to a successful conclusion. The General Commanding, Hewitt however failed to rise to the occasion. Labouring under the weight of seventy years, he was found miserably wanting at the moment of need. He had his difficulties. All his horsemen could not ride and those who could had no mount. It was long before the carbineers got their ammunition and nobody knew where to find the enemy, for the sepoy had no preconcerted plan and each party

had gone its own way. The situation was not beyond control and could still be saved with a little energy and initiative. In judging Hewitt we should not, however, forget that he was completely taken by surprise and it will be uncharitable to condemn him for incompetency, if we recollect that General Penny who replaced him had bolted with several high ranking officers to Keonthal when the Nasiri Regiment betrayed signs of insubordination at Simla, and people at Calcutta did not behave better on the black Sunday.

If the cook-boy's cry had caused the panic, other factors certainly contributed to it. The Rifles were actually getting ready for the church parade and their movement lent some semblance of truth to the earlier rumours. While the moderate elements in the 3rd Cavalry had been consulting lawyers, it is not unlikely that the bolder spirits had been contemplating an armed rescue, and when the confusion began they spontaneously galloped to the prison doors. Whether they contented themselves with the release of their own men alone or let loose the convicts as well is not clear.[38] They received no opposition from the guards on duty and did not molest the jailor and his family. But there is no clear account of further events except that there was a mad orgy of arson, pillage, and murder in which no distinction of age or sex was made. Fear had driven the sepoys wild, but the worst outrages were not commited by them. In fact, those on duty mostly remained at their station. A trooper of the 3rd Cavalry rode up to stray English soldiers in the bazar and urged Gunners McCartney, McAlroy, Caldwell, and McQuade to take to their heels.[39] A European medical officer was warned by the Havildar Major of the 11th N.I. of Colonel Finnis's death and of the mutiny of the regiments. A loyal non-commissioned officer of the cavalry rode to Gough's bungalow to report the outbreak. Individual officers and ladies have faithfully recorded their experiences of that fateful evening, but their account is necessarily incomplete. Equally bare of details was Major-General Hewitt's official report drawn up the day following, and we do not know in what sequence one act of violence followed another. It is clear that no regiment was entirely free from blame while it is equally evident that every regiment had its loyal element. Of the 3rd Cavalry, the most aggrieved regiment at the station, about one hundred sowars remained steady; the least affected was the 11th

[38] See James Doorit's evidence, Depositions, No. 21, pp 14-15. He says that the new jail was raided by villagers after 2 o'clock in the morning and eight hundred and thirty-nine prisoners were then released

[39] Depositions, Nos. 40-43, pp 27-29

N.I., of which the majority quietly dispersed after the *émeute* and one hundred and twenty of them later returned to Meerut. Even in the turbulent 20th N.I. there were a few mild spirits. But those who preferred to cast in their lot with the majority necessarily did not share their views. In one instance at least, a non-commissioned officer, who had stood by his British superior till the last, placed loyalty to his regiment above his personal conviction. He and two of his men had safely escorted Lieutenant Gough to the artillery lines "where, having brought me in safety," states that gallant officer, "they made their final salute and left me, notwithstanding my earnest entreaties and persuasions that they should remain with me,—the native officer averring that his duty was with his regimental comrades, and whether for life or death they must return to the regiment".[40]

It appears that when the sowars of the 3rd Cavalry had gone to the old jail, the 20th N.I. moved out to their parade grounds and so did their neighbours, the 11th N.I. Their commander, Colonel Finnis, had hurried to the spot and his efforts to restore order met at first with some amount of success. Even the 20th N.I. had shown some inclination to listen to reason, when a sowar of the 3rd Cavalry rode by raising for a second time the alarm that the Europeans were coming. From that moment chaos and disorder reigned supreme. A young recruit fired at Colonel Finnis and killed him.[41] The murder of their commanding officer decided the hitherto wavering 11th N.I. The 20th had indeed opened fire on them as well, but they feared that for the death of Colonel Finnis they were certain to be held responsible and safety demanded that they should make common cause with the other regiment. Some of their officers were still with them and they asked them to look after their safety. Neither the 11th nor the 3rd did any harm to their own officers. Lieutenant Gough testifies, "Indeed I may say that not a single officer's life was taken by our own men"[42] and Wajir Ali Khan, Deputy Collector, says that though plunder was going on all night the sepoys did not touch a thing. "They only set fire to the Bungalows and murdered Europeans, at least, it was so rumoured in the city and sudder."[43] Instances are not wanting where the sepoys

[40] Gough, *op. cit.*, p 38. Gough adds—"I never heard again of my friend the native officer. I knew his name of course ; but though I found out his house in the Oude District, no trace of him was ever again found, and I could only conclude he met his death at Delhi in the mutineers' camp."

[41] It was alleged that the young recruit, who killed Colonel Finnis, was in his turn shot by other sepoys

[42] Gough, *op. cit.*, p 39

[43] Depositions, No. 3, p 2

chased the pillagers away when the intended victims had no means of defence.

The worst offenders came from the slums of the city and the recently broken prison. The city police readily joined hands with them. The officiating Kotwal, Dhanna Singh was a Gujar and his men came mostly from that lawless tribe. At this crisis he had no control over them and their passion for plunder got better of their good sense. The unsuspecting wayfarers were ruthlessly robbed and murdered and Indian citizens suffered at their hands equally with the Europeans. The house of Babu Birbal was burnt down and the wine shop of Kailash Chandra Ghosh, a Bengali, was attacked. But the most heinous murder of that night was committed near Captain Craigie's bungalow. Mrs. Chambers was alone at home, as her husband was away on duty and she was a newcomer to the station. She was expecting a baby soon and could hardly take care of herself. Craigie's house was under the protection of loyal sowars. Mrs. Craigie had not forgotten her neighbour, but in the turmoil, her instructions had been lost on her servants. The young woman was literally butchered to death. The culprit, a butcher, was later arrested and hanged. Nothing outraged European feeling so much as the brutal murder of Mrs. Chambers and the avenging army everywhere held the sepoy responsible for it.

The mutiny caught the station off its guard. Lieutenant Gough was quietly dressing for duty. The two chaplains were off to the church. The Greatheds were preparing to go there. Lieutenant MacKenzie was quietly reading a book in his own bungalow. Miss MacKenzie and Mrs. Craigie were driving to the evening service and then began the *halla* in the sepoy lines. Gough mounted his horse and galloped down by the parade ground of the 20th N.I., avoiding the lines. "When within view of them", he says, "I saw a sight which has been indelibly stamped on my memory." "The huts on fire, the sepoys . . . having seized their arms and ammunition, dancing and leaping frantically about, calling and yelling to each other, and blazing away into the air and in all directions—absolutely a maddened crowd of fiends and devils, all thirsting for the blood of their officers, and of Europeans generally."[44] He eventually reached his own troop but found everything in the utmost disorder. No attempts were made on his life but no heed was paid to his remonstrances either. He was too late and was forced to turn towards the European line. On his way he tried to warn the Greatheds but they

[44] Gough, *op. cit.*, pp 27-28

were already in hiding and their faithful servants persuaded him to leave. MacKenzie also armed himself and boldly rode towards the lines. He found the road full of cavalry troopers and providentially met Captain Craigie. The troopers made off but not before attempting a few cuts at him. Convinced that their place was the parade ground, the two officers went there. "Nearly every British officer of the Regiment came to the ground, and used every effort of entreaty, and even menace, to restore order, but utterly without effect. To their credit be it said the men did not attack us, but warned us to be off, shouting that the Company's Raj was over for ever!"[45] Craigie noticed some hesitation on the part of a few troopers to join the row and boldly addressed them in their own language. Eventually, a small body of some forty troopers rallied round him and he led them towards the jail. But they reached it too late ; the prisoners were already swarming out and the jail guards had also joined the mutineers. By this time the whole cantonment was on fire. While Craigie and Clarke led the loyal men back to the parade ground, MacKenzie hurried with a small escort to find out what had happened to his sister and Craigie's wife. Thanks to the courage and presence of mind of the coachman, they had reached their bungalow but the mob was scattering fire and death all around and MacKenzie at once appealed to the honour of his troopers. "I determined on a desperate stroke. I . . . brought the ladies down to the door of the house, and calling to me the troopers commended their lives to their charge. . . . Like madmen they threw themselves off their horses and prostrated themselves before the ladies, seizing their feet and placing them on their heads, as they vowed with tears and sobs to protect their lives with their own."[46]

The sepoys did not tarry long at Meerut. It would have been a folly if they had. There were fifteen hundred well-armed Europeans against them and their own fighting strength was still uncertain for they knew well that there were many waverers in their ranks. Yet they did not know where to go. Some suggested that they should set off in a body for Rohilkhand; others preferred the imperial city, only forty miles away. In small groups they set out for safety. Their lines were laid in ashes and women and children had to be left behind without any provision for food or shelter. Some took the road to Hapur, others went Bagpat way, yet others were found a few days later in the neighbourhood of

[45] MacKenzie, *Mutiny Memoirs*, pp 12-13
[46] *Idem*, p 18

Gurgaon. The great majority wended their way to Delhi. Babu Harsaran Das, a Delhi businessman, was on his way to Meerut that night. Just after crossing the Hindan between 12 and 1 o'clock he met a party of eight sowars; four miles further on he came by a larger party of twenty-five. At dawn he reached Muradnagar and left the high road which he considered unsafe. He met a party of the jail-guards at the village of Muri. They sorrowfully told him how the sowars, aided by the *badmashes* of the Sadr Bazar, had broken into the jail. They had left Meerut for fear of punishment and joined the rebels. Ramlal, a coachman, met eight sowars at about 1 o'clock in the morning after he had reached the Meerut road by Gaziuddin Nagar bridge, while about five miles from Muradnagar he came across a bigger party of thirty. Near Meerut he saw other parties, some with, others without, arms. Many villagers noticed that the rebels were in a hurry and threw away their arms and property all along the way.[47]

With the morning the mob dispersed. "The daylight", writes Mrs. Greathed, "showed how complete the work of destruction had been, all was turned into ruin and desolation, and our once bright happy home was now a blackened pile." But the cantonment had many losses to mourn. Rev. T. C. Smyth says: "Mr. Rotton and I have buried thirty-one of the murdered, but there are others whose bodies have not as yet been brought in." He absolves the 11th N.I. of incendiarism and murder and adds that they had "protected the ladies and children of the corps".[48]

If the night of the 10th had its horror, it witnessed many noble deeds of courage and kindness as well. The story of Golab Khan, the Commissioner's Jamadar, has gained wide publicity. But for his devotion the Greatheds might have perished under a burning roof. Buktwar Chaukidar risked his own life to save that of his mistress, Mrs. Macdonald, but unhappily his efforts were not rewarded with success: After the mother's death he succeeded in removing the children to safety with the help of the nurse Nasiban who never left them. Mrs. Courteny's life was saved by a party of native horsemen belonging to the 3rd Cavalry. Asghar Ali's bungalow was attacked but he refused to betray his Christian tenants even under threat of personal violence. But for the humanity of the local Indians the casualties would have been heavier still.[49]

[47] Depositions, Nos. 23-27, pp 15-17
[48] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, pp 105-107
[49] Williams' *Memorandum*, p 4. Also see depositions of witnesses No. 37 to 39, 52 to 54, 67, 71 to 73

The Meerut outbreak was sudden and short-lived like a summer gale. It came without the least warning, caused tremendous havoc while it lasted and then subsided as quickly as it came. Colonel Smyth's parade was undoubtedly the immediate provocation. General Hewitt in his distress asked the Colonel, "Oh! why did you have a parade? . . . My division has kept quiet, and if you had only waited another month or so, all would have blown over."[50] But for the deep-rooted distrust and disaffection that prevailed among the sepoys, nothing untoward might have happened if every responsible person had been watchful and discreet. But the least indiscretion on the part of any person of the ruling race might have fired the train.

Shortly after the outbreak, the military authorities had shown some signs of activity and a feeble demonstration had been made against the sepoy lines. One company of the Rifles had been detailed to protect the treasure at the Collector's *kachari*. Wilson marched with the Artillery and the rest of the Rifles to the parade ground but the insurgents were not to be found there. A few troopers were loitering near the cavalry lines but they made themselves scarce as soon as fire was opened. Wilson feared that the sepoys might stage an attack on European quarters and thither he led his men. On the way he was joined by the carbineers who had started earlier but lost their way. Nothing more was done that night, no pursuit was attempted. If a junior officer offered to lead a patrol along the Delhi road, he was not taken seriously. For the next few days the Meerut brigade remained idle in its barracks unable to shake off the lethargy into which it had fallen. It is almost certain that if the rebels had been pursued and attacked, Delhi would have been saved and though the general discontent might still have caused some minor outbreaks here and there, the local risings could have been suppressed in detail and the Government would have been spared the widespread revolt that followed soon afterwards.

The lethargy and inertia at Meerut cannot be easily explained unless it is frankly recognised that even brave hearts may sometimes yield to panic. Rotton who was present there at the time says: "In truth, our military authorities were paralysed. No one knew what was best to do, and nothing was accordingly done."[51] Never before had the heroic Briton in India felt more helpless and less secure. An insignificant minority in the midst of an unfriendly multitude, he read treachery in every face and

[50] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 45
[51] Rotton, *The Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi*, p 7

suspected treason in every quarter. "One day we were all to be poisoned by the native servants; the next we were all to be murdered on the anniversary of some Mahomedan feast; indeed every sort of unfortunate prediction was promulgated."[52] So the "women and children and unarmed civilian refugees were given shelter in the 'Dumdama', an often-described walled enclosure. The Generals and their staffs and many other officers took refuge in a barrack, over which a guard was duly mounted. Piquets, inlying and outlying, were told off; and every precaution was taken to prevent the cantonments being rushed by the 'budmashes' of the 'Burra Bazar' or the Goojars of the neighbouring villages!"[53]

[52] Rotton, *op. cit.*, p 22
[53] MacKenzie, *op. cit.*, p 36

## Chapter Three

# DELHI

There was a King at Delhi. He had no kingdom but the memory of his ancestral empire still lingered. His authority did not extend outside his palace fort and inside it was narrowly circumscribed by British supervision. Convention conceded him all the forms and etiquettes of the past, and popular reverence invested his office with a majesty not sanctioned by facts. He subsisted on a pension which his courtiers loved to treat as tribute. In fact he owed his royal status to British indulgence, but to the man in the street he was still the suzerain lord of India, the lineal successor of Babur and Akbar and the lawful master of the *de facto* rulers. The Company's Government carefully nursed this fiction of uninterrupted succession and undiminished sovereignty. Until a short time before they had rendered to him those tokens of homage to which his ancestors were accustomed in the palmy days of the empire. When the Governor-General passed through the imperial city his representatives waited barefooted before the throne, humbly enquired about His Majesty's health and dutifully presented a *nazar* to the 'Ruler of the Universe'.[1] He, in his turn, invested them with the customary robe of honour. A court bulletin was issued as in the days gone by, and the world outside was solemnly informed of what His Majesty did or said. In some Indian states coins were still issued in the name of the Badshah.[2] A living symbol of the glorious past to which many Indians still

[1] *Nazar* was ordinarily paid four times a year on the occasion of Id, Bakr-Id, Nauroz, and the King's birthday. As for the etiquettes observed, see Edwards, *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*, quoted by Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, pp 661-62. "We were required to proceed without any shoes into the immediate presence—such having been in all ages in India the usual mark of respect on the part of an inferior on approaching a superior. On this occasion we compromised the matter by putting short worsted Cashmere socks over our boots . . . . We made a low obeisance to the Emperor, and on approaching the throne, each in succession presented his bag of gold mohurs, and inquired after His Majesty's health and prosperity."

[2] This tradition continued to be respected even after the formal extinction of the empire. "The Holkar Shahi coins continued to bear the name of the second Shah Alam as late as the reign of Tukoji Rao II (1844-1886). Similarly the Gwalior rupee bore the fragments of Akbar II legend till 1886." Sen and Mishra, *Sanskrit Documents*, p 63

wistfully turned, the King was a potential source of danger to his foreign masters, for he represented that legitimate authority which alone could accord legal sanction to armed resistance to the Company's Government.

The Government were not unaware of this danger. They had carefully eliminated all dominant dynasties of India and had removed their lawful heirs to a safe distance from their former seats of power. The Peshwa, who could command the allegiance of the entire Maratha empire, had been sent to a distant North Indian village. The heirs of Tipu had been transferred from Vellore to Calcutta. The son of Ranjit Singh had found a home in the British Isles beyond the reach of all mischief. But the titular emperor had been permitted to reside at his ancestral capital in Shah Jahan's palace. The East India Company had once found it expedient to exploit the theory that associated the paramountcy of India with the throne of Delhi, but with the consolidation of their power in Bengal and the Carnatic and with the fall of the Maratha and Sikh powers, the monarchical institution at Delhi had lost its political utility. On the contrary, it was a constant reminder of the legal anomaly that recognised a *de jure* ruler as against a *de facto* government. The abolition of the royal title and the exclusion of the royal family from the fortified palace of Delhi, therefore, became imperative.

Bahadur Shah succeeded to the title in 1837. Like his father he assumed the titles of Badshah (emperor) and Ghazi (holy warrior), for people had long been accustomed to an emperor without an empire and a warrior without any experience of war. Long past the prime of life, he was hardly the person to lead a forlorn cause. In normal times nothing more would have been expected of him than quiet maintenance of the phantom court with some semblance of dignity. He had none of the dash and daring that distinguished his warlike ancestors, but he had inherited some of their literary tastes. In his spare hours he diverted himself by writing verses.[3] Born and bred in the vicious atmosphere of debauchery and intrigue of a profligate court, he was not free from the superstitions of his times and was liable to be influenced by unscrupulous adventurers.[4] Hasan Askari, his spiritual guide, was at best a charlatan. Every Moghul prince dreamt

[3] He had four volumes of poems to his credit, and found relaxation in verse-making even in the worst days of the Mutiny

[4] Sir Syed Ahmed says that "the Ex-king had a fixed idea that he could transform himself into a fly or gnat." Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, p 4. Jivanlal mentions that the King once gave a *tawiz* (a charm) to one of his officers which was expected to ensure victory. Metcalfe, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi*, p 141

of the vanished glories of his family but Bahadur Shah was the person least likely to cause his British masters any trouble. Like his father he had asked for an increase in his allowance but the Company was unwilling to add to his pension unless he agreed to give up his title and leave his palace. Only in another subject did he seriously interest himself. He wanted to secure the succession for a minor son, Jawan Bakht, the child of his old age by his favourite queen, Zinat Mahal. But there were several elder princes between that boy and the title. Bahadur Shah never missed an opportunity of pressing his cause with the Company's Government. That Government, in their turn, were watching for a suitable occasion to persuade the head of the royal family to relinquish the ancient title and to remove to a residence, in the neighbourhood of the Qutb, less reminiscent of the imperial past.

Bahadur Shah could not persuade himself to make a sacrifice so humiliating to his house. The British Government were not prepared to perpetuate the mockery that relegated them to the status of a tributary. But they did not want to force the issue. The Moghul throne, decadent as it was, still commanded the reverence of millions, and it seemed impolitic to alienate popular feelings by doing away with an anachronism which had caused no serious inconvenience so far. But the outward forms of subordination were one by one omitted. Lord Ellenborough forbade the payment of *nazar* either on his own behalf or on that of the Resident, though provision was made for an equivalent payment. But there is no financial compensation for the loss of a prerogative and Bahadur Shah felt himself and his family grievously wronged, though he could not openly ventilate his feelings. Meanwhile, Lord Dalhousie had pressed upon the authorities at home the urgent necessity of abolishing the royal title and removing the family to more appropriate surroundings, but the Court of Directors could not agree with the Board of Control about the expediency of the measure, and when the Governor-General was finally armed with the necessary authority he had to yield to the opinion of Hobhouse and agreed to desist from force.[5] It was decided to wait for Bahadur Shah's death, a contingency that might not be long delayed, for the King was infirm and old. In 1849, the heir-apparent died and the Resident at the Court of Delhi came to a definite understanding with Prince Fakir-ud-din, who stood next in succession, that on his father's demise he would be recognised as the head of the royal family with the title of Shahzada or prince, and that the citadel, which

[5] Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. II, pp 134-38

commanded the city, the river, and the magazine, should be vacated. The arrangement did not long remain a secret and was resented by most of the princes. In 1856, Prince Fakir-ud-din also died, not without a suspicion of poison, and the King, under the influence of Zinat Mahal, made a fresh effort to advance the claims of Jawan Bakht, but none but the most sanguine expected any success. The days of the Delhi monarchy were numbered. With the death of Bahadur Shah, the unworthy descendants of Shah Jahan and Alamgir would be expelled from their ancestral home unless something unexpected happened.

The morning of the 11th May 1857 found the Meerut rebels crossing the Jumna at Delhi by the bridge of boats. The city was still unaware of the outbreak at Meerut. In the summer, the local college met early in the morning, and Professor Ramchandra had gone there, not knowing what the day had in store for him.[6] Munshi Mohanlal, the famous explorer, was leisurely conversing with an English friend. Papers had arrived from Calcutta the day before.[7] Kashi Prasad, the Jhajjar Nawab's agent, went out for his usual morning ride and found nothing unusual to warn him of the impending troubles.[8] Munshi Jivanlal had paid a visit to Captain Douglas in the palace with a copy of his diary, and after returning home, had ordered his *palki* for going to the court.[9] Mainuddin Ḥasan, the officer-in-charge of Paharganj police station, was already in the Collector's court in connection with a criminal case.[10] Simon Fraser, the Commissioner, was still in his bed. Suddenly an alarm spread that horsemen from Meerut were at the city gates. They had killed the Toll Collector, and set fire to his office. Hutchinson, the Collector, immediately left his court and hurried to the Commissioner's bungalow. The summer morning that began so peacefully witnessed a horrible massacre and violence stalked openly in the streets of Delhi.

The King was as much taken by surprise as the Commissioner. A tumult below the palace windows first warned the old man of the arrival of the mutineers. In the old days, when the empire was a living institution, the emperors were accustomed to show themselves from a balcony to their subjects below. Bahadur Shah had not the courage to confront an unruly crowd and he sent

[6] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, p 210. The night before Ramchandra had been told that the cause of sepoy disaffection had been removed

[7] *Idem*, pp 207-209

[8] Coldstream and Muir, *Records of the Intelligence Department of the Government of the North-West Provinces of India*, Vol. II, p 35

[9] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 75

[10] *Idem*, p 41

Captain Douglas instead. Douglas told them to move away as they were causing annoyance to the King. The insurgents next went to the Calcutta gate which they found closed. Meanwhile Simon Fraser, the Commissioner, and Hutchinson, the Collector, had driven there. They had also been joined by Captain Douglas. If all the gates could be safely secured the mutineers would have found it difficult, if not impracticable, to force their way into the city. But there was no lack of sympathisers within. Once the rumour spread that the sepoys had killed the Europeans at Meerut and come to Delhi to fight for the faith, the streets were thronged with a curious mob and the lawless elements soon appeared on the scene. Many of them regarded the English as 'trespassers' and usurpers; and only recently, a proclamation, purporting to come from the Shah of Iran, had called upon the citizens of Delhi to get rid of them. It is not possible to say whether the hand that threw open the Rajghat gate, where the mutineers appeared next, was guided by political motives or lust for loot. But as the exultant horsemen surged in, their ranks were swelled by the local rowdies.

The first casualty in the city was an Indian Christian, Dr. Chamanlal, who was standing in front of his dispensary. The rebels then swarmed towards the palace. The palace guard offered no resistance and made common cause with the sepoys. Fraser, Douglas, and Hutchinson had, in the meantime, returned to the palace where they were murdered. Mr. Jennings, the chaplain, Miss Jennings, his daughter, and Miss Clifford, her friend, shared the same fate. The mutineers called upon the King to assume command. He pleaded poverty, he pleaded infirmity, but the rebels would not be denied. They had come to serve their King and to fight for their religion and the question of pay and promotion mattered little.[11] But he still temporised and, on the advice of his friend and physician, Hakim Ahsanullah, contrived to send a camel rider to Agra to convey to the Lieutenant-Governor the news of the Mutiny at Meerut and the arrival of the mutineers at Delhi. It was fondly hoped that the European troops of Meerut would not be long in coming, but hour after hour passed without any relief from that quarter and every moment the situation became worse and worse. For the first time in the King's knowledge, an armed mob had violated the sanc-

[11] "The King told the Rebels he was a mere Pensioner, couldn't help them in any way, or pay them. They replied that he was not to mind ; they didn't want pay". "He (the King) is said to have plainly told the Rebels, that he wished to have nothing to do with them." Kashi Prasad in Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, p 36 and p 39. Also see Jivanlal, in Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 83

tity of his palace and sowars rode where the scions of the noblest families of the realm, nay, even the agents of the East India Company, would courteously dismount. The old King quailed before increasing violence. But not until nightfall did he ultimately resign himself to the inevitable. What part the princes played in this tragedy will never be known. They were naturally more ardent and less circumspect. Here was an opportunity for reviving the glories of their house, the alternative was expulsion from their ancestral home and extinction of the imperial title. The choice was easily made and subsequent events show that Mirza Moghul, Mirza Khizr Sultan, and Mirza Abu Bakr made the most of the opportunity that chance had thrown in their way. At midnight, twenty-one salvoes announced that the descendant of Babur had assumed the reins of the empire.

Unlike Meerut, Delhi had no European troops. Some of the sepoy officers of Delhi had served on the Court Martial at Meerut and the greased cartridge was as much a concern to them as to the poor troopers they had agreed to convict. That very morning the proceedings of the Court Martial of Iswari Pande had been read to them. In what light did the condemned Jamadar appear to the sepoys of Delhi? Was he a felon, guilty of treason, who had rightly forfeited his life, or was he a martyr to the cause of religion, a victim to British villainy? It was unfortunate that this particular document should have been made public on the morning of the 11th May. It was equally unfortunate that the 38th N.I., the regiment that had lately refused to go to Burma, should be on duty in the city on that fateful day. But these were accidents beyond human control and accidents sometimes accelerate the pace of history.

The cantonment was located a few miles from the city in the village of Rajpur now covered by the University campus. It was some time before Brigadier Graves could be apprised of the trouble. But the sepoys were apathetic. The 54th N.I. followed Colonel Ripley to the Kashmir gate but refused to fight even when their commander was cut down and officers were shot dead. That settled the fate of the city. Major Abbott of the 74th could not retrieve the situation. The main guard was held till the afternoon but in the evening the sepoys of the 38th N.I. opened fire on their officers and they had to leave as best as they could with the ladies.

The city had in the meantime been denuded of its Christian population, Indian and European. The Daryaganj area, then largely inhabited by Europeans and Anglo-Indians, was thoroughly scoured and every Christian was put to the sword. The Bank

was looted and the manager and his family were massacred. The press of the local newspaper was raided and the compositors were killed to a man. A large party of men and women had kept themselves concealed in the house of the Raja of Kishengarh for two days. The King later sent his eldest surviving son to rescue them but either he reached the place too late, or his remonstrances went unheeded and the poor fugitives all died. Some fifty prisoners were carried to the palace where they were executed a few days later. But there were many miraculous escapes, the most remarkable of which was that of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, the Joint-Magistrate. A large number of fugitives took shelter in the flagstaff tower, and when they found that there was no prospect of relief, set out in different directions under cover of night. Some safely reached Meerut, others went to Karnal and Ambala. In the day-time they concealed themselves in the jungles by the roadside, at night they pursued their weary way by lonely lanes and devious routes until they safely reached their destination. There were kind people in the countryside who took pity on their misery and gave them food and shelter. On the other hand bad folk were not wanting who robbed them of their few belongings and drove them away from their temporary refuge. The Gujars, Rangars, Mewatis, and other tribes, with predatory predilections, had a merry time.

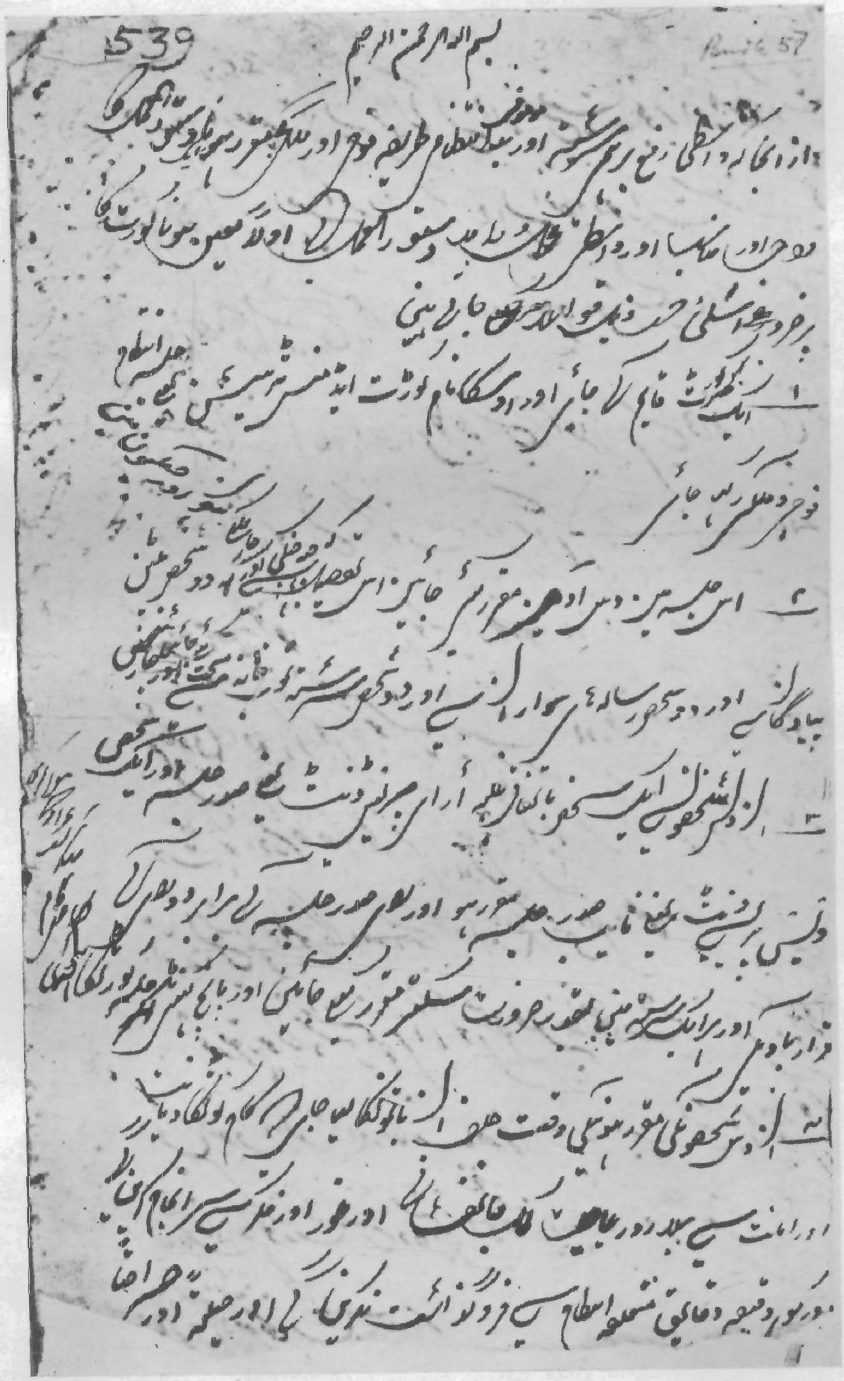
The disaster was relieved by a glorious deed of heroism. The city was abandoned, the cantonment had to be evacuated, but the magaizne was not tamely surrendered. The effective garrison consisted of nine Englishmen, for they could not rely on the Indian crew. Early in the morning, Sir Theophilus Metcalfe had come to the magazine to remove two guns for shelling the bridge, but the bridge had already been crossed and the guns could not be moved for lack of transport cattle. Lieutenant Willoughby made what arrangement he could for the defence of the magazine and resolved to blow it up at the last moment. He could not expect any succour from the cantonment, and the crowd outside was growing more and more menacing. At last surrender was demanded in the King's name and ladders were brought for carrying the place by assault. At a preconcerted signal the train was fired and a tremendous explosion announced that the magazine was gone. Of the heroic nine, three died at their post, Willoughby and five others escaped with their lives. Forrest, Raynor, Shaw, Buckley, and Stewart lived to receive the Victoria Cross, but Willoughby, their leader, survived the explosion to die at the hands of a village mob on his way to Meerut.

The jailor, Lala Thakur Das, also held the convicts in check

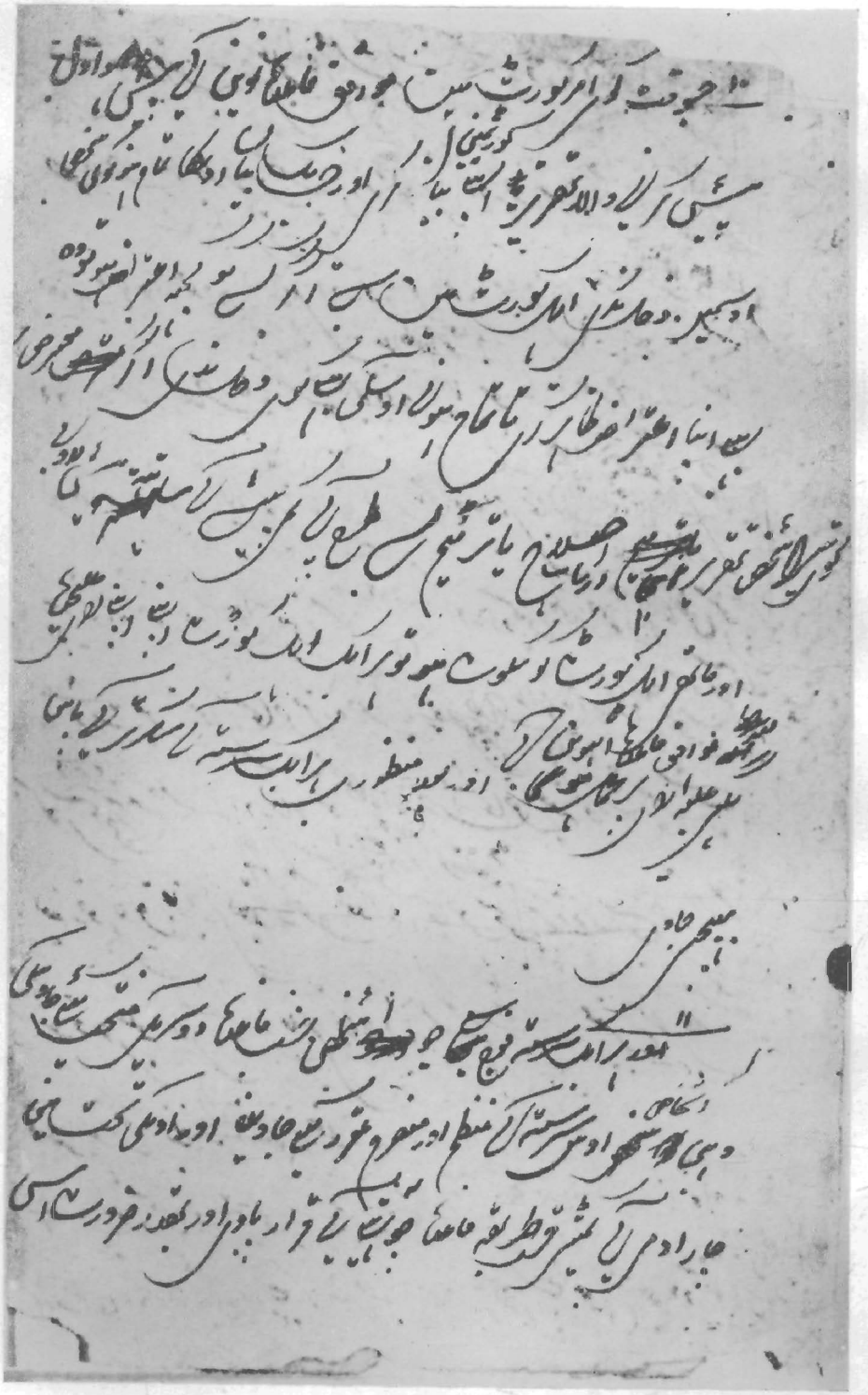
till five in the afternoon. When the guards showed unmistakable signs of indiscipline he had no alternative but to leave his post.[12] Two Anglo-Indian youths in the telegraph office flashed the news to Ambala, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar—"The Sepoys have come in from Meerut, and are burning everything—Mr. Todd is dead, and we hear several Europeans; we must shut up." Thus was the Punjab warned of the fate of Delhi.

For the next few weeks the sepoys were left alone. There was no hostile demonstration from Meerut and what happened elsewhere they did not know. But the King was in a sorry plight. Accustomed to have everything provided for him, he was now called upon to make provision for the troops. His trusted adviser, Hakim Ahsanullah, had no administrative experience and, like the King, was essentially a man of peace. Moreover, he had no faith in the sepoys and the sepoys did not trust him either. The Hakim firmly believed that the British would sooner or later return and he was not the man to champion a cause he believed to be lost. On the 12th, the King summoned to his council some of the Muslim nobles of the city among whom was an uncle of the Nawab of Jhajjar. They were called upon to form an executive council, order had to be restored and maintained in the city, food and quarters had to be found for the soldiery and new troops had to be recruited. Disorder prevailed all over the capital, bad characters caused trouble to men of wealth and rank on the pretext of searching for Europeans and Christians, shops were closed and business was totally suspended. There was no money in the treasury and funds were needed for financing the army. It was a tremendous task that would have daunted the boldest spirit and both courage and talent were sadly lacking in the new Court. No wonder that the King's appeal found no response and one of the invited nobles categorically refused to serve on the council.[13] Nevertheless, a governor was appointed. Mirza Moghul became the Commander-in-Chief and high military ranks were conferred on other princes. But the princes were as incompetent as the King, and they were hardly the persons to control troops who had already tasted indiscipline. The King paraded the streets, mounted on an elephant and personally appealed to the traders and citizens to resume their normal occupations, but their fear was not easily allayed. The troops quartered themselves in the palace gardens and became a menace to peaceful people. Writes Munshi Jivanlal: "From house to house the unwilling King was distract-

[12] Jivanlal in Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 84
[13] *Idem*, p 85



*Constitution of the Mutiny Court at Delhi*



ed by cries and petitions—now from the servants of Europeans who had been murdered, now from the shopkeepers whose shops had been plundered, . . . . all looked to the King for immediate redress. Appeals were made to him to repress the plunder and rapine now common throughout the city."[14] The King tried his best, but his best did not amount to much. He pleaded, he remonstrated with the troops, and at a later stage he threatened abdication, but without any effect. A weak man does not make a good king and the last of the Moghuls was not cast for the role of a revolutionary leader.

The difficulties that confronted the new administration were not minimised and the more reasonable elements in the army were prepared to co-operate with the King and the Commander-in-Chief. Disapprove as they did of English ways, they could not altogether escape the influence of western ideas and English institutions. 'A Court' or 'military and civil management committee' was appointed "to do away with mismanagement and to remove disorder from the civil and military establishments". The committee consisted of ten members, six of whom were elected by the army, two to represent each of the three branches of the service, infantry, cavalry, and artillery. It was their special business to look after military affairs, while the remaining four were charged with the civil administration. It is not clear who were to elect the civilian members and how; but in the selection of the military wing of the Court the seniority and efficiency of the candidates were to be taken into consideration, and the majority rule was to prevail. The committee was to elect its president and he was vested with an extra vote. The Court was under the Commander-in-Chief without whose approval its decisions could not be implemented. The Commander-in-Chief was authorised to send back to the Court for its reconsideration any of its decisions he did not confirm, but if the Court still persisted in its original views, a reference was to be made to the King whose authority was final. The King and the Commander-in-Chief could, if they liked, attend the meetings of the Court.[15] On paper, the Court was a democratic body, and its representative character and military majority should have ensured its authority over the army, and it should have served as an efficient curb on military licence. But in practice, it achieved nothing. When exactly the Court was appointed is not precisely known, for its constitution bears no date. It continued to function till the

[14] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 86
[15] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 57, Nos. 539-41

fall of Delhi. But it could not make its power felt either over the army or over the civil officers of the short-lived government, and anarchy and disorder continued as before.

As the month of May progressed the King was faced with fresh troubles. According to a report, dated the 28th May, the sepoys had already plundered Delhi for three days. They suspected Begam Zinat Mahal to be in league with the English.[16] The King asked some of the neighbouring landlords to supply the army with rations but the administration suffered from shortage of funds. So the bankers of the city were summoned to the fort and asked to contribute to the treasury. Jivanlal records, "Under great pressure from the King, the newly appointed officers and city bankers raised one lakh of rupees for the payment of the troops."[17] A lakh did not go a long way to meet the emergency, and a few days later the soldiers plundered a rich man of Hyderabad, and orders were issued to seize bankers and wealthy persons suspected to be friendly with the English and extort money from them. In the last week of May the situation slightly eased as a lakh and seventy five thousand rupees came from Rohtak, but the atmosphere was still clouded with suspicion and distrust. The guns on the Islamgarh bastion were tampered with and rumour associated the King's anglophil minister and friend Hakim Ahsanullah with this act of sabotage.[18] To make matters worse there was no good understanding between the Delhi and Meerut mutineers.[19] The latter complained that the Delhi men had enriched themselves with the loot of the local treasury while they suffered all sorts of privations due to want.

Lack of preparation on the part of the English Government gave the mutineers and their leaders a long respite. From the 12th May, the day following the capture of Delhi, to the 8th June, the day of the battle of Badli-Ki-Serai and the capture of the ridge, leaders of the revolt had ample time to set their house in order and prepare themselves for the inevitable attack. But they wasted their opportunity, and June found the sepoy army divided against itself, the business class unfriendly to the military, and the King vainly trying to protect his subjects from the excesses of the princes.

General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, was not in the best of health when the Mutiny broke out. He had repaired to the

[16] Hakim Ahsanullah Khan was also suspected. Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp 92, 93, 103, 104, 107
[17] *Idem*, p 99
[18] *Idem*, p 103
[19] *Idem*, p 105

cool heights of the Himalayas, like other invalids of his race, in search of recreation and rest. British troops were posted in the summer stations of Dagshai, Kasauli, and Subathu. John Lawrence, Commissioner of the Punjab, was at Rawalpindi on his way to Murree. When the electric wire flashed the news of the outbreak he cancelled his journey and got in touch with his colleagues at Lahore and Peshawar. Anson ordered the troops at Dagshai to be ready to move down. A Gurkha regiment was ordered from Dehra-dun to Meerut. The Ambala sepoys were in uncertain temper, but Anson reached there on the 16th. All was not lost as yet and if Delhi could be recovered without loss of time the rest of India might be saved. Lawrence wrote letter after letter to Anson urging him to hurry on. But Anson had his handicaps. He had to get transport, he had to get the necessary arms and ammunition, he had to arrange for the tent equippage, the food supply and the siege-train, before he could march against a fortified city, seven miles in circuit and defended by troops armed and trained by the best British officers. The ramparts of Delhi could not be expected to topple down at the blast of his trumpet. The most daring soldier cannot afford to throw caution to the winds and the stake was nothing less than the empire of India. If prompt action was calculated to strike terror into disaffected hearts and rally waverers, a defeat would spell disaster and demoralisation which might do incalculable harm to the British cause, for already many officers in distant stations were under the impression that their people in the rest of India had been completely exterminated.[20] Anson had necessarily to go slow. He did not spare himself or his officers, but as a soldier he knew his job; he could not allow himself to be hurried by an impatient civilian whose ignorance led him to underestimate military difficulties and the political consequences of another disaster.

Soon there was reason to believe that the British morale was not at its best at the moment. The Nasiri regiment of Gurkhas were posted at Jutogh near Simla. Like all the troops in the hills they had been ordered to proceed immediately to Ambala. But they were in arrears, and no provision had been made for the safety of their women and children during their absence, and they were not prepared to march till they were satisfied that their families would suffer no want while they were away. There were frayed tempers, strong words, and probably more tangible signs of insubordination, which fear magnified into a mutiny. The

[20] Griffiths, *A Narrative of the Siege of Delhi*, p 7

European population of the summer resort heard that the Gurkhas were on their way to Simla and chaos and disorder at once set in. Lord William Hay, the Deputy Commissioner, kept his head, and unprotected women and children were asked to gather in the Bank premises which could be defended, but many of them lost their nerve and tried to place themselves at the maximum distance from the threatened city within the minimum possible time. Unfortunately some of the army officers did not behave any better. They did not consider even the Simla residence of the Raja of Keonthal safe enough and left for the Raja's country palace. Among those who sought safety in Raja Sansar Sen's capital were Major-General Penny, Lieutenant-Colonels Keith Young, Greathed, Thos. Quin and Colyear, four Captains and three Lieutenants.[21] But the Gurkhas were humoured and the fugitives quietly returned home. Greathed later distinguished himself in the siege of Delhi, and the Nasiri regiment acquitted themselves with credit in the district of Shaharanpur where they were later employed.[22] In their case at least trust begot trust.

Before he marched east Anson found it necessary to contact Hewitt and restore communication with Meerut. It was his plan that the Meerut troops should join him at Baghpat and then the combined force should proceed against Delhi. Accompanied by a body of Sikh horsemen, Lieutenant Hodson rode to Meerut with the Commander-in-Chief's message. But unknown to him, Captain Sanford also had left for Ambala with twenty troopers of the 3rd Cavalry. Neither of the two officers encountered any opposition on the way. The Raja of Patiala, the Raja of Jind, and the Nawab of Karnal had decided to remain loyal and place the resources of their states at the disposal of their British suzerain. To them fell the important task of guarding the road from Ambala to Delhi, thus keeping open communication with the principal base of operations while the British army was engaged before the Muslim metropolis. But Anson was not destined to reach Delhi. The British troops were not accustomed to march through the plains of North India during the hot months of summer. They had, therefore, to rest during the greater part of the day and march at night. The sanitary condition in the camp was far from satisfactory and death from cholera and sunstroke was quite common. On the 27th May, Anson, ill and worried, died of cholera, and General Sir Henry Barnard succeeded him in the command of the field force.

[21] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 323
[22] Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp 80-83

Barnard was a Crimean veteran. He was new to India. The Meerut contingent under Brigadier Wilson joined him at Baghpat according to plan. They had two successful engagements with the rebels at Ghazi-ud-din Nagar and the river Hindan before they reached their rendezvous. On the 8th June they met the rebel army at Badli-ki-Serai, five miles from Delhi. In the battle that followed the rebels were defeated with the loss of twenty-six guns. They had the double advantage of number and terrain, but superior generalship won the day. On the British side four officers were killed and several wounded. Among the killed was Colonel Chester, the Adjutant-General of the Army. That very day the victorious army pushed forward and occupied the ridge, the low range of hills that form the outer rampart of Delhi. The sepoys did not lack courage, but there was no military talent to guide them, or the ridge would not have been abandoned without a more determined resistance. The British officers, chased out of Delhi on the 11th May, found themselves back at their cantonment on the 8th June, less than a month later.

The ridge faced only the north side of the city and commanded three of its principal gates. The troops of General Barnard were too few to attempt an investment. In 1857 neither the city of Delhi, nor the hostile camp on the ridge was ever besieged. The Mathura road was open throughout; and rebel troops from Oudh and Rohilkhand, from Jhansi and Kanpur, from Nasirabad and Nimach, found no difficulty in reinforcing Delhi. On the other hand, the British communications with their base of operations at Ambala were seldom threatened and no serious attempt was made to cut off their supplies. The first thing that Barnard did was to secure the strategical points on the ridge. On his extreme right, where the ridge abruptly slopes down to the suburb of Sabzi Mandi or the vegetable mart, stood a stone building called Hindu Rao's house. The owner, a scion of the Ghatge family of Kagal and a near relative of Daulat Rao Sindhia, was dead and the house was untenanted at the time. Here was posted Major Reid with the Sirmur Gurkhas. In its better days the house had witnessed many convivial parties, for the Micawberian optimism of the owner admitted no financial difficulties. Little did he imagine that those walls would be riddled with bullets and cannon shots soon after his death, and his residence would witness the life-and-death struggle between his British friends and their insurgent army. On the left, the flagstaff tower, a round two-storied brick-building, offered an excellent observation post and a picquet was placed there. Not far from the tower was an old Pathan mosque and near Hindu Rao's house stood an

observatory. Both of these buildings were used as picquet posts. Beyond the flagstaff tower, on the river-bank, was the country house of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe from the sheltered compound of which the sepoys could harass the British left wing. Ludlow Castle, a turretted brick building, could be conveniently used as a position of vantage against the British centre. But the sepoys made little use of them; it was the Hindu Rao's house and the British right that felt most the fury of their assault.

Barnard had to decide immediately whether he should not assault the city at once, on the off-chance of catching the enemy unprepared. The nights were still dark and it was hoped that sepoys, demoralised by three successive defeats, would not make a determined stand. The political advantages, likely to accrue from the prompt recapture of the Moghul capital with the King, outweighed every other consideration, and Sir John Lawrence never ceased to urge on the General the supreme necessity of daring and audacity. The glorious example of Robert Clive and the early British heroes was cited with confidence, and Calcutta was equally convinced that to knock at the gates of Delhi was to enter and take it. Once Delhi was taken, the mutiny at other stations could be suppressed in detail. These feelings were shared in the camp on the ridge by the junior officers whose ardour was yet untempered by experience. Wilberforce Greathed of the Engineers had actually prepared a plan to which Barnard gave his approval with considerable mental reservations. Without any experience of India, Barnard was in an unhappy position, for he was conscious that military considerations did not warrant what political expediency demanded, and political need might claim priority at a crisis like that. According to Greathed's plan, two of the city gates were to be blown away under cover of the night and the city was to be taken by a *coup de main*. Success depended on absolute secrecy, but when the two columns got ready, Brigadier Graves, the field officer of the day, refused to move on verbal instructions only. He rode to the General's tent, and when Barnard questioned him as to the chance of success he gave his candid opinion that though the city might be taken by surprise it was another matter whether it could be held afterwards. Graves knew Delhi better than anybody else in the camp and his opinion naturally could not be lightly dismissed. In any case the delay had spoilt what chance the plan originally had, for surprise was no longer possible as dawn had already begun to break, and the enterprise had to be abandoned. It caused great disappointment at the time and no little criticism. But it was later realised that Barnard had done wisely, for failure would

have been fatal at this juncture. Rotton thinks that an early assault on Delhi with a force so small and equipments so meagre would have been foolish and foolhardy. "I think no general would have ventured on such a course if the enemy within Delhi had been European instead of Asiatic." He observes, "Even with the enemy we had to deal with, if they had not been judicially blinded, and so acted contrary to every dictate of common-sense, simultaneous attacks in the front and rear of the camp, continued for any length of time together, and made moreover in sufficient force, and not by driblets, as was the wont of our adversaries, our troops, after making the most ample allowances for Anglo-Saxon energy and valour, must have eventually sunk beneath fatigue and exposure in combination."[23] The same fears were shared by Colonel Keith Young who says that the General had decided to attack Delhi with his present force against his own conviction; "but it *might* have failed from some unlooked-for accident, and then 'Good-Bye!' not only to our little force, but to India itself!"[24] Even Harvey Greathed, Wilberforce's elder brother, was persuaded that "the time is gone by for what we expected to have done on the night of the 12th." "All the men in military command are in favour of waiting for reinforcements".[25]

If the British officers had planned a *coup de main* within three days of their arrival at the ridge, the rebel army was not idle either. They did not lack courage and energy though there was no plethora of talent among them. On the 9th June, the day after the battle of Badli-ki-Serai, they made an attack on Hindu Rao's house. Luckily for the British, the famous Daly's Guides had arrived that very morning, after a long march of five hundred and eighty miles from Mardan near Peshawar, and helped to beat back the assault in the afternoon. The next day, the rebels threatened the rear of their enemies and the Britishers in their turn occupied the Metcalfe House and posted a picquet there, thus extending their left flank right up to the river. Then followed a daily but desultory artillery duel in which the rebels had the advantage of superior calibre and marksmanship. On the 15th the sepoys again sallied out in a vain attempt to recover the Metcalfe House and two days later was fought a more desperate action. The sepoys tried to raise a battery on the Idgah, an enclosed place of prayer, which commanded the Hindu Rao house. Barnard at once realised that if the sepoys succeeded in their purpose his position on the right would be untenable,

[23] Rotton, *op. cit.*, pp 62-63
[24] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 61
[25] Greathed, *Letters Written during the Siege of Delhi*, p 50

and he resolved to prevent it at any cost. Fortunately for him, the sepoys had no officer of ability to guide them, and when they gained some advantage they did not know how to press it home.

On the 19th the British rear was seriously threatened. At one time Tombs' Artillery seemed about to be lost. Brigadier Hope Grant was wounded and his life was saved by the selfless gallantry of a Muslim sowar. When the sun set the day was yet undecided, but the sepoys did not perceive to what straits their enemy would have been driven if they could hold their ground. British communication with the Punjab would have been completely cut off and they would have found themselves besieged on the ridge. When the British returned to renew the fight in the morning they found that the sepoys had disappeared under cover of night. Many devout Englishmen on the ridge sincerely believed that God was with them and had confounded their enemies. After a respite of three days the sepoys again returned to fight. It was the centenary of the battle of Plassey[26] and it had been confidently prophesied that the Company's rule would come to an end just one hundred years after Clive's victory. So they fought desperately believing all the while that the stars in their courses were also fighting for them. Major Reid, whose post (Hindu Rao's house) was in serious danger, wrote: "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 cannonade from the city, and the heavy guns which they had brought out, raged fast and furious, and completely enfiladed the whole of my position."[27] But science ultimately triumphed over number and brawn yielded to brain. Greathed believed that the sepoy casualty was heavy.[28] Heavy enemy losses were reported previously in the camp on the ridge but Rotton observes, "Their casualties were often magnified beyond all due bounds, . . . I verily believe that . . . the odds, as far as losses were concerned, . . . were relatively in their favour, and against ourselves."[29] In fact the hospitals were full to repletion in nine days and arrangements were made for transporting the sick to Meerut. The British soldiers had to fight the natives of the country and its inclement climate. There were as many victims of sunstroke, cholera, and dysentery as of the sword and the bullet.

[26] Every English writer believed that the resolute attack launched on the 23rd was inspired by the prophecy, but it is strange that the sepoys should observe the English calendar

[27] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 94

[28] 400 killed and 300 wounded. Greathed, *op. cit.*, p 69

[29] Rotton, *op. cit.*, p 75

On the 24th Neville Chamberlain came to the camp. He had first been appointed to command the Punjab Mobile Column and was transferred to Delhi to take up the office of Adjutant-General, which had fallen vacant on the death of Colonel Chester. His arrival infused the men on the ridge with fresh confidence, and hopes of a *coup de main* were revived again. Wilberforce Greathed was still working with his plans; and Harvey, his brother, wrote to his wife that very day, "Neville Chamberlain has arrived: of this we are all glad, as well as the General. Wilby's bold conceptions may now receive more consideration; General Barnard always thought well of them, but wanted more support."[30] With Chamberlain had come a young Engineer, Lieutenant Alexander Taylor, who was to elaborate the plans of the final assault in September with Colonel Baird Smith. Baird Smith had also been summoned from Roorkee. Anxious to be at the kill, he had left for Delhi on the 29th June. Reinforcements were steadily pouring from the Punjab and the strength of the attacking force had reached the neighbourhood of six thousand and six hundred. The time seemed propitious, the plans were ready. There was no lack of daring spirits in the camp. Hodson had been placed in charge of the intelligence department and the one-eyed Syed Rajab Ali was busy not only in espionage but in sowing dissension in the enemy ranks. Barnard came to learn that the rebels themselves had decided to make a general attack on the English position on the 3rd July, the day fixed for the enterprise. The success of the scheme depended mainly, if not wholly, on the chance of catching the rebels off their guard. If they were prepared for action there was no reasonable hope of carrying the city by surprise and Barnard was not prepared to risk a failure.

Meanwhile the rebel army at Delhi had also been reinforced. The Bareilly troops had arrived at Delhi on the 1st and 2nd July. On the 2nd their commander Bakht Khan waited on the King and offered his services to him. He was an artillery Subadar of forty years' experience and had served in the First Afghan War. In 1857 he was no longer in the prime of life and rode his horse with difficulty. According to Jivanlal he was a man of noble birth and "was the descendant of the same family as the King of Delhi". At another place, however, Jivanlal represented him as saying that "he was a native of Sultanpur in Lucknow, and related to the royal family of Oude".[31] Captain Waddy, his

[30] Greathed, *op. cit.*, p 70
[31] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp 134 & 146

late commanding officer heard otherwise. He describes Bakht Khan as a man of gigantic proportion, " his height about five feet ten inches; forty-four inches round the chest; family of Hindoo extraction, but converted under temptation of territorial acquisition; a very bad rider owing to large stomach and round thighs, but clever, and a good drill".[32] Other officers described him as "a big fat man, obsequious, fond of the society of Europeans, and very intelligent".[33] Bakht Khan had a private interview with the King and he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces in supersession of Mirza Moghul. That prince was on the same date appointed Adjutant-General and must have resented the appointment of a newcomer to the supreme command. From all accounts it appears that Bakht Khan was a braggart and hardly possessed the qualities expected of a commanding officer. He had paid his troops six months' pay in advance and he assured the King that he would not trouble him for funds. In fact he had brought with him sufficient treasure from Bareilly and for the time being the financial worries of the King were relieved to a certain extent.

The King had other troubles. Essentially a man of peace, he could not countenance military licence, but he had no control over the army. It was on that account that he had asked Bakht Khan to take all necessary steps for the maintenance of order in the city. The defeat of the 23rd June had naturally caused a panic and tradesmen closed their shops as a measure of precaution. This could not be permitted, for provision had to be obtained for the troops or anarchy would have ensued. That is why the King ordered all shops to be opened even by force. But once this was done he expected the soldiers to leave the city people alone and obtain whatever they needed by lawful means and fair purchase. But the soldiers were not amenable to discipline. On the 14th the shop of one Jamna Das was plundered because he sold atta at a high price.[34] On the 20th the sepoys caused disorder in Billi Mahalla and plundered several houses there.[35] The Paharganj area also suffered at their hands and two citizens complained to the King that the sepoys forcibly took away goods from shops without payment and entered houses of

[32] Cooper, *The Crisis in the Punjab*, p 201

[33] Bourchier knew him personally. He says, "Bukht Khan, like the Nana, was always very fond of English society. At one time, when studying Persian, he used to come twice a day to my house to read and talk with me. He was a most intelligent character, but a more dreadful hypocrite never stepped on earth." Bourchier, *Eight Months' Campaign against the Bengal Sepoy Army*, p 44

[34] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 121

[35] *Idem*, p 124

the poor people and took away beds, woods, vessels etc.[36] Whatever might have been his shortcomings, Bahadur Shah honestly tried to do his duty by his people, and weak and infirm as he was, he never shirked his responsibilities. Worried by constant complaints, he addressed a strong letter on the 27th June to Mirza Moghul, then Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army, and Mirza Khair Sultan, who then held the rank of a Colonel. "Not a day has elapsed, since the arrival of the Army, and its taking up quarters in the City, that petitions from the towns-people have not been submitted, representing the excesses committed by numerous Infantry Sepoys".[37] But the princes on whom the King had to depend for the maintenance of law and order could not always resist the temptation of helping themselves to other people's property. From an undated petition submitted by two merchants, Jugal Kishor and Sheo Prasad, we learn that vexation and annoyance were caused by the functionaries of the State and the princes, and royal troops still came to plunder their house and threaten to arrest them.[38] On the 4th July, two days after Subadar Bakht Khan had been invested with the office of the Commander-in-Chief, one Ahsan-ul-Huq complained about the dissolute and lawless conduct of Mirza Abu Bakr,[39] the King's grandson; and Mirza Moghul was ordered to recover the looted property. The very next day a more serious complaint was lodged against this prince by no less a person than Imani Begam, a daughter-in-law of the first Bahadur Shah. She represented "that the night before Abu Bakr, in a state of intoxication, came to her house with several sowars to seize her, and fired several shots with rifles and pistols, and beat a number of people of the Mohalla. The police arrived, but Abu Bakr attacked the Kotwal with a sword, had him seized and taken away in custody, insulted him, and finally plundered her house." The King was very indignant. He deprived the offender of his military rank and ordered him to be arrested.[40] But the prince did not find it difficult to evade punishment. The King disgraced the princes

[36] Joint petition of Chand Khan and Gulab Khan, *Proceedings of Bahadur Shah's Trial*, p 8

[37] *Idem*, p 9

[38] *Idem*, pp 10-11

[39] *Idem*, p 12

[40] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp 138-39. This is corroborated by Kashi Prasad, "The King keeps the Shahzadas strictly in order. Abu Bakr went, in connection with some female intrigue, to a house, and plundered the adjoining residence of the Cazee's son, Abdool Huk. On this being reported to the King he directed the Cotwal to apprehend and forward to him any of his sons who committed acts of violence, and to punish himself any of the sulateen similarly apprehended. He reduced Abu Bakr from his command." Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 39

and directed them to keep away from his levies. The headmen of the Mohallas, were notified that the princes were to be treated like common men if they were found guilty of any lawless action. But it does not appear that royal displeasure had any sobering effect on these wayward youths.

If the city people suffered wrongs at the hands of the mutineers and the princes who commanded them, the countryside was not better off. We read in a petition from Syed Abdullah, dated 29th June 1857,—"The whole of the Autumnal crop . . . of the Fasli year 1265, has been totally devastated, and more than this, the very implements of Agriculture, such as ploughs, the wood-work on wells, have been all carried away, in plunder by the soldiers."[41] The Gujars were scouring the country around for plunder and loot.

In times of war the man in the street cannot expect the security of peace time. But the common folk suffered both at the hands of their countrymen who wanted to overthrow the alien government and the loyal agents of that government who sometimes happened to be their kith and kin. In justification of the sepoy leaders it may be noted that they had to take proper precautions against machinations of British agents and there was no lack of them within the city walls and no one was above suspicion. Hakim Ahsanullah, the King's confidant, was suspected, and not without reason, of complicity with the British. A man had been caught inside the palace tunnelling in a room. Sometimes men of rank and wealth suffered from unmerited suspicion. The Maharaja of Patiala was an avowed friend of the English and his troops were engaged in guarding their line of communication. Ajit Singh, a prince of the Patiala family had long been resident in the imperial city. He had demanded a partition of the state, and, foiled in his attempt to secure with his elder brother (step-brother) an equal share of his ancestral property, had retired to a voluntary exile on a pension.[42] On the 10th June a body of sepoys raided his residence and brought him a prisoner to the King. The King released him on the assurance of Hakim Ahsanullah Khan that there was no good feeling between Ajit Singh and the ruler of Patiala.[43] An artilleryman, Kuli Khan, had particularly distinguished himself in the King's service, but three sepoys were wounded by a shot from his battery when they were returning to the city after the daylong battle of the 23rd June. He was at once accused of collusion with the English and

[41] *Proceedings of Bahadur Shah's Trial*, p 10
[42] For Ajit Singh's claims see Sen and Mishra, *op. cit.*, pp 24-28
[43] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 119

placed under arrest.[44] A decisive victory over the English would have eased the situation but fear and suspicion discovered treachery in every quarter and the feeling of insecurity continued unabated.

Though the morale in the British camp was reasonably high and the officers went about with a characteristic care-free air, there also the atmosphere was not quite free from misgivings. The ammunition supplies for heavy guns were by no means abundant and the unspent round shots of 24-pounders, fired by the enemy, had to be collected and fired back. During the first three weeks, we learn from Rotton, the decreasing number of the Government troops and increasing reinforcements of rebels caused no little concern about the future. Sometimes their spirit rose as they heard that Sir Hugh Wheeler was proceeding westward at the head of a strong army,[45] sometimes a less assuring rumour announced the supersession of Colvin by Wheeler as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces.[46] They could not rely completely on the loyalty of the Indian soldiers who were risking their lives and limbs in their service. Reports of difference in the enemy ranks brought them little comfort for there was treachery within their own camp and three Purbiahs had to be hanged and the rest of the company dismissed. Throughout the month, news of outbreaks in widely scattered out-stations continued to arrive. Above all they had not that confidence in the leadership of their general, which sustains hope and engenders courage in the midst of dire disaster. Keith Young did not think much of him and his opinion was shared by others. "The truth is," he writes, "General Barnard, though a very nice, kind-hearted, and brave old man, is no more fit for his present post than he is to be Pope of Rome; and as to General Reed, I fancy he is no better, but he very wisely abstains from interfering."[47] Barnard was no fire-eater, he did not possess the daring of Nicholson and the audacity of Hodson, and he was expected to achieve a feat of arms which most people did not consider practicable. Hodson maintained that "Anglo-Saxons can thrash Asiatics at any odds". But that was rhetoric, and a responsible military leader cannot permit himself to be carried away by rhetoric. There were instances of British defeats at the hands of the Asians, and Barnard hesitated to take a gambling chance, for the stake was too high and he could not permit himself to gamble away an

[44] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 126
[45] Rotton, *op. cit.*, p 111
[46] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 90
[47] *Idem*, p 80

empire. He took his duties seriously enough and did not spare himself in their discharge. A man of advanced years, unaccustomed to Indian climate, he went about the camp at all hours of the day and had no sleep at night. At last he succumbed to excessive physical exertions and heavy mental strain and expired on the 5th July after a short attack of cholera. Even in his delirium he spoke of strengthening the right. "He was a highminded, excellent officer," wrote Harvey Greathed, "and on European ground, and in a European war, would have done the State good service; but he was too suddenly thrust into the most difficult active service in India that could be imagined, and found himself placed in command of an army which General Anson had organised, and obliged to carry out operations which he would not himself have undertaken with the means at his command."[48] No one had pressed for a general assault on Delhi with greater persistence than Harvey Greathed and his graceful compliments to the dying man may be accepted as sincere and genuine. To the Court of Delhi it was reported that the English Commander-in-Chief had committed suicide.

General Reed succeeded Sir Henry Barnard in the command of the Delhi Field Force. He was an invalid and "fit for little more than lying on his bed all day".[49] The strain of active command was too much for him. Though there was no question of taking the city by assault for some time to come, the army did not suffer from scarcity of food but there was shortage of "creature comforts". On the 8th July English bacon sold at five rupees per pound and a pound of candles, which cannot be classed as a luxury, cost three rupees. Other things however were quite cheap. The camp could not therefore furnish the ordinary comforts which a man in Reed's health wanted. It is therefore no wonder that he relinquished command on the 16th. But the interval, brief as it was, was not uneventful. On the 9th, a body of rebel sowars boldly rushed past an artillery picquet, routed a body of carbineers and reached the native artillery post and invited them to come to Delhi with their guns. The artillery men remained staunch but the 9th Irregulars were suspected of collusion with the raiders. An action was fought on Sabzi Mandi side also. Casualties were heavy on both sides. The British lost two and twenty-three killed and wounded, the rebel loss was computed at fifteen hundred. It was in this action that Lieutenant Hills and Major Tombs won their Victoria Cross. The 9th Irregulars had

[48] Greathed, *op. cit.*, p 94
[49] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 136

an influential champion in Brigadier Chamberlain who refused to share the general suspicion against them. They were not disarmed but removed to the Punjab with the 17th.

If the 9th Irregulars were spared, the white soldiers did not fail to vent their rage on the inoffensive camp-followers. They had served their masters well and often risked their lives so that their masters might not go without their dinner. They had collected the round shots to replenish the scanty stock and the price was only a few pice per piece. The army could not do without them for a day but the raid of the 9th had made the British soldier lose his head. Kaye says, "It is related that in the absence of tangible enemies, some of our soldiery, who turned out on this occasion, butchered a number of unoffending camp-followers, servants, and others, who were huddling together, in vague alarm, near the Christian churchyard. No loyalty, no fidelity; no patient good service, on the part of these poor people, could extinguish for a moment the fierce hatred which possessed our white soldiers against all who wore the dusky livery of the East."[50] No disciplinary action was or could be taken against the culprits. Rotton observes, "There was some little stir about the matter, as it would appear that several of the deceased met their fate at the hands of our own European soldiery. I remember the authorities were very sensitive on this point, and I think very properly so; as life is not to be taken from any man without sufficient cause. But the disorder necessarily occasioned by the sudden appearance of an enemy in the camp, and the ignorance of the fact in our men, that they were slaying friends and not foes, are all sufficient excuses. It was one of the accidents of war, to be deplored, but not to be helped."[51]

Another severe action was fought on the 14th. The rebels attacked Hindu Rao's house and the Sabzi Mandi picquets in great force, under the cover of heavy artillery fire from the city walls, and the battle raged the whole day. In the evening Brigadier Chamberlain accompanied a column to drive them back and got a ball in his shoulder which kept him *hors de combat* till the fall of Delhi. This might have considerably influenced Reed in his decision to retire, as Adjutant-General Chamberlain was his right-hand man.

The loss of three Commanders-in-Chief in quick succession was a misfortune from which an Indian army might not have easily recovered. The British, however, not only stood the shock

[50] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 581
[51] Rotton, *op. cit.*, p 134

but more than held their own against their ill-disciplined adversaries. Archdale Wilson, the new Commander-in-Chief, was not the seniormost officer in the camp. On the fateful evening of the 10th he had not given evidence of any exceptional ability at Meerut. But he was a steady man and had considerably rehabilitated his reputation by the victories of Ghazi-ud-din Nagar and the Hindan. He at once turned his attention to routine matters of the camp. Keith Young wrote on the 22nd July, "Matters go on much more quickly and smoothly in camp now that Brigadier Wilson is commanding. He is a gentlemanly, quiet, steady 'old fellow', looks to everything himself, and gives clear and distinct orders, and all feel much more at their ease than they did under their late commander, in whom no one had confidence. He (Brigadier Wilson) is rather over-careful, perhaps, but this is a fault quite on the right side".[52] His lack of drive and daring did not matter at the moment for there was no immediate prospect of an assault on the rebel capital. Harvey Greathed had not only reconciled himself to the delay but persuaded himself that it had been wise to abandon the earlier schemes. "The tide is beginning to turn," he wrote on July 29, "and the waves already beat with less force against the rock of our defence. I think the part borne by this army will look well in history, when all opposing difficulties are fairly considered. It might have been more brilliant, but if a reverse had taken place, the results would have been terrible; and it is now pretty clear that delay will not be fatal to the empire; and I think the dates on which outbreaks and massacres took place elsewhere will show that they did not ensue because Delhi was not taken on our arrival."[53] Hopes of succour from the east, it is true, could no longer be entertained and dismal news had reached from Kanpur of Wheeler's fate,[54] but it was believed that things were not going well within the city walls. There were reports of sepoys clamouring for pay and deserting in large numbers, harassed bankers and citizens anxiously awaiting the return of the English, dissension among the sepoy leaders and the King's counsellors, difference between one rebel regiment and another, shortage of ammunition and above all impending conflict between the Hindus and Muslims on the question of Id sacrifice.

The reports were not all well founded. Though banias were suspected of buying percussion caps in the British camp and sell-

[52] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 145
[53] Greathed, *op. cit.*, pp 153-54
[54] The news of the fall of Kanpur reached Delhi about the 18th July but Havelock was expected to reinforce Delhi after relieving Lucknow

ing them in the city there was no lack of shots and shells. There was a real shortage of powder. On July 18, Rajab Ali, the *darogha* of the Magazine, reported that gunpowder had run short and on July 24 Muhammad Bakht Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, submitted a similar report to the King. There was a limited supply of sulphur in the city and the powder manufactured by the rebels did not reach the British standard. Early in July the King had directed the Commander-in-Chief to make arrangements for securing money from bankers and merchants, as the treasury was exhausted. It was proposed to meet the emergency by raising loans and contributions and the King actually executed a bond to one Brindaban.[55] Rao Tularam of Rewari was directed to collect the revenue of his area and revenue collectors in other areas received similar instructions. It does not appear that the King had any serious financial embarrassment in the month of July as he did not always demand contribution but pressed for loans. To Ramji Mal, a banker, he said—"I ask ou for money as a loan; I do not want to take it as a tax. See, ıy friend Jeoti Persha (Joti Prasad, contractor of Agra) had lvanced 30,000 rupees to the English; on what grounds do ou demur to lend me money."[56]

Though contributions were not demanded, citizens still contiued to suffer at the hands of the soldiery who took the law ıto their own hands whenever they suspected anybody of being iendly towards the English and they had good reasons to be on ıeir guard. On the 7th July Colonel Becher brought to Keith oung a letter from Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabhgarh.[57] The aja had been assisting the King of Delhi with supplies and men, ıt he now assured the British of his staunch friendship and ffered to visit their camps. On the last day of the month the ıme officer referred to a letter from "The Jhujhur Nawab" xpressing his wish to come in and make his *salaam*.[58] General akht Khan complained to the King that evil tongues were busy ısinuating that he was in secret league with the enemy.[59] Rao Tularam was playing a doubtful game. While paying *nazar* and lip-allegiance to the King he was fighting his neighbours in furtherance of his personal interest. To another noble man he is

[55] *Proceedings of Bahadur Shah's Trial*, pp 42-43. In a letter dated 15th July Mirza Moghul is asked to raise forced loan on an interest of 1 per cent. In another letter of the 28th July he is asked to raise loan without interest. Mutiny Papers in National Archives of India, Bundle No. 153, No. 9

[56] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 174

[57] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 112

[58] *Idem*, p 164

[59] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 161

alleged to have written, "Are you intoxicated that you think the English are going away from Hindustan? They will most assuredly return and will destroy you."[60] These chiefs were supposed to have closely identified themselves with the King's cause, but they were secretly negotiating for a settlement with the English, even before the British had succeeded in achieving any notable success against the sepoys. The double-dealing of these clever chiefs went unsuspected but Alap Prasad, an agent of the Nawab, was accused of harbouring English emissaries. A large body of soldiers went to his house and "charged him with concealing Europeans". They searched and plundered his house and took away property worth 50,000 rupees. General Bakht Khan wanted to stop this outrage, but the troops he sent refused to interfere. The case was later brought to the notice of the King who ordered Mirza Moghul to make an enquiry.[61]

The Muslim festival of Id was approaching and Hodson confidently expected Muslim fanatics to fight the Hindus over the customary killing of cow in the Jami Masjid. His spies had reported of dissensions going on. "Some of the Mahomedan fanatics", we are told, "have declared their fixed intention of killing a cow as customary on that day at the Jumma Musjid. It is hoped that they will religiously adhere to their determination, and there is then sure to be a row between the Mahomedans and Hindoos."[62] A large number of Moghuls at Delhi had declared themselves as Jehadis, their ranks had been swelled by outsiders, and in July a large body of them had arrived from Tonk. The Jehadis were not trained soldiers and though they fearlessly faced death they were of little use in the battle-field as their idea of fighting consisted of waving their swords around the head. There was at least one woman among them who led a cavalry charge and killed two of her opponents before she was wounded and taken prisoner.[63] The Jehadis however were a source of embarrassment to the King and his ministers. Their services could not be declined, and at the same time their demand of the declaration of a holy war or Jehad against the unbelievers could not be encouraged. At Lucknow the merits of a Jehad had been ex-

[60] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 174
[61] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp 166-68
[62] Keith-Young, *op. cit.*, 158
[63] *Idem*, p 143. "Did I tell you that they took a woman prisoner the other day, who they made out was leading a charge of Cavalry and who killed two of our men with her own hand?" Greathed also refers to this amazon. "A Joan of Arc was made prisoner yesterday ; she is said to have shot one of our men, and to have fought desperately. She is a 'Jehadin', a religious fanatic, and sports a green turban, and was probably thought to be inspired." Greathed, *op. cit.*, p 130

tolled in a proclamation issued in the name of the Wali himself.[64] But at Delhi there was a large number of Hindus in the rebel army, and responsible Muslim opinion was disinclined to alienate them in any way. For similar reasons, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly also offered to prohibit cow killing, should the Hindus co-operate with him in his war against the English.[65] Everybody was wondering how far the King would be prepared to go for the sake of unity. It was evident that no decision in this respect could be universally popular. Hakim Ahsanullah hesitated to forbid a time-honoured practice and would fain be guided by the Maulavis. But the King took courage in both hands and informed the General and officers of the army that "no cows were to be killed within the city during the festival of the Eed, and if any Mahommedan should do so he would be blown away from a gun; and whoever, on the part of a Musalman helped to kill a cow, would also be killed."[66] The King himself set an example to his subjects by sacrificing a sheep at the Idgah. So on the first of August, the day of the Id, there was no internecine war or factious fight at Delhi. The morning was spent in prayer, the King held a ceremonial Darbar, at which he received presents and distributed dresses of honour. Keith Young wrote to his wife the next day, "Our hopes of a grand row in the city yesterday at the Eed Festival have not, apparently, been fulfilled—at least the only newsletter received from the city alludes to nothing of the kind. The King had issued strict orders against killing cows, or even goats,[67] in the city, and this, if acted upon, must have satisfied the Hindoos; and instead of fighting amongst themselves they all joined together to make a vigorous attack to destroy us and utterly sweep us from the face of the earth".[68] The battle raged all that afternoon and the night and continued till noon the next day. The sepoys threw themselves again and again against the British defences to be mowed down by a steady fire from the batteries. But they rallied and returned to the assault undismayed by the hail of bullets. Their courage deserved a better reward, but courage unsupported by science, was of no avail against disciplined troops entrenched on the ridge. For two months they had tried to dislodge the enemy from their posi-

[64] Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 1752-1753, 31 Dec., 1858. The paper was found at Bareilly.

[65] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 22-23, 30 April, 1858. "If the Hindoos will come forward to slay the English, the Mahomedans will, from that very day, put a stop to the slaughter of cows".

[66] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 170

[67] This is not correct

[68] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 171

tion of vantage, their assaults were led mainly against the right flank, only occasionally were the rear and the left threatened, and never was any attempt made to envelop the whole camp by a simultaneous attack all along the right, left, centre, and the rear. As fresh rebel regiments reached Delhi, an attack on the ridge was made to signalise their arrival and prove their prowess. But there was no well-thought-out plan to execute and no master mind to conduct the campaign. Numerical superiority was more a disadvantage than a source of strength, for association of trained troops with an armed rabble, devoid of discipline and even the rudiments of military science, was more likely to cause confusion in their ranks than to contribute to success. Repeated failures had sored their spirit and the sepoys attributed their ill success to treachery at high quarters. Their suspicion fell upon Hakim Ahsanullah Khan when the magazine was exploded on the 7th of August.

From the beginning the Hakim had no sympathy with the Mutiny, and it is very unlikely that his views were a complete secret to the sepoys. How the explosion took place nobody knew. It might have been an unlucky accident, or it might have been a deliberate act of sabotage, for some secret agents were admittedly operating on behalf of the English. The explosion took place soon after the Hakim had visited the magazine. He was suspected of being in correspondence with the English. Keith Young tells us that the suspicion was not unfounded.[69] When the Hakim's house was raided and searched, a compromising letter was discovered. Cooper says that this letter was deliberately planted by Rajab Ali with a view to compromising the Hakim.[70] No wonder that the Hakim was placed under arrest, according to Keith Young's information. Jivanlal was told that the Hakim was concealed by the King in an underground chamber of the palace but he had to surrender the minister ultimately to the soldiers: the ladies of the Hakim's family, however, safely effected their escape and were thus spared further humiliations.[71] But such loss of confidence in the King's trusted adviser lowered the morale of the army and caused despondency at the court. The mutineers did not know that the King was in this respect at

[69] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 186. In a letter, dated the 25th May, 1857 Sir John Lawrence advised Harvey Greathed to write to Mahbub Ali Khan, Hasan Ali Khan, Aminuddin Khan Ziauddin Khan, Ilahi Baksh, Ramjidas Gurwala and Mathuradas Shaligram who, he believed, would prove loyal and would be glad to open communication with Greathed. Kaye Manuscripts, Home Miscellaneous No. 726, p 591.

[70] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p 206

[71] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 186

one with the Hakim and had opened negotiations with the English as early as June.[72] The King, however, was not alone in his design to betray his army.

Jivanlal was not likely to know about the secret correspondence between the palace and the British camp, but the sepoys must have scented something queer and their suspicion was directed to the right quarter. They openly accused Zinat Mahal, the principal queen, of treachery and bad faith. The Mutiny had completely upset her plans. She had been trying to secure the succession for her son, Jawan Bakht. Successive deaths, natural or unnatural, had removed two of the principal rivals. All the surviving princes, with the exception of Mirza Kobash, had signed away their birthright. It only remained to persuade the British authorities that Jawan Bakht was a person worthy of the title and his succession would be popular. The Mutiny, however, brought the older princes to the forefront and if the English were defeated, Mirza Moghul, and not Jawan Bakht, would be the choice of the army. Mirza Ilahi Baksh was busy working in the interest of the English and Ahsanullah might have seconded his efforts. Maulavi Rajab Ali[73] must have lent his active co-operation. The plan was simple. If the British authorities agreed to guarantee the old pension and privileges of the King and restore the *status quo ante bellum,* his party would contrive to destroy the bridge of boats, win over the cavalry and with their help overpower the infantry and admit the British into the city. The military position of the British, however, had considerably improved and the very overture was a confession of weakness. Confident of ultimate victory, the British authorities refused to listen to these proposals.

When exactly the negotiations were renewed we do not know. In a letter dated 6th August Greathed informs Sir William Muir that Metcalfe had received a letter by post from the King asking after his health. This was obviously a feeler, but no notice was taken of it.[74] By the 20th August, rumours about the King's overtures had reached the Governor-General and Edmondstone sent the following telegraphic message to Colvin, "Rumours have more than once reached this Govt.: that overtures have been

[72] See Kaye Manuscripts, Commonwealth Office Library, Home Miscellaneous No. 726, pp 345-46 and pp 191, 437 and 442. Greathed refers to the reported overtures from the King on the 16th June. Nothing came out of the negotiations as the British thought that the King would not be able to render them any service as two of the palace gates were in rebel hands

[73] Rajab Ali was in the city till the first week of August. When intensive spy hunting started after the explosion he found the place unsafe and left

[74] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 117

made by the King of Delhi to the Officer commanding the troops there, and that the overtures may possibly be renewed upon the basis of the restoration of the King to the position which he held before the Mutiny at Meerut and Delhi; the Governor-General wishes it to be understood that any concession to the King, of which the King's restoration to his former position would be the basis, is one to which the Government (as at present advised) cannot for a moment give its assent.''[75] On the 27th August Muir wrote to Havelock, "Mr. Greathed had received two or three messages from Shahzadas, 'tendering their services', and vowing strong attachment. They meet with no response'.''[76] Greathed refers to these approaches in a letter dated the 19th of August,[77] though he does not say precisely when they began. Discountenanced by Greathed, they opened their overtures with Brigadier Wilson, as Muir later told Havelock, "The offers of service on the part of some of the princes, which were rejected by Mr. Greathed, were made again to the General in a somewhat altered form. There was a distinct offer to destroy the Bridge and to enlist the services of the Cavalry, and with their aid to put an end to the Infantry, on condition of favour being shown to the Royal Family. General Wilson refused positively to entertain any communications from the Palace.''[78] It is very likely that the negotiations were made through trusted agents and written correspondence was avoided. On the 21st August, an "emissary came out from Zeenut Mukul, the favourite wife of the King, a great political personage, offering to exercise her influence with the King, to bring about some arrangement. I (Greathed) sent word, we wished her personally all happiness, and had no quarrel with women and children, but could hold no communications with any one belonging to the palace:''[79] Though her approaches were thus politely repulsed the British agents still counted on her collaboration and believed that she had some influence with the garrison. In a Persian *chit*, which Hodson gave to Keith Young, occurs the significant sentence, "A document to Mirza Ilahi Baksh and Zeenut Mahal Begum will even now procure the desired aid from the garrison." The *chit* is dated

[75] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 145
[76] *Idem*, Vol. II, p 145
[77] Greathed, *op. cit.*, pp 205-6. "I am beginning to get letters from the princes, declaring they have been all along fondly attached to us, and that they only want to know what they can do for us. They must find out for themselves, for I shall not answer and tell them."
[78] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 148. Though Muir's letter is dated 10th September, the overtures were probably made before the middle of August
[79] Greathed, *op. cit.* p 217

24th and 25th August.[80] The queen was suspected, but the sepoys certainly would not have left her alone if the full extent of her intrigues was known. It was patent that the King had no good feeling for the rebel troops. Their failure to dislodge the British troops from the ridge could not but make an unfavourable impression on him and he openly complained that they had brought ruin on a kingdom that had lasted for five centuries. He threatened suicide when his favourite Hakim Ahsanullah was placed under arrest. Failing to protect the city people from military high-handedness, he openly spoke of abdication. He often spoke of retiring to Qutb and leaving the country for good to seek peace in the holy city of Mecca. Ignored by the princes, insulted by the soldiers, he sometimes sought solace with his favourite muse; for, arms he was unaccustomed to wield, and men he was incompetent to lead. Once in his despair he had exclaimed,

"Clothed in my burial-sheet I shall spend
my remaining days in the seclusion of some garden."

But he did not know what fate had in store for him and the queen and the princes fondly imagined that it was still possible to retrace their steps and return to the security of the past.

The negotiations were secrets known only at the top. But there were other signs of returning confidence which must have cheered the rank and file. Merchants now considered the ridge a good place for business and came with stores of which the soldiers had long felt a need. On the 18th August Keith Young wrote to his wife, "Did I tell you that Peake & Allen have sent down their representative here with lots of stores? There are two Parsee merchants also in camp, Jehangeer and Cowasjee, with lots of supplies, particularly beer, brandy and soda-water. Beer they wanted twenty-four rupees a dozen for at first; but they came down to fifteen rupees for their best English bottle, and the Head-Quarters' mess took a hundred dozen from them at this price." Prospects of profit no doubt brought the adventurous Parsis to the camp but their advent showed that the road was safe and the neighbourhood free from sepoy incursions.

The rebel army, unconscious of the intended betrayal, still resolved to fight, and August brought no respite to the men on the ridge, but they were inspired with fresh hopes, for on the 7th John Nicholson rode to the camp in advance of his column.

[80] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 335. Jivanlal records on the 8th August (Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 190) that the queen informed the King that she was also suspected and 200 troopers were sent to guard her house.

Spiritually Nicholson belonged to the Heroic Age, when reckless courage often went with ruthless cruelty. He could fearlessly face a ferocious tiger, armed with a sword only. His indomitable spirit refused to yield to fatigue, and a hard ride, in the hottest season of the year, still found him ready to fight against heavy odds. For the mutineer he had no mercy and would gladly propose a "Bill for the flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi". The idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities was to him "maddening". "I wish" he wrote, "that I were in that part of the world, that if necessary I might take the law into my own hands."[81] Like many of his contemporaries in India, he was a devout Christian, but he derived his inspiration from the Old Testament and put his faith in an avenging Jehovah rather than the merciful Son of Man. The fear and admiration of the frontier tribes had made a god of him, for the primitive mind prefers a god to be feared to a god to be loved and the divinity that strikes terror naturally commands unlimited homage. Merciless flogging only strengthened the devotion of his Fakirs, for here was a god who could chastise as well as cherish his worshippers. He did not like India and its peoples. Probably, age and the influence of a wife would have softened his temper, but he did not marry, and he was only thirty-five when he was called upon to succeed Chamberlain in the command of the movable column in supersession of several seniors. Though still a Captain in the army, the rank of Brigadier-General was conferred on him, and he justified his appointment by disarming the sepoys at Philaur and eliminating the mutineers of Sialkot. He rode in advance of his men from Ambala and came to Delhi to consult General Wilson. On the 14th, the column, consisting of two thousand four hundred infantry, six guns and some cavalry, with Nicholson at their head, marched into the camp, and was received joyously by their brethren there.

With the arrival of Nicholson the question of a *coup de main* once more gained priority. Nicholson was for immediate action, and would wait only for the unavoidable preliminaries, the arrival of the siege-train, the completion of the batteries and reconnaissance of the enemy position. But Wilson was still unable to make up his mind. "He must have known full well that failure would be disastrous, not only to his force, but to India at large. The Punjaub, up to the present time tranquil, was in a state of vacillation; placards of an inflammatory nature were posted in

[81] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol II, p 401

every village; the Bombay army was shaky. . . . 'India seemed to be slipping through our fingers'."[82] Wilson was not cast in a heroic mould, he naturally hesitated to take a gambling chance, and wanted to be absolutely sure of success before he struck. According to reports received from the city, the rebel army was full forty thousand strong. Wilson would have to leave the camp practically unguarded on the crucial day, and if the enemy attacked the camp from the rear, while the bulk of his troops was engaged elsewhere, it would fall an easy prey to the sepoy. Even if fortune favoured him, and the city was carried, could he hold it against such numerical odds? How would his small force, the effective strength of which did not exceed nine thousand, fare in a street fight in a strange city with a hostile population? These were some of the considerations that worried him. Subsequent events proved that his fears were not entirely unfounded.

The day Nicholson's column arrived (14th Aug.) a body of the rebel cavalry were seen to march out. The sepoys had at last awakened to the necessity of extending their field of operations. In the earlier days, when Barnard could hardly spare troops for guarding the line of communication, the sepoys could fairly expect to cut off enemy supply from the Punjab. In fact, the Jind troops failed to protect the bridge of boats at Baghpat against a column from Delhi, and the Patiala troops might not have proved more formidable. But things were changed now, and Hodson was told off with a body of the Guide cavalry and two hundred of his newly recruited horsemen (Hodson's Horse) to watch them. Hodson was an excellent cavalry leader, the *beau ideal* of the hardy Punjab riders, but like Nicholson, he also belonged to a bygone age. In the Middle Ages he would have made a good *condottiere* and would have excelled as a partisan leader. But in the nineteenth century his easy conscience and elastic standard of honour was an enigma to those who admired his warlike virtues. In serving his country he did not miss an opportunity of serving his personal interests, and he did not neglect the chance of making a penny, honest or dishonest, should it come his way. His bravery and indefatigable industry earned him the friendship of many good men but his callous cruelty equally repulsed many potential well-wishers.

The Irregulars of Hodson's horse were yet undisciplined, but this deficiency was more than made up by the Guides. "Their composition was mixed—Sikhs, Punjabis, Mohammedans, Afri-

[82] Bourchier, *op. cit.*, pp 38-39

dis and other frontier tribes, and even Hindustanis, the latter of whom remained singularly faithful and loyal, even to fighting against their own countrymen. The men were more or less a picked lot, and their experience in war was great, as from early youth they were constantly engaged in frontier warfare, and it might be said of them, every man was a veteran."[83] The first action was against a fortified village inhabited by a number of irregular sowars who had gone on furlough before the Mutiny. It was assumed they were not loyal since they had not returned to duty. A native officer of the 1st Irregular Cavalry came to greet Hodson and his party, and he was immediately placed under arrest. The news frightened the other sowars and they shut themselves in a small building. They were eventually smoked out and slain to a man. Hodson next proceeded to Rohtak. There was an old fort near which "a largish body of armed men were drawn up." Hodson drove into the town. The local people were not unfriendly and brought him supplies. Deeming it unwise to attack the enemy in the town, who were reported to have been reinforced by a considerable force of cavalry, Hodson tried a well-known stratagem to draw them in the open field outside. He pretended a retreat, and when the Rohtak men were lured out, he turned about and charged. The result was a complete rout. With these two victories to his credit, Hodson returned to Delhi after an absence of four days and "received high commendations for the excellent manner in which he had conducted his reconnaissance".

The British soon discovered that if they had friends in the city there were secret enemies in their own ranks. On the 16th August, "an attempt was discovered . . . in two of the batteries near Hindoo Rao's to spoil the priming powder of the guns by putting little stones in it".[84] The offence, however, could not be brought home to any one. But some of the gun Khalasis were "tampering with the charges of powder after they were made up, with the intention of rendering it impossible to throw the shot and shell to the proper distance".[85] Two of them were summarily hanged. Brigadier Wilson was always suspicious of Indian artillery men as most of them were Purbiahs. The irony of the situation was that he could not do entirely without Indian troops, though he could not trust them. The Gurkhas and the Punjabis

[83] Gough, *op. cit.*, p 83

[84] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 209

[85] *Idem*, p 212. Also see Rotton, *op. cit*, pp 193-94. "Some of the gun lascars had been sympathising with the rebels, and in consequence of this sympathy, they had been altering the charges so as to make our fire harmless".

had, according to Keith Young, given no cause for suspicion so far. But there were Sikhs both within and without the city walls.

The sepoys were now wide awake to the impending peril. They had heard that the siege-train was on its way and they had served in the British army too long to miss its implication. If the convoy was intercepted the city could be saved for some time. So they set out with eighteen guns on the 24th August, but their movement was no secret. In fact, the British intelligence service was so efficient that no decision in the city, of any importance, remained long unknown to the British headquarters. The next day Nicholson followed them with two thousand infantry and cavalry and sixteen horse artillery guns. The road was bad, and the day was wet, and it was not easy to drag the guns through sand and mire. But Nicholson was resolved to overtake and engage the sepoys before sunset. He found them on the other side of the Najafgarh canal and decided to charge the enemy position. British troops advanced through a galling fire until they were within thirty yards of the battery. A bayonet charge then put the sepoys to flight, but the battle was not yet over. Another body of sepoys was strongly posted in a village in the rear and they could not be left undisturbed where they were. So fighting was resumed but the sepoys evacuated the village under the cover of night. His task accomplished, Nicholson returned to the ridge. Strangely enough, no further attempt was made from Delhi to intercept the siege-train, and thirty pieces of heavy ordnance with plenty of ammunition reached their destination on the 3rd September. We do not know to what extent this inactivity was due to the suicidal rivalry between Bakht Khan and Muhammad Ghaus Khan, the commander of the Nimach rebels. Bakht Khan openly complained that his orders were no longer obeyed,[86] and soon afterwards he ceased to be the Commander-in-Chief.

In the month of August the financial difficulties of the King had further aggravated. There was no longer any pretence of borrowing, there was no offer of interest as before, no bond was executed in favour of the creditor. A mint was opened in the city, but that brought no perceptible relief,[87] and so contributions were demanded from Hindus and Muslims alike.[88] Big bankers and small shop-keepers were all called upon to subscribe to the war fund, only very poor men were exempted from the levy. But the bankers had probably foreseen the early fall of the government, and some of them did not respond to the summons, others

[86] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 179
[87] Mutiny Papers in the National Archives of India, Bundle 43, No. 45
[88] Mutiny Papers in the National Archives of India, Bundle 153, No. 11

shut themselves in their houses,[89] and a few mustered courage enough to refuse payment altogether.[90] The more crafty had recourse to bribe and men in power were prepared to sacrifice the King's interests for a small price. Muhammad Akbar Ali Khan of Pataudi complained to the King that one Shamsher Ali Khan, Risaldar of the Lucknow troops, had mulcted him of a large sum of money and also robbed him of his property. While the culprit was reprimanded and ordered to restore his loot, the King demanded of the victim a sum of three hundred thousand.[91] Unfortunately for the people, the power of raising loans and contribution was not vested in a single authority. The troops, the princes, the Commander-in-Chief, General Bakht Khan and the Mutiny Court were all collecting funds, independently of one another, and the same parties were called upon to pay more than once. People suspected of sympathy with the English cause were singled out for heavy demands, Jivanlal had so long been left alone, but in August he was asked to pay Rs. 25,000. Mirza Ilahi Baksh pleaded for him and he obtained a brief respite, but later his house was raided and Jivanlal was arrested. Ornaments worth two thousand rupees were plundered from his house, these were recovered and appropriated by Mirza Moghul. Ilahi Baksh intervened for a second time, and his importunities secured the poor man his release.[92] Mufti Sadruddin was another suspect, the mutineers demanded two lakhs of rupees from him.[93] It appears that the currency had depreciated and a high discount was demanded for the current rupee. The Kotwal was directed to proclaim that anyone who charged more than an anna for a rupee would be punished.[94] There was an impression that buried treasure was to be found somewhere in the fort of Salimgarh and the mutineers started digging there.[95] On the 31st August, however, it was proclaimed that the Mutiny Court was the only authority competent to collect contributions to the military chest.[96]

Meanwhile, gunpowder and provisions ran short, and the mutineers, unable to obtain sulphur in the open market, searched

[89] Syed Nazir Ali to the Commander-in-Chief, Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 61, Nos. 382 and 396

[90] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, p 192. Mirza Aminuddin Khan, for instance, said that he had no money and would meet force with force. It should, however, be noted that people who had contributed to the loans more than once were exempted from further payment. One Ramji Das had paid twice before and it was ordered that no more demand should be made on him in August

[91] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 196, Nos. 1-4

[92] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, pp 187-190

[93] Mutiny Papers in the National Archives of India, Bundle 16, No. 8

[94] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 111 (d), No. 71

[95] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 20, No. 2

[96] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 111 (d), No. 90

the shop of one Debi Das where a large quantity was seized. Many people were arrested on the suspicion of supplying provision to the English camp. We learn from several letters of Syed Nazir Ali, the officer-in-charge of the Chandni Chauk police station, that no butchers were to be found in this area, gunny bags were not available there, he could not get any tent-maker, and confectioners were not willing to supply sweets on credit, as their previous bills had not been paid.[97] He sent coolies and dooly bearers more than once, but shoe-makers he could not find, nor could he secure camels and carts. The Chandni Chauk was full of dirt and filth as the sweepers were not doing their work,[98] the officer supplied wood but could not find the brass pots and huqqas (hookas) which every sepoy needed.[99] Nazar Ali complained that transport buffaloes, collected by him, had been let loose by the infantry men.[100] Obviously there was a shortage of artisans and labourers which the army needed so much. The sepoys had no respect for the civil authorities, they billetted themselves in shops, harassed the grocers[101] and plundered the petty traders. The Commander-in-Chief tried his best to maintain order in the city, but his efforts did not bear adequate results. The worst case in August was the abduction of a woman by a sowar.[102] Even the army grass-cutters had their own way of causing damage to the standing crops. According to English information which may or may not have been correct, the sepoys began to desert in big batches, but desertion was not confined to one side only.

With the safe arrival of the siege-train, the British Engineers commenced their final preparations in right earnest. A trench was dug and a battery was constructed near the extreme right of the British lines. These served as protection against sudden assault from the Lahore and Kabul gates and also diverted the attention of the mutineers. From the early days of June, when a small army occupied the ridge, to the closing days of August, when the British troops were getting ready to deliver the final assault on the city, the right wing of the British, posted in Hindu Rao's house, had experienced the most severe fighting. If the mutineers had succeeded in turning this point the rest of the army would have been easily annihilated. The rebel army, therefore,

[97] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 61, Nos. 280 & 281, 295 & 296, 347
[98] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 61, No. 372
[99] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 61, No. 426
[100] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 61, No. 441
[101] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 124, No. 306
[102] Mutiny Papers, National Archives of India, Bundle 60, No. 605

thought that the city was going to be attacked from the right, and high rewards were offered for carrying the trench. The Mutiny Court promised to provide suitably for the family of those who might be killed in this effort. But it was from the left—from Ludlow Castle and Qudsia garden—that the English decided to attack the Kashmir, Mori and the Water Bastions. With absolute lack of military prescience the sepoys left that side unwatched and unguarded. Taylor entered Ludlow Castle all alone and returned safely after making the necessary reconnaissance. When Ludlow Castle was occupied by the English they caught the picquet off its guard. The sepoys had not even taken the precaution of demolishing such old structures, outside the wall, as might prove useful to the enemy in future. Three other batteries, one in front of Ludlow Castle, another in an old custom house near the Water Bastion, and a third in the Qudsia bagh, were quickly constructed.

This could not be accomplished without some loss of life, but the casualties were not armed soldiers but unarmed Indian workmen. More than half the fighting men on the ridge in September 1857 were Indians, and all the camp-followers, who far outnumbered the men of arms, were natives of India, who were inferior to none in passive courage, and faced death and mutilation with stoic indifference. On the 10th September alone, when the first Battery (No. 3) was completed, thirty-nine of them were killed and wounded. "They were merely the unarmed Native Pioneers . . . . and not meant to be fighting men. With the passive courage so common to Natives, as man after man was knocked over, they would stop a moment, weep a little over their fallen friend, pop his body in a row along with the rest, and then work on as before".[103] The British soldiers had a cause to fight for, they laid down their lives for the empire their fathers had founded. But these unfortunate men sold their lives for a mess of pottage. It was their cousins who madly ran after unspent shots to earn a few pice and roused the mirth of the onlooker and the scorn of Chaplain Rotton. "This little circumstance", he says, "shows what dangers poverty or avarice will force men to face".[104] It was abject poverty and not avarice that drove these people to that apathetic indifference to life.

The trench and three batteries were finished in four nights and the fourth was nearly completed, but the Engineers had raised hopes of greater speed, and did not receive their meed

[103] Medley, *op. cit.*, pp 82-83

[104] Rotton, *op. cit.*, p 66. Medley on the other hand pays an eloquent tribute to the bravery of the servants. Medley, *op. cit.*, pp 92-93

of praise from their impatient colleagues. Keith Young wrote on the 16th when No. 3 Battery was yet unfinished—"The Engineers are very much blamed for misleading the General as to the time it would take to erect all these batteries. They talked of doing everything in one night, but none but themselves expected this, thinking that they might take two or three; but the fourth has already passed. They are very fine fellows the Engineers, there is not a doubt about that, but they wanted to make themselves out able to do impossibilities."[105] They were, most of them, in their early youth, and their enthusiasm and ardour refused to recognise patent difficulties of which older men would not fail to take account, but they did their utmost, and history has awarded to them full credit for the capture of Delhi.

On the 11th in the morning the batteries began to cannonade the ramparts and by the 13th the wall was breached at two places. Lieutenant Medley inspected the breaches, under cover of night, and reported them practicable. It was decided to storm the city the next morning. The days of waiting were over, the long expected moment of action had arrived. John Nicholson was the man of the moment. It was no secret in the camp that Wilson had his doubts about the wisdom of the assault, and had reluctantly yielded to Richard Baird Smith's persistent expostulations. He would fain wait for succour from the east, for the west could not send any more reinforcements. Nicholson was all optimism. No doubt assailed him, no fear shook his confidence; he was, therefore, the obvious leader of the enterprise. The assaulting troops were divided into four columns. The first, under the command of Nicholson himself, was to storm the breach near the Kashmir Bastion. The second column, led by Brigadier Jones, was to carry the second breach by the Water Bastion. The third, commanded by Colonel Campbell, was to blow the Kashmir gate and march into the city. The fourth column was to enter the city by the Lahore gate after clearing the suburbs of Paharpur (not to be confused with Paharganj) and Kishanganj. The commander of this column was the hero of Hindu Rao's house, Major Reid, who had so long borne the brunt of sepoy attack and repulsed them times without number. The reserve column was placed under Brigadier Longfield. The columns were ready before daybreak but the assault had to be postponed. Medley's reconnaissance was no secret to the sentries, and the main breaches had been filled up during the night, fortunately for the English, not with brick and mortar but with sandbags. The breaching

[105] Keith Young, *op. cit.*, p 275

batteries, therefore, opened fire again and the ramparts were cleared before long.

Baird Smith knew the city well, and the plan, prepared by him and his staff, had omitted no detail. Every commanding officer had been furnished with a copy, but there is such a thing as accidents of war. Reid's column not only failed in its objective but had to beat a retreat. With his Gurkhas were associated the Jammu troops, led by R. C. Lawrence. At the beginning of the assault Major Reid was wounded and had to be carried to the rear. It was at this point that the sepoys expected the most serious assault and they offered the most desperate opposition. The Jammu troops were soon afterwards routed, but others did not fare better. The whole column was steadily pushed back to Sabzi Mandi and Hope Grant's horsemen were mowed down by a cruel artillery fire from the Lahore gate. Had the sepoys a leader of any ability amongst them, he would not have failed to exploit this success. If he could attack the British camp from the rear, the city would not only have been saved, but the storming parties would have been caught between two fires. But there was no man that day in the Delhi army who knew when to strike and where. The victory over the fourth column could not avert the loss of Delhi.

The first column led by Nicholson soon carried the breach and captured the Mori Bastion. It pushed on and on until the Kabul gate was taken. Beyond the Kabul gate they proceeded towards the Burn Bastion. But further progress was impossible. The sepoys did not yield an inch without a desperate struggle and the assaulting columns had suffered heavily from their fire. The officers inspired their men with their personal example, but there is a limit to human daring. Again and again they pushed forward, and again and again they were beaten back by the steady fire of the defenders. Major Jacob fell mortally wounded, and shortly afterwards Nicholson himself arrived. Calling his men to follow him he sprang forward to be instantaneously shot down. The casualties were so heavy that it was deemed necessary to return to the Kabul gate.

The second column, led by Jones, also carried the breach and mounted the rampart but it also found it impracticable to advance beyond the rallying point of Nicholson's men. The third column, however, accomplished its allotted task and added a glorious chapter to the annals of the British Indian army. They reached the Kashmir gate to find that the drawbridge had been partially destroyed, but they crossed the remaining beams with the gunpowder and lodged it against the gates, though volley after

volley was showering death all the while. Man after man fell dead or wounded but ultimately they succeeded in firing the charge. The gates were blown with tremendous crash and the bugle sounded the advance. The heroes of this great exploit were Lieutenants Salkeld and Home, Corporal Burgess, Sergeants Smith and Carmichael, Havildars Madho and Trilok Singh and Sepoy Ramnath. The third column then re-formed at the main-guard and penetrated as far into the city as the Jami Masjid. A steady fire from the mosque however forced them back. At the end of the day the British had occupied a part of the city walls and got a foothold within the city. The officers slept that night in Skinner's house. The church and the college building also fell into their hands. But the loss was appalling, "eleven hundred and four men and sixty-six officers, or about two men in nine were killed and wounded." "Of the seventeen officers serving with the Engineers one had been killed and eight wounded severely."

Wilson was naturally worried. The fort of Selimgarh, the fortified palace and the magazine were still in sepoy hands. Every street could be defended from the loopholed houses on either side. Was it wise, he asked, still to persevere with his ranks so cruelly thinned? Should he leave the city and retire once again to the safety of the ridge and there await fresh reinforcement? Against this counsel of despair Baird Smith strongly protested and Nicholson raised his dying voice. Happily for the British, daring prevailed over prudence, but the events of the next day demonstrated that Wilson's hesitation did not arise from idle fears.

Charles John Griffiths, who served with Wilson's army at Delhi, thus records the events of the 15th September. "Strong drink is now, and has in all ages been, the bane of the British soldier—a propensity he cannot resist in times of peace, and which is tenfold aggravated when excited by fighting, and when the wherewithal to indulge it lies spread before him, as was the case at Delhi. When and by whom begun I cannot say, but early in the morning of the 15th the stores had been broken into, and the men revelled in unlimited supplies of drink of every kind. It is a sad circumstance to chronicle, and the drunkenness which ensued might have resulted in serious consequences to the army had the enemy taken advantage of the sorry position we were in. Vain were the attempts made at first to put a stop to the dissipations, and not till orders went forth from the General to destroy all the liquor that could be found did the orgy cease, and the men return crestfallen and ashamed to a sense of their duties.

The work of destruction was carried out chiefly by the Sikhs and Punjabis, and the wasted drink ran in streams through the conduits of the city."[106] But the sepoy took no notice of the tell-tale inactivity in the enemy camp, only in the evening did they start a musketry fire on the college compound, and the neighbouring houses were shelled from Selimgarh.

On the 16th the magazine was captured. From the 17th to the 19th Selimgarh was bombarded and the English position was steadily extended. On the 20th the palace and the adjoining fort of Selimgarh were entered. There was none to defend these fortified strongholds except a few men who preferred death to dishonour. The city was evacuated but they remained at their posts, indifferent to their inevitable fate. "It is related", says Kaye, "that a sentry was found at each gate, with his musket on his shoulder, grim and immovable, prepared for his doom."[107] No one found in the palace was left alive and no one asked for quarter. Nobody knows whether these nameless heroes were given a decent burial.

That night General Wilson transferred his headquarters to the palace. "The Englishman celebrated his victory by ordering dinner to be laid in the Elysium of the Dewan-Khas, with its lustrous marble walls and lovely arabesques, triumphs of that barbaric art, beside which the best effort of the nineteenth century Englishman is but as a Caliban to an Ariel."[108]

Thus was the occupation of Delhi completed, but at what enormous cost of human life! On the British side alone 3,837 men and officers were killed, wounded, or missing from the 30th May to the 20th September. The loss of individual regiments was no less harrowing. The Sirmur Gurkhas, who held Hindu Rao's house and defended the right flank of the British army, were 450 strong to start with. They later got a reinforcement of 90 men. Of these five hundred and forty men, nearly sixty per cent, had been either killed or wounded. How many sepoys laid down their lives in the fight for Delhi will never be precisely known. The strength of the sepoy army at the imperial city has not yet been correctly computed. Wilson calculated the rebel strength at 40,000 on the eve of the assault. The more vivid imagination of Hodson magnified the figure to 70,000. Even if we accept the former figure as reliable, we do not know what proportion of them were new recruits, or how many Ghazis or Jehadis encum-

[106] Griffiths, *op. cit.*, pp 174-75
[107] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, p 633
[108] *Idem*, Vol. III, pp 633-34

bered their ranks. The fighting strength as well as the casualties of the defenders of Delhi were highly exaggerated, but that does not in any way detract from the stupendous success that the attacking troops, British and Indian, had achieved, in spite of unforeseen difficulties and great handicaps. The British were fighting with their back to the wall, as much to avenge the dead as to defend the living, but the Indian mercenaries also brought uncommon devotion and daring to the service of their foreign masters. Griffiths affirmed, "The native troops fought with the most determined bravery; Sikhs, Punjabis, and Goorkhas, side by side with their English comrades, pressed into the forefront of the strife, helping in the most material manner towards the day's success."[109]

The victory was in a sense incomplete so long as the King and the princes were free. Bakht Khan advised the King to accompany the army to Oudh and to continue the war there. But Ilahi Baksh advised conditional capitulation. His arguments were reinforced by the importunities of the queen. She wanted to save her son and father, and expected to retain some of her jewels and money. With one exception, none of the princes had inherited even an iota of that indomitable energy and spirit of enterprise that enabled Babur to found a new empire after the loss of his paternal principality, and Shahzada Firuz Shah was not at Delhi. Mirza Moghul, Mirza Khizr Sultan, and Mirza Abu Bakr had been carried away by the unexpected prospects of reviving the empire. During the brief term of their authority they had occupied themselves in feathering their nests and now their only anxiety was to save their skin as best as they could. The King had at first gone to the Qutb. Mirza Ilahi Baksh persuaded him to come to Humayun's tomb. Maulavi Rajab Ali of the British intelligence service informed Hodson of the whereabouts of the fugitives. Hodson went to General Wilson and obtained his permission to negotiate for the King's surrender through Ilahi Baksh on the sole condition of sparing his life. This was a political business which was normally the responsibility of the civilian officer attached to the Camp, Harvey Greathed. But Greathed died of cholera on the 20th, and was succeeded by Saunders. Hodson verbally told him that he had obtained the General's authority to treat for the King's surrender and to guarantee his life. Hodson certainly exceeded his power when he included in the amnesty prince Jawan Bakht and the King's father-in-law, Ahmad Kuli Khan. His action was at the time

[109] Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p 173

most severely criticised by many Englishmen in responsible position, because they held the King responsible for the murders in the palace. Cecil Beadon wrote to Muir on 13th October, "It strikes me as most unfortunate that any terms should have been made with the King of Delhi, who certainly deserved summary punishment, such as was righteously inflicted on his sons and grandson . . . I cannot doubt for a moment that the man is an arch ringleader and fully deserving of death, and I feel certain that to have hung him on the palace wall would have had the best effect throughout India, just as our omission to do so will be assuredly attributed to fear."[110] A sober examination of the evidence, tendered at the King's trial, leaves no doubt that the King was a victim of circumstances, he was physically and mentally incapable of turning the tide of events. It is true that he resented the abolition of *nazar* which he and his immediate predecessors used to receive. It is very likely that the news of British discomfiture anywhere gave him secret satisfaction, but he did not incite the Mutiny. Nor was he in any way responsible for the murder of the prisoners in the palace. It was his misfortune to be a helpless spectator of the massacre, but it was beyond his power to prevent it. Nor is there any evidence that Mirza Moghul was in any way implicated in the crime. It was alleged that he was seen on the roof of his residence and witnessed the executions from there. But that does not prove that he had any part in them.

On the 21st September Bahadur Shah surrendered to Hodson and was carried back to Delhi. The next day, Hodson again rode to Humayun's tomb and demanded the unconditional surrender of the princes. They tried in vain to get an assurance that their lives would be spared. Mirza Moghul, Mirza Khizr Sultan, and Mirza Abu Bakr were placed in a bullock cart. Hodson says that an armed crowd had gathered but he found no difficulty in disarming them. Then he proceeded towards Delhi and the crowd followed. When the party arrived near Delhi gate Hodson ordered his prisoners to take off their clothes and then shot them with his own hand. His excuse for this cold-blooded action was that the mob was gathering in strength and in its angry mood might have attempted a rescue. In the interest of his own safety and that of his men he had to do a distasteful act. Hodson had many apologists and when a civilian of high repute, like Cecil Beadon, found no difficulty in extending his approval to this deed of blood, it is no wonder that the ordinary man and woman, thirst-

[110] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 361

ing for vengeance, should find nothing wrong in it. But it cannot be ignored that Hodson had scented no danger in the open country that lay between Humayun's tomb and the city wall, it was at the city gate that he realised the danger of his position. The day before, when he brought the King and the queen prisoners to the city, he apprehended no violence from the mob. In any case the fate of the princes was sealed from the moment of their surrender. The question was whether the rope or the bullet would be their lot. Shortly afterwards twenty-one princes of the imperial family were hanged,[111] and a similar fate befell the Raja of Ballabhgarh and the Nawab of Jajjar. Both of them had tendered their homage to the King and associated themselves with the Mutiny, but both of them had kept correspondence with the other side. The Raja had in the early days of the outbreak extended his hospitality to English fugitives, and if he had been tried a year later, when it was realised that a policy of relentless vengeance could not be continued for ever, his life might have been spared. But for the discovery of his correspondence in the palace after the fall of Delhi the Raja's double-dealing would never have been brought home to him.

It would have been better for the King if he had not bargained for his life. He was treated like a vile criminal. It is true, he was not put in irons, but he was miserably lodged, and every Englishman or woman who passed through Delhi could at his or her pleasure intrude on his privacy without the least pretence of leave to cast scornful glances at him. Griffiths who saw him on the 22nd, the day after his surrender, writes, "Sitting cross-legged on a cushion placed on a common native *charpoy*, or bed, in the verandah of a courtyard, was the last representative of the Great Mogul dynasty. There was nothing imposing in his appearance, save a long white beard which reached to his girdle. About middle height, and upwards of seventy years old, he was dressed in white, with a conical-shaped turban of the same colour and material, while at his back two attendants stood, waving over his head large fans of peacocks' feathers, the emblem of sovereignty—a pitiable farce in the case of one who was already shorn of his regal attributes, a prisoner in the hands

[111] 'Memo. of the Siege of Delhi' by E. Hare, Kaye Manuscripts, Commonwealth Office Library, Home Miscellaneous No. 726, pp 1377-1457. Hare one day saw more than twenty men seated in a row and was told they were Shahzadas. They were prosecuted by Metcalfe and tried by Boyd. Boyd had his doubts about the evidence produced and suggested that they should all be tried for associating with conspirators and rebels and as they all belonged to the royal family, there could not be any doubt about their guilt and they were "all condemned, hanged and carted off the same day".

of his enemies. Not a word came from his lips; in silence he sat day and night, with his eyes cast on the ground, and as though utterly oblivious of the condition in which he was placed. On another bed, three feet from the King, sat the officer on guard, while two stalwart European sentries, with fixed bayonets stood on either side. The orders given were that on any attempt at a rescue the officer was immediately to shoot the King with his own hand."[112] Raikes saw him on the 18th December. He wrote on the 19th, "Yesterday we all went, a large party of ladies and gentlemen, with Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, to see the King. He is a withered old man of ninety. I found him propped up with cushions on a bed, in a small house which formerly was occupied by a humble follower. I sat down on a chair by his side, heard him rambling on about his dreams and quoting some verses of his own composition, and then left without addressing him."[113] The queen was not spared the humiliation of inquisitive gazes of visitors of her own sex and occasional words of rudeness. Mrs. Coopland, whose husband was killed at Gwalior, also went to see the miserable prisoner, but found not a vestige of fallen majesty in him. She writes, "We climbed some steep steps on to the terrace, where some more guards were walking before the door, and entered a dirty-looking house, then the abode of the 'king of kings,' the descendant of a long line of Moguls. . . . . Pushing aside the purdah, we entered a small, dirty, low room with white-washed walls, and there on a low charpoy, cowered a thin small old man, dressed in a dirty white suit of cotton, and rolled in shabby wraps and rezais, on account of the cold. At our entrance he laid aside the hookah he had been smoking, and he, who had formerly thought it an insult for any one to sit in his presence, began salaaming to us in the most abject manner, and saying he was 'burra kooshee' (very glad) to see us."[114] Russell, who saw him much later, did not think that he had any reason to be grateful to the East India Company, but he did not approve of the old man, because he believed that the King was a cruel man, "guilty of permitting very horrible murders within the walls of his palace". His picture of the prisoner and his environments is equally gloomy. "In a dingy, dark passage, leading from the open court or terrace in which we stood to a darker room beyond, there sat, crouched on his haunches, a diminutive, attenuated old man, dressed in an ordinary and rather dirty muslin tunic, his small lean feet bare, his head

[112] Griffiths, *op. cit.*, pp 201-202
[113] Raikes, *op. cit.*, p 81
[114] Coopland, *A Lady's Escape from Gwalior*, p 275

covered by a small thin cambric skull cap."[115] The King's convenience was not consulted in selecting the hour of visit, for he was sick at the time, and was retching violently in a brass basin. Prince Jawan Bakht was also unwell, but he had to leave his bed and to stand up to do honour to the visitors, and dared not resume his rest till the Commissioner permitted. At the time of the trial the Judges and the prosecutors did not extend to the King even ordinary courtesies. He still sought to divert himself with his favourite muse; not having paper or pen, he wrote with a burnt stick on the wall of his cell. At one time it was suggested that he should be sent to the convict islands of the Andamans, Africa was sometimes considered to be a more suitable country for his exile, Cecil Beadon mentioned Hong Kong on the Chinese coast, but he was ultimately banished to Rangoon, and in Burma he breathed his last a few years later. Bahadur Shah had none else to blame for his misery. If he had left with the army, and boldly met his death in the battle-field, he would have earned the respect of his countrymen and, probably, of his enemies, but he tamely yielded, first to the temptation of power held out by the sepoys, and then to the temptation of life held out by Rajab Ali and Ilahi Baksh, and died, a plaything of fortune, in a foreign land, far from the country of his ancestors, unhonoured and unsung, but maybe not altogether unwept.

No less dire a fate befell Delhi and its people. Prize Agents had indeed been appointed before the assault, and General Wilson had strictly forbidden violence against women and children. But where is the soldier who obeys the dictates of mercy at the moment of victory? The Sikhs had been deliberately reminded of a prophecy that foretold the sack of Delhi by the followers of the Guru. The prospects of plunder had induced them to enlist in the British army as much as the prospects of vengeance on the overbearing Purbiah. The British soldiers had heard of butchered children, dishonoured women and comrades burnt alive. They were thirsting for vengeance, and even Christian priests found nothing unworthy in righteous retribution. A captured city is the legitimate spoil of the soldier. No one paused to think that unless the King and his troops were accorded the status of belligerents, the property of the common people could not be legally treated as prize, but if once that was done, the King could not be logically indicted of treason. But the lust

[115] Russell, *op. cit*, Vol. II, p 58. From Saunders' letter to Edmondstone of 2nd Dec. 1857 it appears that prince Jawan Bakht had betrayed the secret of his mother's jewels which far exceeded in value the two lakhs promised by her as the price of amnesty

of a conqueror is not curbed by logic. Delhi was lucky in escaping the fate of Carthage, for a British officer actually proposed that the city should be razed to the ground leaving only the cathedral mosque, converted into a church, to remain a grim memento of Christian prowess.

On September 21, Griffiths found the streets "deserted and silent, they resembled a city of the dead on which some awful catastrophe had fallen. It was difficult to realize that we were passing through what had been, only a few days before, the abode of thousands of people."[116] "The portions of the town we passed through on that day had been pillaged to the fullest extent."[117] "Dead bodies of sepoys and city inhabitants lay scattered in every direction, poisoning the air for many days, and raising a stench which was unbearable."[118] No wonder that cholera broke out in the deserted city and the hospital was full of patients. But systematic plunder went on unabated. The floors of the deserted houses were dug and the walls were tapped to reveal hidden treasure, if there were any, and officers did not hesitate to appropriate rich booty which, by law, should have gone to the common pool. The story of Somnath was not forgotten, and Hindu idols were unceremoniously removed and their pedestals broken in search of buried jewels.[119] On the 31st October Muir conveyed to Sherer the following extract from the report of an intelligent Assistant Súrgeon, "Delhi is still standing in all its magnificence. There is scarcely a trace of shot and shell from one end to the other, but the houses are desolate and plundered. The wretched inhabitants have been driven out to starve; and I cannot help thinking they have been rather cruelly treated. You used to blame me for my sentiments of death without mercy to every Sepoy: but I think this Government is behaving too sternly to the poor Bunniahs and Kayeths. The plunder daily being found in the city is more than enormous; it is almost incredible. I fancy every officer present at the siege might be able to retire at once."[120] This was not an idle guess. Griffiths cites the case of an officer whose ill-gotten spoils amounted to two lakhs of rupees. "Other cases similar to that just mentioned were known to us at the time, in which sums of money were appro-

[116] Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p 199
[117] *Idem*, p 198
[118] *Idem*, pp 200-201
[119] *Idem*, p 245. The Trustees of the "Serumjee Mandir" (Sriramji) Delhi complained to the Governor-General that the Prize Agents entered the temple and dug out property worth Rs. 10,000. Petition, dated, 5.2.1859, Military Consultations, 25 Feb., 1859, Nos. 254-55
[120] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 239

priated only a little smaller in amount," he adds, "while of those which reached the value of £100 their name is legion."[121] He further says, "That many of the private soldiers of my regiment succeeded in acquiring a great quantity of valuable plunder was fully demonstrated soon after our arrival in England. An unusual number of non-commissioned officers and men bought their discharge, having during three years kept possession of the plunder acquired at Delhi awaiting a favourable opportunity for the sale of the articles. Many jewellers' shops in the town in which we were quartered exposed for sale in the windows ornaments and trinkets of unmistakable Eastern workmanship, which, on inquiry, we were told had been bought from the men."[122]

The Prize Agents held that the whole city had by conquest become the property of the army but Saunders protested against this extraordinary doctrine and he had the influential support of Sir John Lawrence and it was not further enforced. But even in November their operations had not come to a conclusion, and though the Prize Agents did no longer "attempt to ransom household property as such", they had on the payment down of a certain sum by the inhabitants of a street, ransomed its wealth, or rather guaranteed it from search and plunder. But search and plunder had in the meantime developed into a science and the city had been so thoroughly ransacked and plundered that people were not prepared to pay much for what was left.[123]

If sanctity of property was a dead letter, sanctity of life did not command more respect. Ghalib, the famous Urdu poet who was at Delhi at the time, mournfully writes, "Here there is a vast ocean of blood before me, God alone knows what more I have still to behold." He had lost so many of his friends that he felt that none survived to mourn him. "Thousands of my friends died. Whom should I remember and to whom should I complain? Perhaps none is left even to shed tears on my death." Even if we make allowance for poetic exaggeration other accounts go to prove that scant regard was shown for human lives and innocent people shared the same fate with the armed rebels.[124] Zahir Delhvi writes in his *Dastan-i-Ghadar,* "Some-

[121] Griffiths, *op. cit.,* pp 234-35

[122] *Idem,* p 233

[123] Apart from the lot appropriated by privates and officers of the army the total amount of Delhi Prize money was Rs. 35,47,917-6-8. Military Proceedings, No. 1279, Feb., 1861

[124] Mrs. Coopland says, "The provost-marshal who performed this revolting duty (i.e., hanging), had put to death between 400 and 500 wretches since the siege, and was now thinking of resigning his office." Coopland, *op. cit.,* p 268

times innocent persons are killed along with the sinners. This is what happened after the Mutiny. The English soldiers began to shoot whomsoever they met on the way. Among the men who remained in the City, there were some whose equal has never been born nor shall be born. Mian Muhammad Amin Panjakush, an excellent writer, Moulvie Imam Buksh Sabhai along with his two sons Mir Niaz Ali and the persons of Kucha Chhelan (it is said they were fourteen hundred in number) were arrested and taken to Raj Ghat Gate. They were shot dead and their dead bodies were thrown into the Jumna. As for the women, they came out of their houses along with their children and killed themselves by jumping into the wells. All the wells of the Kucha Chhelan were filled with dead bodies. My pen dare not write more." Ghalib wrote in his *Dastambu,* "God alone knows the number of persons who were hanged. The victorious army entered the city along the main road. Whomsoever they met on the way was killed. The white men on their entry started killing helpless and innocent persons. In two or three Mohallas the English both looted the property and killed the people".[125] An instance of indiscriminate shooting, cited by Griffiths, lends colour to the account of Zahir Delhvi and Ghalib. An officer of his regiment had captured some fugitives from the city and sent them to the Governor, who had the power of life and death. He was suspected to be a merciful man and let the captives off; on a second occasion three men were caught, but it was deemed useless to send them to the proper authority for punishment. The officer in question "called out a file of his soldiers, placed the prisoners in the ditch outside the Ajmir Gate, shot them, and then, digging a hole, buried them at the place of execution."[126] Nothing illustrates better the feeling by which the average officer, posted at Delhi, was impelled. If they could not distinguish the innocent from the guilty, and General Wilson had enjoined them not to spare the mutineers, they would rather eliminate the innocent than spare the guilty.

Careful not to err on the side of leniency, the military officers treated all Indians alike without distinction of politics and religion. Professor Ramchandra was a Christian. On the 11th May he had to leave his home for fear of life. He had friends in high quarters, and Mr. Muir (afterwards Sir William Muir) had

[125] Krishnalal, *The Sack of Delhi 1857-58 as witnessed by Ghalib,* in the *Bengal Past and Present.* Vol. LXXIV. Part II, Serial No. 139, pp 106-7. Saunders also admitted that for the first ten days after the capture of the city the soldiery "were almost beyond all control, and entirely without discipline". Many innocent people must have suffered consequently. Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p 288

[126] Griffiths, *op. cit.,* p 213

specially commissioned him to salvage, if possible, old manuscripts at Delhi, for nothing was spared, furniture, paintings and manuscripts by soldiers bent on indiscriminate plunder and destruction. He was, after the fall of Delhi, employed in the Prize Agents' office. Yet he was subjected to harassment and insult, not by an uneducated soldier, but by an officer, even after he had told him that he was a Christian and a public servant.[127] He was not the only friend of the Government to suffer indiscriminate ill-treatment. Families of undisputed loyalty found their houses ransacked and property looted.[128] They were excluded, like the armed mutineers, from the city and driven from their hearth and home. Their innocence was no consolation for the privations to which they were exposed.

Luckily the civilians did not see eye to eye with their friends in the army, and Saunders was quite alive to the inequity of the policy and practice that condemned friends and foes to a common lot. He strongly advocated the cause of the civil population, and his views were shared by many highly placed civilians of whom Sir John Lawrence was one. Muir wrote to Beadon on the 18th November, "The policy of the Military Authorities has, it is too evident, occasioned a vast amount of misery and distress indiscriminately among the innocent; even among those who suffered bitterly from the Mutineer reign at Delhi. But that cannot be helped now, and I trust every day will help forward a juster and more generous policy. But I find from applications made *here* for certificates, etc., of being well affected, by persons who have been steady servants of Government throughout our troubles at Agra, and whose families are still in extreme misery, crowded in hovels in the villages about Delhi, without change of clothes, shelter, or any of the conveniences of life, that the practical working of the rule throwing the *onus probandi* on the person desiring to return, presses very hardly."[129] The military authorities pleaded their inability to provide for the security of the town, on account of shortage of men. Unable to guard every gate they had closed all but two. The Kashmir gate was kept open for ingress into and the Lahore gate for the egress from

[127] See Ramchandra's letter to Colonel H. P. Burn, Military Governor of Delhi, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, No. 524 (Appendix), 29 Jan., 1858

[128] Pandit Kedar Nath, Naib Mohafiz, Commissioner's office, Delhi, complained on the 5th October 1857, "During the outbreak the rebels demanded his money, but he gave none, but the British troops plundered between 50,000 and 70,000 rupees worth of property of his when the city was taken. One child died of cold in the jungles." Foreign Political Consultations, No. 3325, 31 Dec., 1858. An uncle and cousin of Sir Syed Ahmed were murdered by the Sikhs three days after the capture of Delhi.

[129] Coldstream and Muir, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 271

the town. But it was argued that there was no harm in permitting the bania and the kaeth to come back, for no harm need be apprehended from them. The military authorities insisted that a fine should be imposed on all supporters of the late regime, and it was generally held that as the Hindus were as a community well disposed towards the British and the Muslims as a community were hostile, the Hindus should be exempted from any penalty. Some Hindus of the trading classes were allowed to return, but the people excluded from the city suffered terribly during the winter months having to live in the open. It was ultimately realised that disaffection towards the British Government was not the monopoly of any particular community, and there were exceptions in both. If all the Muslims were penalised, people of known loyalty were bound to suffer with the disloyal elements, and if the Hindus were exempted from all punishments as a community, a few disaffected men would escape scot-free. It was, therefore, decided that every citizen, who desired to return, should pay a fine, but there should be a discrimination in the rate on a communal basis. While the Muslim had to pay a fine equivalent to 25% of the value of his real property, the Hindu was required to pay 15% less.[130] All their movable property was gone, "there remained nothing but bare walls and empty houses." Delhi was henceforth attached to the Punjab, and the credit of restoring to the unfortunate victims of war what remained of their ancestral homesteads, and of rehabilitating the deserted city, goes to Sir John Lawrence and the civilians.

[130] R. Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab to G. F Edmondstone, Foreign Secretary, Government of India, 21 April 1858, Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 23-32 and K.W., 18 March, 1859

# APPENDIX

Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 524, 29 Jan. 1858

Colonel H. P. Burn,
Military Governor of Delhie

RESPECTED SIR,

I humbly beg to bring to your notice that living in the Chandnee Chok Bazar and being obliged to frequent the Palace and the several streets of the City on private and public business, I have been exposed to difficulties and dangers from which I have no hope of escaping but by an appeal to you because, I with all other natives live under your protection.

More than a month ago I was directed to go to Mr. Murphy's house near the Church there to translate some papers from Persian into English. As I was passing on the road which leads from the Magazine to the Church, I saw some English Officers standing in Hamid Ali Khan's mosque behind the Govt. college throwing clay balls by means of a bow or *Ghoolail* at all the native passengers. All my explanations of being a Govt. servant, a Christian &ca., could not be of any use; on the contrary they are more exasperated at this; they abused me and threw their clay balls with greater force. From that time I ceased to pass that way for more than 13 days, after which having to go to a lane close to the said mosque in search of some books which I am employed to collect by the Prize Agent Dr. James I was attacked as before though I had two Prize Agency Chuprassees with me and though I cried to inform the English Officers that I had a ticket of the Prize Agent. After that I found to my great grief that I was not only in danger in deserted streets but in my very house also. About 12 days ago at about 9 O'clock at night I and two of my friends were conversing with each other on the means by which peace could be reestablished in India as it was before the rebellion and this conversation had its use from what we had learned from English newspaper about the views of Lord Ellenborough in England. When we were thus engaged we were suddenly confounded by the cracking of stones and clods against the doors and wall of my house and by one stone falling in my bed with great violence and having ascer-

tained that English Officer just living opposite to my house and their visitors had done this, we shut up our doors and became quiet, supposing that perhaps our somewhat loud talk might have disturbed them in their repose. Again during day time these Gentlemen or their visitors did the same and once at about 11 O'Clock at night when I and my friends were gone to sleep all the doors were shut up, I was awakened by the noise of clay balls cracking against these doors. This noise continued for some seconds and then stopped. On the evening of Sunday last at about 5 O'clock I and my visitors in my house were attacked in the same way. Shutting up the doors could only protect us from being hurt. The same took place on Tuesday evening.

On the evening of Monday last when it was dark and dusky as I was returning from Major H. Louis(?) who had lately arrived and is lodged at in Edward Campbell's house, I received a heavy blow on the head from an English Officer passing in Dewani Aum Square on horse back with another gentleman in Company also on the horse back and after inflicting this blow with his stick the officer turned round and required me to make him a *salam*. I made many salams instead of one, and cried I was a Christian Sir, and employed in the Prize Agency and after this he proceeded towards the Dewan Khas abusing me and saying that I was black as a jet.

Being much hurt almost stunned and grieved I stopped a little at the place where I had received the blow, seeing which the Gentleman who struck me returned towards me galloping and alighting from his horse inflicted many severe blows on my left arm and back with his stick and compelled me to leave the place. As for making salams to the English Officers I am never unwilling to do so, whether I knew them or not except when I am aware that my salaming will not be seen or noticed by them, though no answer be returned as is generally the case now.

Before the English Camp was pitched in the Cantonments on the 8th of May (sic. June?) last and before I joined it on the 12th of the same month I lived in villages in greater danger of being cruelly and disgracefully treated and at last of being killed, but then I was comforted in my greatest distress (once I had a very . . . . escape) by reflecting that my ownself was nothing compared to the many greater and better mind Viz. English Officers Civil and Military: Missionaries &ca., who with their wives were most barbarously murdered by the mutineers and Budmashees of Delhie. Besides this I thought that if the mutineers find me and kill me, they will do so merely on account of my having abjured the creed of my forefathers and embraced

Christianity and that I will die a witness of the faith of the Blessed Saviour like martyrs of old, the Apostles and early Christians. Herein was a great comfort to me under all my trials and danger but there is hardly any comfort remaining, when a native Christian is in danger from Christian officers themselves merely because he was not born in England and had not a white skin. This was not the case even among the rebels in Delhie who were professors of false religion. A Mahomedan or a Hindoo was received as a brother among them, they hated only Christians and all those who were known to be friendly to them. This my appeal is not only for native Christians exclusively for they are very few in Delhie, but for Hindoos and some Mahomedans also who are allowed to live in the City but are exposed to danger from the English soldiers and particularly English officers.

I have the honor to be &ca,
Sd/- Ramchandra
Employed in the Prize Agency

Delhie,
the 27th Novr. 1857

P.S. Yesterday evening a Hindoo acquaintance of mine was bringing two new Lahafs filled with cotton by a *Dhooniya* who lives in the Durya Gunge. An English Officer on horse back with two syces met him in the way, forcibly took one of these Lahafs gave it to his syces and went away galloping. My acquaintance tried to go after the Officer complaining but the syces warned him that if he would make a noise after the *Sahib* he would turn back and give him a good beating; he therefore thought proper to return home quietly. These two Lahafs belonged to my family and my acquaintance had undertaken to have them prepared. I should thank the Officer that he was contented with one Lahaf and did not take both of them.

## Chapter Four

# KANPUR

Delhi had its own imperial house, Kanpur looked for leadership to a princely family of Maharashtra. In November 1817, Peshwa Baji Rao II challenged the British power in India, by May next he was completely worsted and surrendered on terms. A safe home, beyond the confines of his former empire, had to be found for him. He would prefer Benares, but there were too many exiled princes there, and it was not deemed safe to lodge the erstwhile head of the most powerful Hindu empire at the holiest place of Hindu pilgrimage, where he would be in uninterrupted contact with his former subjects. The British Government suggested Monghyr and Gorakhpur, but Monghyr was too hot, the Peshwa objected, and Gorakhpur had no temple to speak of. His preference was for a place by the Jumna, the city of Mathura, if the British authorities had no objection, or its neighbourhood, if they found the city inconvenient. He was even prepared to live at Delhi, in the midst of his hereditary enemies. But official choice fell on Bithur, a few miles from Kanpur, and there the Peshwa finally settled. A jagir was assigned to him, the residents of which were excluded from the jurisdiction of the ordinary civil and criminal courts of the country by Regulation I of 1832. A pension of eight lakhs of rupees per annum was granted for 'the support of himself and family', and the Peshwa gradually reconciled himself to the monotony of the routine life of an exile. He had still a fairly large number of dependents who accorded to him royal honours. What hurt him most was the official refusal to recognise his old title Panta Pradhan, and the decision to style him as Maharaja in formal correspondence. His savings permitted him to subscribe liberally to Government loans but he resented the imposition of a ferry tax on his grass-cutters as the payment was considered to be derogatory to a prince of his status. The British officers failed to appreciate such sentimental objections to minor imposts on the part of a deposed ruler, but Indian mind was more agitated by sentimental grievances than by more material hardships. Baji Rao continued to be a source of anxiety to the suzerain power, for

rumours insinuated sometimes intrigues with the Court of Nepal, and sometimes a more serious story of a grand conspiracy with Burma and Tibet gained wide currency. He came of a short-lived family, he was not in robust health at the time of his capitulation, and the Government of India persuaded themselves that he could not long be a burden on the public exchequer; but the care-free easy life that he lived at Bithur extended his years beyond the Biblical limit of threescore and ten, and he survived till January 1851.

Despairing of having an heir of his body, Baji Rao had adopted three sons, Dhondu Pant alias Nana, Sadashiv Pant alias Dada, and Gangadhar Rao alias Bala. At the time of his death, Nana Saheb and Bala Saheb were alive, Dada Saheb died earlier leaving a son, Panduranga Rao, better known as Rao Saheb. Two minor daughters Yoga Bai and Kusma Bai also survived Baji Rao. A grand nephew, son of his brother Chimnaji Appa's daughter Dwaraka Bai, was one of the deceased ex-Peshwa's recognised dependents. By a written testament of 1839 Baji Rao had left his title and estates to the eldest of his adopted sons, Nana Saheb.[1]

Of Nana's early life and training we know nothing. No one who knew him gave him credit for any extraordinary ability or striking quality. John Lang, who enjoyed his hospitality for a few days, regarded him as a mediocrity. "He appeared to me not a man of ability, nor a fool. He was selfish; but what native is not? He seemed to be far from a bigot in matters of religion".[2] Private Henry Metcalfe saw him drive to church. "It is scarcely to be believed", writes Metcalfe, "that he (Nana) accompanied the Regiment to Church on the Sunday before we left Cawnpore for Lucknow, but it is a positive fact. I saw him myself riding in a beautiful phaeton, drawn by two splendid grey horses."[3] If Lang, or rather his informant Nana's Khansama, is to be believed, the Brahman prince had no objection to any kind of meat being served to his European guests. "The Maharaja was constantly in the habit of entertaining European gentlemen, and that although His Highness was himself a strict Hindoo he had no kind of prejudice, so that if I preferred beef to any other kind of meat, I had only to give the order." Mowbray Thomson described him as "exceedingly corpulent, of sallow complexion, of middle height, with thoroughly marked features, and like all Mahrattas, clean shaven on both head and face. He does not

[1] Gupta, *The Last Peshwa and the English Commissioners*, pp 105-107
[2] Lang, *Wanderings in India and other Sketches of Life in Hindostan*, p 116
[3] Tuker, *The Chronicle of Private Henry Metcalfe*, p 19

speak a word of English."[4] Sherer "heard from several who knew him, and especially Dr. J. N. Tresidder, who had attended him professionally, that Dhoondoo Punt was an excessively uninteresting person. Between thirty and forty years of age, of middle height, stolid features and increasing stoutness, he might well have passed for the ordinary shop-keeper of the bazaar, had it not been for the Mahratta contour of his turban, of which, however, he did not affect a very pronounced type. He did not speak English, and his habits, if self-indulgent, had no tinge of poetry about them."[5] An Englishman, Mr. Todd, used to read English newspapers and magazines to him. In normal times not much was expected from the titular head of a deposed royal family and Nana might have ended his life in peaceful obscurity.

It is difficult to say whether Baji Rao had saved enough for his family. According to official estimate, the property he left, in cash and kind, did not exceed thirty lakhs of rupees.[6] Nana was expected to maintain out of this sum the personal establishment of his father and support his numerous dependents. Morland, who knew him well, was convinced that Nana would not be able to live within his income though he was "a quiet unostentatious young man and not at all addicted to any extravagant habits".[7] But the Government had made it abundantly clear during Baji Rao's life time that his heirs would not be entitled to any portion of his pension. In pursuance of this policy they had refused to continue the pension of Chimnaji Appa to his widow and daughter when he died in 1832.[8] The Government decision to discontinue the pension on Baji Rao's death could not, therefore, have been altogether a surprise, unless Nana had unbounded faith in British generosity and fairness. Many Englishmen, however, held that whatever might have been the legal obligation, equity demanded that a portion of the pension should have been conceded to the family. Nana and his advocates argued that the pension had been granted to Baji Rao "for the support of himself and family", and the family had a legal claim to the pension, irrespective of what savings Baji Rao might have effected in his life time.

Unfortunately the family was divided against itself. A claim was preferred on behalf of the two minor daughters by their

[4] Thomson, *The Story of Cawnpore*, p 46
[5] Maude and Sherer, *Memories of the Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 215
[6] Gupta, *op. cit.*, p 93
[7] *Idem*, p 96
[8] Sardesai wrongly states that Chimnaji died in 1830, *Marathi Riyasat, Uttar Bibhag*, Vol. III, p 565. The Governor-General's Agent gives the correct date in his letter of 2nd June, 1832. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 48, 18 June, 1832.

grandfather, Balavanta Rao Athwale. He argued that, according to the Hindu law, the daughters are to be treated as sons in the absence of a legitimately begotten male issue and the adopted son's claim could not be entertained in supersession of theirs.[9] This view did not find favour with the Government, and the applicant was told that Dhondu Pant was the *de jure* and *de facto* head of the Peshwa's family. What part the Peshwa's widows played in this game is not known, but there is good reason to believe that they had their own scheme in which Chimnaji Appa's grandson, young Chimnaji Thatte, was probably involved. Among the dependents and servants of the late Peshwa designing people were not wanting, who were prepared to exploit the family discord, and they found willing collaborators among the sharks of the neighbouring industrial town.

The Regulation of 1832, which exempted Baji Rao and the people residing with him in his jagir at Bithur from the jurisdiction of the ordinary law courts, ceased to operate with the decease of the Peshwa. In February 1852, an Act was passed repealing the Regulation. It not only reduced Nana and his brother to the status of common men but exposed them to the vexation of being dragged to a court of law. To this humiliation they would probably have been reconciled in course of time, but at Baji Rao's death they were shocked to find that the family no longer possessed an inch of land anywhere.[10] When a Peshwa died, the Brahmans used to receive at the time of his *sradh* five principal gifts (*Mahadanas*) of elephants, horses, gold, jewels, and land from his heirs. Baji Rao's *sradh* was performed with the same eclat as those of his predecessors and no expense was spared, but his heir was not in a position to donate any land, as he had none. Sardar Raghunath Rao Vinchurkar was at Bithur at the time and was grieved to notice this omission. He humbly suggested to Nana that as all the other *Mahadanas* had been performed, the gift of land should not be omitted. His jagir and inam villages, fifty-two in all, he argued, really belonged to the Peshwa, and Nana Saheb should present to the Brahmans as many of these as he liked. This uncommon evidence of devotion to his family greatly touched Nana and he burst into tears.[11] There was none among the British officials, with imagination enough, to think of a similar offer which would have placed the unfortunate prince under eternal obligations to the Government.

[9] Sen and Mishra, *op. cit.*, pp 29-33 (Introduction) and Document No. 23
[10] Nana was granted only life interest in the Bithur lands
[11] *Itihas Sangraha, Aitihasik Sphuta Lekha,* Part III, p 26

It is often ignored that trifling concessions sometimes go a long way to soothe over-sensitive spirits. Nana might have been permitted to use his deceased father's seal. To the common people he was the rightful heir of the Peshwa, and even Englishmen did not deny him the courtesy title of Maharaja. It would not have added to his political stature, in any way, if his letters bore the Peshwa's seal. But Morland, the Commissioner at Bithur, protested and Nana made a new seal in which he styled himself as the Peshwa Bahadur. The new seal was more offensive and its use was interdicted; the disappointed prince had to be content with the simple legend of Shriman Nana Dhondu Pant Bahadur.[12] This unwelcome reminder of his reduced status added bitterness to the disappointment caused by the loss of pension.

In those days Indian princes were accustomed to appeal to the Government in Britain against the Government in India, to the Court of Directors against the Governor-General-in-Council. Like every dispossessed prince in India Nana fondly hoped that if his case was fairly represented to the authorities in England, justice might still be done to him. When his memorials to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and the Governor-General-in-Council bore no result, he petitioned to the Court of Directors, and when the Court refused to revise the decision of the Government of India, he sent a personal agent to England, for repeated rebuffs had not yet made his heart sore and, vain as it was, he still preferred to live in hope.

The agent, Azimullah Khan, was a remarkable person. It was no discredit to him that he was a man of humble origin and had once earned his living as a lowly waiter. He improved his position and educated himself. He learnt to read, write and speak English and French and became a schoolmaster, not a mean achievement for a man who started life with so many handicaps.[13]

[12] Foreign Political Consultations, 30 Dec., 1858. "Seereek Dhondupunth" of Mowbray Thomson and Trevelyan is probably a corruption of Shri Dhondupanth

[13] Naturally very little is known about Azimullah's early life. Mowbray Thomson says, "Azimoolah was originally a khitmutghar (waiter at table) in some Anglo-Indian family ; profiting by the opportunity thus afforded him, he acquired a thorough acquaintance with the English and French languages, so as to be able to read and converse fluently, and write accurately in them both. He afterwards became a pupil, and subsequently a teacher, in the Cawnpore government schools, and from the last-named position he was selected to become the vakeel, or prime agent, of the Nana." Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 54. Shepherd's account is somewhat different: "This Azimoolah Khan was a charity boy, having been picked up, together with his mother during the famine of 1837-38 ; they were both in a dying state from starvation. The mother being a staunch Mahomedan, would not consent to her son (then quite a boy) being christened. He was educated in the Cawnpore Free School under Mr. Paton, schoolmaster, and received a subsistence of Rs. 3 per month. His mother earned her own livelihood by serving as ayah or maidservant. After 10 years' study, Azimoolah was raised to be a teacher in the same school, and two years after he was made over, as a moonshee, to

Nature had endowed him with well-favoured features and a charming personality, to which he added, by his own efforts, cultivated manners, and when he reached England he was admitted to the best society where he moved with natural ease. It was no small compliment to his accomplishments that he won the affection of elderly matrons of the British aristocracy, and fair maidens found in him an object of love and admiration[14] in spite of "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun". But Azimullah soon discovered that his pleadings had little influence with the seasoned politicians of the British Isles, and his master's plea found no more favour with the Queen's advisers than with the Directors of the East India Company. He decided to return home, but unlike the average man, he did not sail straight for India. He heard at Malta of the Russian victories against the combined Anglo-French army and immediately booked his passage for Constantinople, where he met the famous journalist, William Howard Russell. Russell has left the following pen picture of the inquisitive young Muslim. "I went down for a few days to Constantinople, and, while stopping at Missirie's Hotel, saw, on several occasions, a handsome slim young man, of dark-olive complexion, dressed in an Oriental costume which was new to me, and covered with rings and finery. He spoke French and English, dined at the *table d'hôte,* and, as far as I could make out, was an Indian prince, who was on his way back from the prosecution of an unsuccessful claim against the East India Company in London." Azimullah sought a passage to the Crimea, as he wanted to see "those great Roostums, the Russians, who have beaten French and English together". He had actually seen the Russian batteries at work from a safe distance. He made light of religious inhibitions, and told Russell, "I am not such a fool as to believe in these foolish things. I am of no religion." Russell later commented, "Is it not curious enough that he should have felt such an interest to see, with his own eyes, how matters

Brigadier Scott, who in his turn made him over to his successor (when leaving the station). Brigadier the Hon'ble Ashburnham, when Azimoolah misbehaved himself and was turned out under an accusation of bribery and corruption; subsequently he attached himself to the Nana." Shepherd, *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore,* p 14

[14] Azimullah's love affair in England caused the greatest resentment among the English officers in India. Lord Roberts wrote to his sister on December 31, 1857,—"While searching over the Nana's Palaces at Bithur the other day, we found heaps of letters directed to that fiend 'Azimula Khan' by ladies in England, some from Lady—, ending *'Your affect. Mother'*. Others from a young girl at Brighton named—, written in the most lovable manner. Such rubbish I never read, partly in French, which this scoundrel seems to have understood; how English ladies can be so infatuated. Miss—was going to marry Azimula, and I have no doubt would like to still, altho' he was the chief instigator in the Cawnpore massacres." Roberts, *Letters Written during the Indian Mutiny,* p 120

were going in the Crimea? It would not be strange in a European to evince such curiosity; but in an Asiatic, of the non-military caste, it certainly is. He saw the British army in a state of some depression, and he formed, as I have since heard, a very unfavourable opinion of its *morale* and *physique*, in comparison with that of the French."[15]

Meanwhile Nana was living the normal life of a well-to-do Indian prince. He willingly extended his hospitality to the English officers of Kanpur and lavishly entertained them. He sometimes drove through the city, but his European friends could not reciprocate his kindness in the same manner, as he could not and would not dine or drink with them. But Mowbray Thomson attributed this reticence on Nana's part not to religious scruples but to wounded vanity. "It was frequently the custom of the Nana to entertain the officers of the Cawnpore garrison in the most sumptuous style; although he would accept none of their hospitality in return, because no salute was permitted in his honour."[16] Whatever might have been the real reason, Nana did not fail to win the confidence and good opinion of the local officials, and when the crisis came, they unhesitatingly turned to him for co-operation and support.

The monotony of the strictly circumscribed life of a prince in exile was relieved in the case of Baji Rao by pilgrimages to Benares, Prayag and Gaya. His movements were indeed closely watched but a change of environments is always refreshing. Nana had in his compound "the fleetest horses, the finest dogs, and rare specimens of deer, antelopes, and other animals from all parts of India"[17] to divert his idle moments, but he also felt the need of active recreations. He visited Lucknow late in 1856 on a sight-seeing tour. Kavanagh saw him there and Russell adds that Nana went to all the military stations on the Grand Trunk Road on the pretence of a pilgrimage and even proposed to visit Simla.[18] He had Azimullah Khan in his entourage, a strange com-

[15] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 165-67. A North-Indian Muslim cannot be rightly described as an Asiatic of non-military caste

[16] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 48. Harvey Greathed and his wife once enjoyed Nana's hospitality. "I think", he wrote to Mrs. Greathed, "we only once staid in the scoundrel's house, on the occasion of the Bithoor Picnic." Greathed, *op. cit.*, p 138

[17] Sherer says that Henry Willock brought two of Nana's pets from Bithur, a Wandaroo monkey (lion-tailed monkey), and a squirrel quite as big as a small rabbit (probably a Malabar squirrel). Maude and Sherer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 223. One of Lieutenant Groom's men found at Bithur a pair of thoroughbred English bull-dogs. "They will bring him 500 rupees at least in Calcutta if he can only manage to keep them." Groom, *With Havelock from Allahabad to Lucknow*, pp 41-42

[18] Russell, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p 168

panion indeed for a Hindu pilgrim. Russell does scant justice to the intelligence and good sense of the Anglo-Indian officialdom without whose leave Nana could not proceed a mile from his palace, and even the griffin knew that Kalpi and Lucknow had no sanctity in Hindu eyes. The official records throw no light on his tour programme, but when Martineau met Azimullah at Ambala in January 1857 Nana was not with him. Very likely his tour was limited to Lucknow alone. It is obvious that he could not have possibly called upon anybody officially considered undesirable. It is said that his movements aroused the suspicion of Sir Henry Lawrence and he abruptly left Lucknow.[19] While there he freely associated with the military officers. Henry Metcalfe says that Nana attended the regimental races at Lucknow. "The races and sports occupied three days, and during those three days that fiend Nana was at the races and sipping coffee etc. with our officers, and all the time was planning the mutiny."[20] If he was really so engaged, the officers at Lucknow and Kanpur had no suspicion about his designs, and he must have been a "clever adept in dissimulation".

In the meantime a lawsuit had been instituted against Nana on behalf of Chimnaji Appa, and dismissed.[21]

Kanpur was an important miliary station. Originally the town and the district, of which it was the headquarters, belonged to the King of Oudh. Out of its revenue a subsidiary force, stationed at the cantonment, was maintained, and the district was ceded to the British in 1801.[22] Situated on the banks of the Ganges. which was navigable for small boats throughout the year, and for heavy crafts in the rainy season, the town had acquired some commercial importance. It was the centre of a flourishing leather industry. Within a hundred miles of Allahabad and forty miles of Lucknow, it commanded the Grand Trunk Road on the one hand and the highway to Oudh on the other. In consideration of its strategical importance Kanpur was strongly garrisoned. In May 1857, there were sixty-one European artillerymen with six guns at Kanpur, as against three Indian infantry regiments, the 1st, 53rd and 56th, the 2nd Cavalry and a few native artillerymen. Their number did not total three thousand. The officer commanding was Major-General Sir Hugh Wheeler, K.C.B. He had more than fifty years of meritorious service to his credit. As an Ensign he had served under Lord Lake and was present at

[19] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 32
[20] Tuker, *op. cit.*, p 21
[21] Nanak Chand, p i
[22] Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds,* Vol. II, pp 122-23

the capture of Delhi in 1804. He later distinguished himself in Afghanistan and the Punjab and, though he was no longer in the prime of life, his reputation as a soldier stood so high that the small British force on the Ridge at Delhi seriously expected that Hugh Wheeler would come to their succour, if everyone else failed. In the opinion of Sir Henry Lawrence, Wheeler was the man of the moment, "a tower of strength at this juncture".

On the 14th May, the news of Meerut and Delhi reached Kanpur. If it caused him the least anxiety, Wheeler did not betray it, and all quiet at Kanpur was his message to the Governor-General on the 18th. If nothing happened elsewhere to influence his men, he still expected to save his station, for evacuation was out of the question. Unlike other stations in the North-Western Provinces, Kanpur had a large European and Christian population. Many officers of Her Majesty's 32nd Regiment, then posted at Lucknow, had left their families there, and Wheeler could not expect to remove them to a place of safety in the face of his sepoys, should they prove hostile. No sign of disaffection was as yet perceptible. As a man who had served with the sepoys for more than half a century, Wheeler knew that the least indiscretion on his part might expedite the explosion. On the other hand, if he presented an unperturbed front the crisis might be safely tided over without firing a shot. On the 19th he received a telegram from the Government of India asking him to "begin immediately to make all preparations for the accommodation of a European force, and to let it be known that you are doing so."[23] If European troops arrived in time Wheeler would have nothing to fear, but to publish the news that they were expected was to warn the sepoys that their fidelity was no longer above suspicion. On the 21st May the 2nd Cavalry got restive. A rumour got abroad "that their horses, arms, etc., were to be taken from them and made over to the Europeans."[24] The rumour had no basis in fact, but the cavalry men enquired of their brethren of the infantry whether they could count upon their support, should any attempt be made to dismount and disarm them.

On the 22nd, about fifty-five Europeans and 240 sowars of the Oudh Irregular Cavalry actually arrived from Lucknow. Though everything was still quiet at Kanpur the sepoys could not be blamed if they did not feel at their ease. The Europeans and the

[23] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 400
[24] *Idem*, Vol. I, pp 401-402

Eurasians were vaguely apprehending some undefined danger. "Everybody in the station seemed to think that something dreadful was to occur, but was unable to foresee what it was. The native troops at that time appeared to be placid and quiet as usual, but yet something indefinite and alarming overshadowed the minds of all." "Some of the European merchants and others engaged boats, intending to leave the station for Allahabad the moment any danger should become apparent. Others made arrangements to start by dak, leaving house and property to the care of servants. Every person, according to his means and ability, entertained more chowkidars."[25] The tension could not but be contagious. Beneath his apparent calm the sepoy also became restless and on the 21st one of them had actually warned his comrades "to keep a look out as mischief was intended by the 'saheb logue (officers)' and the 1st Company 6th Battalion Artillery guns were made ready, the gunners being on the point of firing upon the Cavalry lines."[26] The offender was arrested, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, but he was not executed for fear of exciting the sepoys. The appearance of the Lucknow troops at this juncture did not reassure them, nor were the troops sufficient in number to intimidate them.

Unfortunately about this time a consignment of rotten atta was placed in the market and offered at a cheap rate. It was old and musty and smelt when baked. It was suspected that the flour had been adulterated with powdered bones of pigs and cows. The sepoys naturally got excited. On enquiry, however, the suspicion was found to be unfounded, but everyone could not be satisfied about the nature of the suspected foodstuff, and suspicion still troubled the over-credulous, for they could not persuade themselves that the traders alone were to blame.[27]

On the 21st an outbreak was apprehended and Wheeler prepared himself for the worst. Nothing, however, happened and he sent the happy news to the Governor-General. The arrival of the reinforcement from Lucknow was also communicated to Calcutta. A more welcome news was that the Maharaja of Bithur had sent about 300 men of all arms with two guns to serve the British. "Once the Europeans from Calcutta arrived," wrote the General, "I should hope that all would be beyond danger." "At present things appear quiet, but it is impossible to say what a moment may bring forth." The Europeans from Calcutta did not arrive until it was too late, and the Marathas, contrary to all

[25] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 2
[26] *Idem*, p 5
[27] *Idem*, p 2

calculations, fraternised with the upcountry Hindus and Muslims.

A pertinent question arises here. Did Nana volunteer his services, or was his assistance solicited by the civil authorities of Kanpur? He certainly offered his hospitality and protection to the English ladies of the station when the news of Meerut outbreak reached Hillersdon and suggested that his wife and the other ladies should be sent to Bithur. But did he volunteer armed assistance of his own accord? Shepherd says, he did. He observes that Nana was on friendly and intimate terms with many of the officers in the city. "He seemed to have inspired our Magistrate and Collector, Mr. Hillersdon, with such confidence that that gentleman decided on placing his own family, as well as some other families, under the Nana's protection just before the mutiny broke out; but the ladies would not agree, and took refuge in the intrenchment. It was in consequence of this great confidence in him that he was appointed guardian of the treasury in Nawabgunge, and permitted to have a retinue of 500 cavalry and infantry under his entire control, by whose help he was also enabled to secure the magazine when the mutineers had marched away from the station."[28] We are further told that "Nana Sahib, a resident of Bithoor, offered his services, and pretending to be a most faithful subject of Government, undertook to protect the treasury in conjunction with our own sepoy guard; very great confidence appears to have been placed in him as his offer was accepted. He accordingly removed to a bungalow near the treasury, and with about 500 armed men in his employ, and two small guns, took charge of the place."[29] Hillersdon was then the person whose evidence would have been conclusive, but he was one of the many casualties in the entrenchment. Mowbray Thomson, one of the four survivors; unambiguously states that the Magistrate invited Nana to take charge of the treasury. "The resident magistrate, Mr. Hillersden, being greatly concerned for the safety of the large amount of treasure under his charge, more than a hundred thousand pounds, after consultation with Sir Hugh Wheeler, sent over to Bithoor requesting the presence and aid of Nana Sahib; he came instantly, attended by his body guard, and engaged to send a force of two hundred cavalry, four hundred infantry, and two guns to protect the revenue. The treasury was at the distance of five miles from the intrenchment, and it was thought inexpedient to bring the revenue into the former position, consequently it was placed under the custody

[28] Shepherd, *op cit*, p 15
[29] *Idem*, pp 5-6

of the detachment from Bithoor, together with a company of the 53d Native Infantry, and Nana Sahib himself resided in the civil lines of the cantonment. The relations we had always sustained with this man had been of so friendly a nature that not a suspicion of his fidelity entered the minds of any of our leaders; his reinforcements considerably allayed the feverish excitement caused by our critical condition, and it was even proposed that the ladies should be removed to his residence at Bithoor, that they might be in a place of safety."[30] Obviously, neither Hillersdon nor Wheeler had any reason at that moment to distrust Nana, whose hospitality they had so often enjoyed, though they knew well that the Maratha prince did not feel happy about the loss of his father's pension. It should be noted that though there is complete unanimity about the number of guns Nana brought with him, the numerical strength of his armed retainers is variously estimated from two hundred to six hundred. We do not know which of the two witnesses is to be considered more reliable, for we are not acquainted with their sources of information. Shepherd was an Eurasian clerk of the commissariat office, while Mowbray Thomson was a commissioned officer of the army who had better access to the resident magistrate and the officer commanding the Kanpur division.

Sir Hugh Wheeler had naturally employed a few spies and informers to keep himself informed about the latest developments in the city and the sepoy lines. Unfortunately, they did not keep their reports for the general's ears alone, and shared their secrets with some of their friends and thus contributed not a little to the general confusion. Their information was sometimes misleading. On the 24th an outbreak was confidently predicted but nothing happened.[31] The sepoy, however, was not the only source of uneasiness and fear, the Europeans and Eurasians were sometimes perturbed by rumoured approach of large bands of

[30] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 32-33. Mrs. Hillersdon shared her husband's confidence in Nana and the Magistrate even expected to suppress the outbreak with troops raised by the Maratha prince. Mrs. Hillersdon wrote to one of her friends, "Should the native troops here mutiny, we should either go into cantonments, or to a place called Bithoor, where the Peishwa's successor resides. He is a great friend of C—'s (the Magistrate's), and is a man of enormous wealth and influence; and he has assured C— that we should all be quite safe there." This letter was dated the 16th May. On the 18th she again wrote, "If there should be an outbreak here, dearest C— has made all the necessary arrangements for me and the children to go to Bithoor. He will go there himself, and, with the aid of the rajah, to whose house we are going, he will collect and head a force of fifteen hundred fighting-men, and bring them into Cawnpore to take the insurgents by surprise. This is a plan of their own, and is quite a secret; for the object of it is to come on the mutineers unawares." G. D., *The History of the Indian Revolt*, p 126

[31] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 410

marauding Gujars.[32] The constant tension, uncertainty and indecision began to affect the nerves of the officers, and some of them felt that any action would be preferable to this unhealthy suspense. One of them wrote home, "I only wish that I might get orders to go out with my regiment, or alone with my company, against some of these people, so that we could put the men to the test, and see whether they really mean to stick to us or not, and end this state of suspense."[33] On the 31st May, Colonel Ewart wrote, "I do not wish to write gloomily, but there is no use disguising the facts that we are in the utmost danger, and, as I have said, if the troops do mutiny, my life must almost certainly be sacrificed. But I do not think they will venture to attack the intrenched position which is held by the European troops."[34] Mrs. Ewart assessed the situation more correctly with a woman's intuition. "An accidental spark may set the whole of the regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, in a blaze of mutiny," wrote she, "and even if we keep our position where we are intrenched, with six guns, officers must be sacrificed; and I do not attempt to conceal from myself that my husband runs greater risk than any one of the whole force."[35]

The spark came in the shape of a drunken officer. In a fit of intoxication this foolish man fired upon a small patrol of the 2nd Cavalry. He was court-martialled, but let off on the ground that he was not in his senses when he committed the offence and was not responsible for his action. This was a novel plea, for drunkenness is not a valid excuse in law, and this palpable injustice confirmed the sepoys in their suspicion that their officers meant some serious mischief. Shepherd met a body of angry horsemen and they made no secret of their feelings. One complained that failing to force the new cartridge on them their officers had cunningly imported flour mixed with cows' and pigs' bone from Roorkee. Another asked, if no treachery was intended why were the officers entrenching themselves? A third asserted that he had no faith in them, for had they not attempted to replace the native guards at the magazine and the treasury by Europeans? The treatment of the Meerut horsemen "who had refused to bite the new cartridge" was also discussed. "Thus we shall all be treated as soon as an European force is sent to Cawnpore, so we will not wait till then; as it is, we are degraded to the lowest degree; for the other night only, an officer fired upon a small

[32] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 5
[33] Forest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 411
[34] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 33
[35] *Idem*, p 36

picquet of ours when going its rounds, and the court passed it off by saying that the officer was mad: if we, natives, had fired upon a European, we should have been hanged".[36] This was indeed a sore point with the sepoys, and they felt that the accused had been let off by judges of the ruling race because he belonged to their own class and caste. But the night of the third passed off quietly.

The entrenchment, that caused so much resentment among the disaffected sepoys as a tangible evidence of distrust, was not a strong place. It consisted of two one-storied brick-built barracks, one of which had thatched roofs. The trench around was not very deep and the breastwork was neither strong nor high. Azimullah ridiculed this flimsy affair and christened it "the fort of despair". It was designed for a temporary shelter, for Sir Hugh Wheeler had been assured by his spies that the native troops, if they mutinied, would immediately march for Delhi, as they had no intention of molesting the English or the Christian community of Kanpur. Against resolute attack the entrenchment offered but little protection and the magazine was preferred by the civil population as a safer place of refuge. But Sir Hugh Wheeler did not like to go far from the sepoy lines where he had instructed his officers to sleep. He was trying to allay the suspicion of the sepoy by this token of confidence and to provide the European community with a safe retreat, should an emergency arise. At every alarm, the women and children of the governing race hurried to the entrenchment and they returned home when the alarm proved false. The sepoy drew his own conclusion and the arguments of his officers carried little conviction. A straightforward policy might have saved Kanpur. If Wheeler had occupied the magazine with the European population, civil and military, and defied the rebels to do their worst, he might hold on, if sufficient provision was available, till succour arrived. If he had placed his faith implicitly in the honour of the Indian troops and given them no reason to fear aggression, there was a sporting chance of rallying the moderate elements; but the mixed policy of thinly veiled distrust and a half-hearted effort to present a calm appearance did not work. The time for open intimidation was over.

On the 30th May, Sir Hugh decided to send back the men of Her Majesty's 32nd Regiment to Lucknow for considerable uneasiness was felt there while Kanpur was still quiet. He still had with him, besides his original force, a few men and officers

[36] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp 9-11

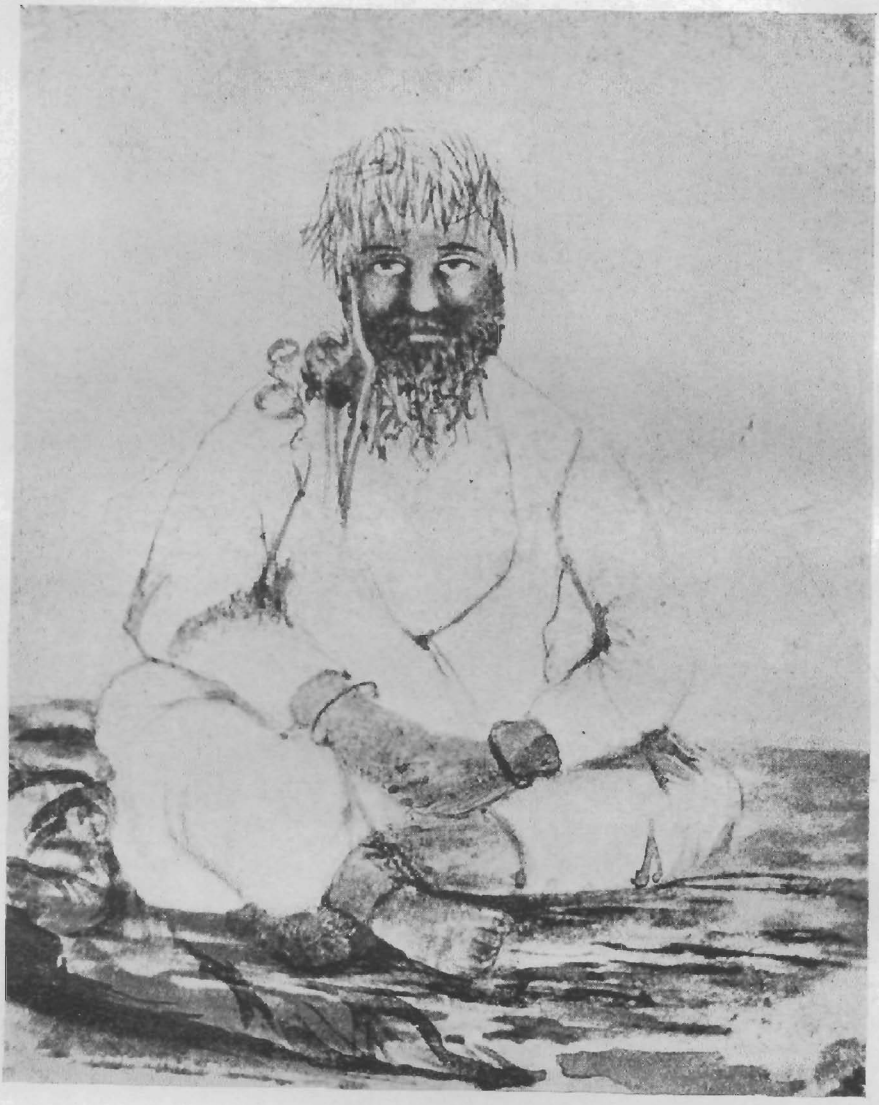
of Her Majesty's 84th foot who had come in small batches from Calcutta. Open mutiny had broken out at Lucknow on the 30th of May; on the 3rd June two officers and fifty men were despatched to that city. "This leaves me weak," Wheeler wrote to Lord Canning, "but I trust to hold my own until more Europeans arrive." That very evening news reached him that a rising was imminent and the non-combatants were ordered to go into the entrenchment. The next day, the 4th of June, provisions for a month were thrown into the entrenchment and one lakh of rupees were brought from the treasury. This served as a signal for the Mutiny. The troopers in their excitement had told Shepherd that they would not wait till the European troops came, and they did not. Mutiny broke out late at night on the 4th, putting an end to the nerve-racking strain of uncertainty and suspense.

As was expected, the 2nd Cavalry took the lead. They were promptly joined by the 1st Infantry, but they did not molest their officers. The 53rd and the 56th kept to their lines till the morning of the 5th, when the 56th also responded to the call of their brethren. Mowbray Thomson writes, "The 53d remained, till, by some error of the General, they were fired into. I am at an utter loss to account for this proceeding. The men were peacefully occupied in their lines, cooking; no signs of mutiny had appeared amidst their ranks, they had refused all the solicitations of the deserters to accompany them, and seemed quite steadfast, when Ashe's battery opened upon them by Sir Hugh Wheeler's command, and they were literally driven from us by nine-pounders. The only signal that had preceded this step was the calling in to the intrenchments of the native officers of the regiment. The whole of them cast in their lot with us, besides a hundred and fifty privates, most of them belonging to the Grenadier company. The detachment of the 53d posted at the treasury held their ground against the rebels about four hours. We could hear their musketry in the distance, but were not allowed to attempt their relief."[37] The loyal remnant of this regiment was prepared to stand by their officers till the last. They were assigned a post about six hundred yards to the east of the entrenchment, which they held for nine days until the building caught fire. They were not admitted into the entrenchment owing

[37] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 39-40. Ram Baksh, Pay Havilder of the 53rd N.I., deposed that after a party of the 5th and light companies had fled with colours and treasure the rest of the regiment came to the parade ground with the intention of joining the Europeans when three round shots were fired and they fled. Depositions, pp 31-32



*Nana Saheb*



*Tatya Tope*

to the shortage of provisions and were dismissed with a few rupees each and a certificate of fidelity. Sir George Forrest, however, attempted a defence of Wheeler's action relying on the testimony of Shepherd, who says that the native officers of the 53rd and 56th had already reported to the General that their men were determined to go, and it was then that a shot or two were fired at them.[38] It is seldom realised how meagre our knowledge of the Kanpur Mutiny and the subsequent events is. The Mutiny is an undisputed fact, and so are the cruel massacres of June and July, but the details, with which the current accounts of these unhappy events have been embellished, are based on such contradictory evidence as will not bear a careful examination. Mowbray Thomson, a responsible military officer, had much better opportunities of knowing the facts than the Eurasian clerk, whose knowledge of that morning's doings must have been second-hand.

The rebel troops, infantry and cavalry, then proceeded to the treasury which they broke open and looted. The prison was also raided and the convicts released. Then they marched towards Delhi and halted at Kalyanpur. The forecast of Wheeler was about to prove correct when unexpectedly the sepoys came back to Kanpur and Nana wrote to the General that he was going to attack the entrenchment. What happened in the interval? Tatya Tope deposed that Nana had been forced under duress vile to join the sepoys' cause and assume their command. At first he refused to go to Delhi or to fight the British troops at Kanpur but later yielded to force.[39] Sir George Forrest objects and points out that Nana had two guns and a body of armed retainers with him, and the story of violence must, therefore, be rejected.[40] The British Government had presented Baji Rao two guns to fire salvoes on festive occasions. For purposes of fighting they were worse than useless ; as instruments of defence they were of no utility. It is also extremely doubtful whether Nana's retainers, who numbered about three hundred, were a match for three infantry and one cavalry regiments. Therefore, Tatya Tope's story might have a substratum of truth. At the last extremity Nana's men might have fraternised with the sepoys, as did the Gwalior and Indore contingents.

According to another account, " a deputation of some of the native officers waited on Nana," and suggested that a

[38] Forest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp 417-18. Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 16

[39] Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 515

[40] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, p 420

kingdom awaited him if he joined their cause, but death if he sided with their enemies.[41] Nana succumbed either to the temptation or to the threat, perhaps to both, and swallowed the barbed bait. This story is not altogether incompatible with Tatya's deposition and is quite in keeping with what little we know of Nana's character. But whether the story itself is authentic is more than we can say. We do not know for certain whether he accompanied the rebel regiments to Kalyanpur and there prevailed upon them to turn back, or whether his agents went after the army and persuaded it, by large financial inducements, to return to Kanpur and finish the handful of Englishmen in the entrenchment. According to Nanak Chand, an avowed enemy of Nana, the Maratha prince had long been in the confidence of the sepoy leaders and had several secret conferences with them before the actual outbreak. But Sherer was of opinion that "Nana was clearly not in league, previously, with the native soldiery, or it would not have been necessary for him to pursue them down the road, and entreat them, with lavish promises, to return."[42] Thornhill put the same argument, somewhat differently, when he observed, "Had any understanding existed between the Nana and the troops, there would have been no object in the march they made on the Delhi road."[43] Colonel Williams conducted an enquiry into the Kanpur Mutiny and events following it, but he found no evidence of any previous understanding between Nana and the sepoy leaders. "It is difficult to specify the exact date on which he first commenced tampering with the troops, for it is impossible to get the evidence of any individuals who are directly implicated in these treasonable proceedings." The logic of events indicates that the sepoys felt the need of a leader of high rank, and played upon his ambition and fear, and Nana placed himself at their head after some hesitation. In a letter written in 1859 Nana asserted that he and his family were at the mercy of the rebels when he was compelled to join them. It is also said that Nana was prepared to lead the sepoys to Delhi, but Azimullah shrewdly pointed out that at Delhi Nana could at best play a minor part but at Kanpur his would be the principal role. So the rebels marched back to Kanpur and started plundering the rich people of the city. It is, however, difficult to explain why Nana notified Wheeler, in writing, of his intention of assaulting the entrenchment. Was it due to vanity, born out of a new sense

[41] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 20
[42] Sherer's *Report on Cawnpore, dt. 13th January*, 1859, p 5
[43] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, pp 598-99

of self-importance, or was it a piece of quixotry that made him conform to the obsolete code of Hindu chivalry that forbade a surprise attack on an unwarned enemy? The entrenchment was cannonaded from day to day, but though the advantage of number was definitely on the rebel side a general assault was never attempted. It was commonly believed that the area had been heavily mined.

Of the refugees sheltered in the "fort of despair" fifty per cent were women and children. Every able-bodied man was expected to fight, irrespective of his normal vocation and the besieged had to be on the alert night and day. Sir Hugh Wheeler was too old to bear the full brunt of the fight, and the main responsibility of conducting the defence fell on the younger, but none the less capable, shoulders of Captain Moore. There was no lack of arms and ammunition and three to seven, even eight muskets[44] were allotted to each fighting man. But food was by no means so plentiful, nor was its distribution regulated by prudential considerations. Says Mowbray Thomson, the "indiscriminate supply of provisions afforded some truly comical scenes during the first few days. Here might have been seen a private trudging away from the main-guard laden with a bottle of champagne, a tin of preserved herrings, and a pot of jam for his mess allowance; there would be another with salmon, rum, and sweetmeats for his inheritance. The rice and flour were then sacred to the women and children; but this luxuriant feeding soon came to an end, and all were reduced to the monotonous and scanty allowance of one meal a day, consisting of a handful of split peas and a handful of flour, certainly not more than half a pint together, for the daily ration."[45] Every attempt was made to supplement this scanty supply. Sometimes a horse was shot when the hostile cavalry came within the range. Once a Brahminy bull "came grazing within limits where his sanctity was not respected" But it was easier to kill the animal than to transport the carcase within the walls, but hunger added zest to the enterprise, and the bull was converted into soup before long, though it did not fall to the lot of men in the outposts to partake of the appetising dish.[46] On another occasion a horse provided two meals for two picquets, though some ladies could not reconcile themselves to this unaccustomed fare. Captain Halliday was shot dead when carrying some horse soup. Even a common cur was once tempted by "every possible blandishment" to walk within practicable dis-

[44] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 64
[45] *Idem*, p 78
[46] *Idem*, pp 80-81

tance, and within a few minutes its "semi-roasted fabric" was offered to Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson but he declined it.[47]

The thin walls of the barracks offered little protection against the scorching heat of June, and many died of sunstroke. "It was often quite impossible to touch the barrel of a gun and once or twice muskets went off at mid-day, either from the sun exploding their caps, or from the fiery heat of metal." The heat quickly putrified the carcases of the dead animals and the offensive smell poisoned the air, but luckily nature's scavengers, the vultures and adjutant birds came to the aid of the besieged.

Suffering from thirst was intense. The single well in the entrenchment had no protecting cover and sepoy sharp-shooters fired as soon as any attempt was made to draw water. Even in the dead of night the creaking of the tackle betrayed the presence of an adventurer by the well. A bucket of water cost eight to ten shillings. John McKillop, a civilian, constituted himself "the Captain of the well" and undertook to draw water for the poor sufferers. After many providential escapes he was wounded while engaged in his philanthropic labours and died soon afterwards. Mowbray Thomson says, the "sufferings of the women and children from thirst were intense, and the men could scarcely endure the cries for drink which were almost perpetual from the poor little babes, terribly unconscious they were, most of them, of the great, great cost at which only it could be procured. I have seen the children of my brother officers sucking the pieces of old water-bags, putting scraps of canvas and leather straps into the mouth to try and get a single drop of moisture upon their parched lips."[48]

About a week after the siege began, a terrible calamity befell the besieged. The thatched barrack, where the sick and wounded had been lodged, caught fire from a carcase or shell, and in spite of all efforts two artillery men died in the flames. With the barrack were burnt all the medical stores and no relief could henceforth be given to the wounded. "It was heart-breaking work to see the poor sufferers parched with thirst that could be only most scantily relieved, and sinking from fever and mortification that we had no appliances wherewith to resist."[49] Deprived of the roof over their head, some of the women had to take shelter in the trench where bare earth was their bed.

Death came from all quarters at all hours. Major Lindsay was blinded by the splinters of a round shot and died a few days later.

[47] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 83-84
[48] *Idem*, p 87
[49] *Idem*, p 94

His wife followed him a day or two after. Heberden was wounded while handing some water to one of the ladies and died after a week of intense suffering. Lieutenant Eckford was killed while sitting in the verandah. Mrs. White was walking with her husband under the cover of a wall, she had two babies, twins, one in each arm. A single bullet killed the husband and broke both the arms of Mrs. White. Hillersdon, the Magistrate, died while talking to his wife in the verandah. Lieutenant Wheeler, the son of the General, had been wounded in the trenches, he was killed by a round shot in a sofa in his room within the sight of his parents and sisters.[50]

The Indian servants also shared the sufferings of their European masters. There were not a few of them in the entrenchment. Thomson says that three of them in the service of Lieutenant Bridges were killed by one shell. A servant of Lieutenant Goad's was shot through the head while crossing from one barrack to another with some food in his hand. Several of them died at the time of embarkation.[51]

The dead could not be given a decent burial and were thrown pell-mell into a well under the cover of night. The only coffin available had gone to the first casualty of the first morning, Mr. Murphy, who was buried within the entrenchment. Afterwards a formal burial was not possible.

But nature did not suspend her creative activities while man was sowing death. "There were children born as well as dying in these terrible times, and three or four mothers had to undergo the sufferings of maternity in a crisis that left none of that hope and joy which compensate the hour of agony."[52] Children were a source of constant anxiety to the parents. Unconscious of the danger outside, and tired of the monotonies of the life within, they would leave the security of the barrack and run out whenever they could evade the mother's eye, and bullets made no distinction of age and sex.

It was a terrible war that recognised no past conventions or humane law, and neither party would spare a prisoner. The first prisoner taken by the besieged managed to effect his escape. "It was not desirable", says Mowbray Thomson, "that very frequent accounts of our destitute condition should be conveyed to the rebels; so in future, to remedy this evil, all we took were despatched without reference to head-quarters."[53]

[50] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 99-110
[51] *Idem*, p 111
[52] *Idem*, p 104
[53] *Idem*, p 75

With their limited resources and steadily thinning ranks, the defenders of the entrenchment could not expect to hold on for an indefinite period. Communication with Calcutta had been completely cut off and although European troops were expected from the east, Lucknow was the only quarter where the beleagured could apply for immediate help. To Lucknow, therefore, General Wheeler addressed his appeal after the first week of the siege. "We have been besieged since the 6th by the Nana Saheb, joined by the whole of the native troops who broke out on the morning of the 4th. The enemy have two 24-pounders, and several other guns. We have only eight 9-pounders. The whole Christian population is with us in a temporary intrenchment, and our defence has been noble and wonderful, our loss heavy and cruel. We want, aid, aid, aid!" "If we had 200 men," he added, "we could punish the scoundrels and aid you." But Lucknow had its own trouble and could not spare any. The siege had not yet commenced but the enemy force was not far off. Sir Henry Lawrence and his advisers felt helpless and commended their countrymen at Kanpur to God's protection. "We are strong *in* our intrenchments," replied Lawrence, "but by attempting the passage of the river, should be sacrificing a large detachment without a prospect of helping you. Pray do not think me selfish. I would run much risk could I see a commensurate prospect of success."[54] So nothing was left but to wait patiently for the European troops the Governor-General had promised, or to come to terms with the enemy when all hope of succour failed.

But General Wheeler did not give way to despondency. There were Eurasians in the entrenchment. Conversant with the local language and dark enough to pass unnoticed in the garb of a native, one of these, Blenman, had paid one or two visits to Nana's camp and returned without any mishap. He was asked to make an attempt to go to Allahabad. He was, however, caught and relieved of his belongings. Probably his identity was not suspected for he met with no further harm.[55] Other efforts to open communication with down country people met with no better success. Ultimately Shepherd, of the Commissariat, offered to go to the city and bring what information he could collect. But his commission was not limited to collection of news only. He was to try, if possible, to create a dissension in the rebel ranks through influential people believed to be in the British interest. Shepherd says that the General asked him to bring correct information "of

[54] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 507, Appendix 2. Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 440

[55] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 130

the intentions and doings of the enemy", and to ascertain whether there was any chance of receiving reinforcement from Allahabad or Lucknow. "He then, after musing a while, instructed me to go to the Nunneh Nawab (*alias* Mahomed Ali Khan). 'He is faithful to us,' said the General, 'and I can trust him. Tell him to endeavour to cause a rupture among the rebels, and if they will leave off annoying us, or go away from the station, I will do a great deal for him.' He further directed me, in case I was unable to find the Nawab, to go to other influential mahajuns, and others of the inhabitants of the city, and if they succeed in assisting us in this respect to promise rewards, I was authorised to offer as far as a lac of rupees, with handsome pensions for life, to any person who would bring about so desirable an end."[56] It is not strange that at this crisis Wheeler should have pinned his faith in Nunneh Nawab, who commanded the siege battery and was pounding the entrenchment day and night. The Nawab had suffered humiliation at the hands of the sepoys when they came back to Kanpur and raided his house. He later came to terms with them and was placed in command of the artillery, for which he does not seem to have possessed the minimum technical qualification. Such unwilling recruits could not but be lukewarm in the rebel cause and were likely to betray it at the first opportunity. But Shepherd was less fortunate than Blenman. He was detected shortly after he was out of the entrenchment, and lodged in the gaol from which he was not released until Havelock's troops reached Kanpur.

Meanwhile Nana had formally assumed the government. Subadar Tika Singh of the 2nd Cavalry was promoted General, and Subadars Dalbhanjan Singh and Gangadin became Colonels. Jawala Prasad, the commander of Nana's own troops, was raised to the rank of a Brigadier. The administration of criminal justice was vested in Nana's brother Baba Bhat. Thieves and other malefactors were produced before him and duly punished. But the penalties imposed were not those sanctioned by the erstwhile law of British India. The Hindu criminal law, with which the Maratha judicial officers were familiar in the pre-annexation days, were revived. So the culprits were sentenced to mutilation, on the principle of removing the offending limbs. Whether these cruel punishments had the desired effect, we do not know for certain. But Nana was not the head of a purely Hindu state. With the outbreak of Mutiny had been unfurled the green banner of Islam, but there was no conflict between the professors of the

[56] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp 59-60

rival faiths. They all wanted a revival of the past, the restoration of the old institutions, the return of the good old days. Azimullah might have treated religion lightly but there were many devout Muslims who attended Nana's court and supported the new regime.

On the 24th June, Wheeler sent his final message to Lucknow. It was the last cry of despair wrung out of an anguished heart. "British spirit alone remains," he wrote, "but it cannot last for ever." "Surely we are not to die like rats in a cage." The garrison was already on half ration and provisions would not last, at this reduced rate, for more than four days. A fresh supply of ammunition had been solicited but there was no chance of the diminished store being replenished. If rain came, and it might come any day, the British position would be untenable. Obviously the end was near.

Relief at last was offered by the enemy and the bearer of the olive branch was an East Indian woman of disputed identity. "On the twenty-first day of the siege," writes Mowbray Thomson (he obviously counts from the 5th of June), "the firing of my picket having ceased for a short time, the look-out man up in the crow's nest shouted, 'There's a woman coming across.' She was supposed to have been a spy, and one of the picquet would have shot her, but that I knocked down his arm and saved her life. She had a child at her breast, but was so imperfectly clothed as to be without shoes and stockings. I lifted her over the barricade in a fainting condition, when I recognised her as Mrs. Greenway, a member of a wealthy family who had resided at Cawnpore, and carried on their operations as merchants in the cantonments."[57] Mrs. Greenway had with her an unsigned letter, written in English, and addressed "To the subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria". Thomson took the letter to Captain Moore. The document was brief and offered "all those who are in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, and are willing to lay down their arms, . . safe passage to Allahabad". Wheeler was still expecting relief from Calcutta and was reluctant to treat with Nana. But Moore pointed out that women and

[57] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 148-149. Forrest, on the strength of Kalka Prasad's evidence, says that it was Mrs. Jacobs who took the note to Wheeler. Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 451. Shepherd obviously was uncertain about the identity of the lady. He first says that Mrs. Greenway was sent with a letter, according to current reports (*A Personal Narrative*, p 70) but later asserts that the offer of terms was brought to General Wheeler by 'Mrs. Henry Jacobie' (*A Personal Narrative*, p 71). Lieutenant Thomson helped the lady into the entrenchment and he is positive that Mrs. Greenway was the bearer of the peace offer. I have no hesitation in accepting his evidence against that of Kalka Prasad and his friends

children claimed first consideration. They had suffered frightful destitution, and as provisions had nearly been exhausted there remained no alternative to an honourable capitulation. The next day Azimullah and Jawala Prasad came for a parley and it was agreed that the entrenchment should be evacuated, each man being permitted to leave with his arms and sixty rounds of ammunition. Conveyance should be provided for the wounded, the women and the children, and boats should be kept ready at the ghat with food supply. Azimullah took these proposals to Nana but he insisted that the evacuation should be effected that very night. But the garrison expressed their inability to leave before the morning. At last a messenger brought Nana's verbal consent. Todd then volunteered to take the document to Nana's residence and returned with the treaty of capitulation, signed by Nana, within half an hour. Jawala Prasad came to the British camp with two other persons as hostages for Nana's good faith. Before sunset the British guns were surrendered, and a committee of three, Captain Turner and Lieutenants Delafosse and Goad, were escorted to the riverside to see that the boats were in readiness. They found about forty country boats "moored and apparently ready for departure, some of them roofed, and others undergoing that process."[58] At night an alarm was caused by some sleepy sentry dropping his musket, but Jawala Prasad personally intervened and quiet was restored.

On the morning of the 27th sixteen elephants and seventy to eighty palanquins came to convey the fugitives to the boats. But all of them could not be accommodated, and Captain Moore, who was supervising the operations, had to come for a second time. "The women and children were put on the elephants, and into bullock carts; the able-bodied walked down indiscriminately, after the advance had gone." It was after the first batch had left that the sepoys came to the entrenchment. "Inquiries were made by men after their old officers whom they had missed," says Mowbray Thomson, "and they appeared much distressed at hearing of their death." "I inquired of another sepoy of the 53d, 'Are we to go to Allahabad without molestation?' He affirmed that such was his firm belief; and I do not suppose that the contemplated massacre had been divulged beyond the councils of its brutal projectors. Poor old Sir Hugh Wheeler, his lady

[58] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p 156. Like every thing relating to Kanpur there is difference of opinion about the number of boats got ready for the besieged. Shepherd says that twenty-four boats lying at Customs Ghat were seized and prepared for the journey. Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 72. Delafosse did not mention any number.

and daughter, walked down to the boats. The rear was brought up by Major Vibart, who was the last officer in the intrenchment. Some of the rebels who had served in this officer's regiment insisted on carrying out the property which belonged to him. They loaded a bullock cart with boxes, and escorted the Major's wife and family down to the boats, with the most profuse demonstrations of respect."[59] By 9 o'clock the last boat had received her complement. If anything had happened on the way Mowbray Thomson and Delafosse were unaware of it. The river was low, the boats had no gangway, and the passengers, men, women and children, had to wade through the water.

What followed, let Mowbray Thomson relate. No one was likely to know the whole truth, for no one could possibly have witnessed everything. There was a huge crowd on the river banks that morning, and thousands of spectators had gathered to see their former rulers leave. But there were no more reliable witnesses than Mowbray Thomson and Delafosse, two of the four survivors, who escaped the massacre and lived to record their unhappy experience. They were both of them trained observers, but while Delafosse's account is very brief, Mowbray Thomson's narrative is more detailed. Neither of them had complete confidence in Nana and his counsellors.

Thomson writes, "As soon as Major Vibart had stepped into his boat, 'Off' was the word; but at a signal from the shore, the native boatmen, who numbered eight and a coxswain to each boat, all jumped over and waded to the shore. *We fired into them immediately,*[60] but the majority of them escaped, and are now plying their old trade in the neighbourhood of Cawnpore. Before they quitted us, these men had contrived to secrete burning charcoal in the thatch of most of the boats. Simultaneously with the departure of the boatmen, the identical troopers who had escorted Major Vibart to the ghaut opened upon us with their carbines. As well as the confusion, caused by the burning of the boats, would allow, we returned the fire of these horsemen, who were about fifteen or sixteen in number, but they retired immediately after the volley they had given us."[61] Then followed pandemonium. Most of the boats could not be moved, though the passengers jumped into the water and tried to push them afloat. Fire was opened from ambushed guns and the thatched roofs of the boats were in flames. Women and children crouched behind the boats and "stood up to their chins in the river" to

[59] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 163-65
[60] Italics mine
[61] *Idem*, pp 166-67

avoid the thickly falling bullets. Vibart's boat, however, drifted into deep waters with its thatched covering unburnt. Mowbray Thomson swam to this boat and was pulled in. A second boat also got away from the ghat but a round shot below the water mark sent it down. The survivors were rescued and taken in Vibart's boat. With the help of spars and pieces of wood the passengers tried their utmost to move the boat out of the danger zone, but grape and round shot fell all around. About mid-day the fugitives got out of range of the big guns but they were followed by musket fire the rest of the day. At night burning arrows were shot and a fire boat was sent down stream with a view to setting fire to the boat.

They had a brief respite in the morning, but they learnt from some villagers, who were bathing in the river, that Babu Rambaksh, a powerful zamindar, was waiting at Nazafgarh ready to intercept them. At about 2 o'clock they reached the dreaded place, and, as ill luck would have it, the boat ran aground and offered a fixed target for the musketeers on the banks. A gun was later brought, but a lucky shower put it out of action. At sunset a boat-load of armed men came from Kanpur but their boat also got stuck on a sand bank. The fugitives anticipated their attack and completely routed them. The boat ran aground for a second time; though a strong hurricane released it soon afterwards. But their trial was not yet over. The morning revealed that the boat had drifted out of the navigable channel and the pursuers were not long in coming. Two successive days and nights of incessant toil, without a morsel of food and any drink, except what the river offered, had completely exhausted them, but they were fighting for their lives and were sustained by the primitive instinct of self-preservation. Vibart directed Thomson and Delafosse to get down with twelve others and charge the assailants. The mixed crowd of sepoys and rustics could not stand their mad onslaught, but when they had cut their way out of the mob, they found that the boat was gone. Unable to evade their pursuers, the desperate band next took shelter in a temple. There was no food in the temple, but some putrid water, held in a hollow, helped to quench their thirst. They had to abandon this shelter and betake themselves to the river. By this time their number was reduced to seven. Two of them were shot while swimming and a third got to a sand-bank where he was knocked on the head. The pursuers at last gave up the chase. After three hours of swimming the survivors decided to take some rest. They sat by the shore, with water up to the neck, when they were hailed by friendly voices from the bank. At first they could not

believe in their good luck, but when they were convinced that they were safe at last, they found that they had lost all their energy so long sustained by fear of life and had to be helped out of the shallow water. Thomson was clad in a shirt only, Delafosse had a sheet about his loins, Sullivan and Murphy had no clothing of any kind. Their host was Digvijaya Singh of Murar Mau, a zamindar of Oudh, whose residence they reached in the evening of the 29th June.

Delafosse's brief account differs in some detail from that of Mowbray Thomson. "We got down to the river and into the boats, without being molested in the least; but no sooner were we in the boats and had laid down our muskets, and taken off our coats, in order to work easier at the boats than the cavalry gave the order to fire two guns that had been hidden; they were run out and opened fire on us immediately, whilst sepoys came from all directions, and kept up a heavy fire. The men jumped out of the boats, and instead of trying to get the boats loose from their moorings rushed to the first boat they saw loose; only three boats got safe over to the opposite side of the river, but were met there by two field pieces guarded by numbers of cavalry and infantry. Before the boats had gone a mile down the stream half of our small party were either killed or wounded, and two of our boats had been swamped."[62]

Thomson and Delafosse had obviously boarded two different boats. Their accounts make it clear that if any outrage had been committed on the way, they were unaware of it. Mowbray Thomson positively states that the sepoys were quite courteous before the embarkation was completed, and as he says, nothing happened until Major Vibart, the last man to leave the camp, had boarded his boat. It can be assumed that the story of Colonel Ewart being killed in the rear of the column and General Wheeler being beheaded as he was getting out of his palanquin does not rest on any substantial evidence. Ewart would have been missed at the ghat and Wheeler did not ride a palanquin, but walked with his wife and daughter all the way to the river.[63] It is not clear who fired the first shot, men from Mowbray Thomson's boat or the horsemen on the banks. For, he is definite that when the boatmen deserted they were immediately fired on, and simultaneously the horsemen, who had accompanied Major Vibart, fired a volley. It is also clear that some of the boatmen were killed while running away, for Mowbray Thomson significantly adds that the majority

[62] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion,* p 648

[63] Wheeler's servant was positive that his master had safely reached a boat

of them escaped. The story of a previous conspiracy to lure the Britishers to the river and then massacre them must be examined in the light of these facts.

The story, though it rests on very doubtful evidence, cannot be lightly dismissed. It cannot be denied that guns had been placed and troops posted by the riverside. The Chaudhuris of boats, Gurdayal and Lochan, deposed that one boat was fired at a signal and the conflagration spread to neighbouring crafts moored in close proximity. The presence of the Chauhan landlords might not have been previously arranged, for the news of the capitulation had gained quick publicity, and people, from the villages near-by, collected early in the morning to witness the departure of the English. It is not easy to ascertain what share Nana had in the plot. As the head of the rebel army, he cannot be absolved from all responsibility for its misdeeds, and technically all blame for the massacre must be assigned to him. But John Lang was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. "In the absence of some proof," he writes, "I should be sorry—especially after the letters I have read on the subject—to attribute to the man that fiendish treachery and horrible massacre which took place at Cawnpore in July, 1857. Nena Sahib had seen so much of English gentlemen and ladies was personally (if not intimately) acquainted with so many of the sufferers, that it is only fair to suppose, when he ordered boats to be got ready, he was sincere in his desire that the Christians should find their way to Calcutta, and that what ensued was in violation of his orders, and the act of those who wished to place for ever between Nena Sahib and the British Government an impassable barrier, so far as peace and reconciliation were concerned. No one knew better than Nena Sahib that, in the event of the British becoming again the conquerors of India, the very fact of his having spared the lives of those who surrendered, would have led to the sparing of his own life, and hence the promise he made to Sir Hugh Wheeler."[64] It cannot be gainsaid that the lives of the women and children, who escaped sepoy bullets and sabres that morning, were saved by Nana, and it was due to his orders that the massacre was stopped. Colonel Maude, writing thirty-seven years later, also felt doubtful about Nana's part in this horrible crime. "Reading them (the evidence collected by Colonel Williams) carefully and without bias today, one must doubt whether the Nana Sahib was guilty of complicity in the murders of our women and children as he is generally believed to have been. I

[64] Lang, *op. cit.*, pp 412-13

am rather of opinion that his hand, though guilty, was forced by his more blood-thirsty followers, whose acts he dared not disavow. Even in the present time, and in our own country, we can point to similar toleration of equally dastardly outrages. It is certain that on more than one occasion the Nana befriended the helpless creatures; indeed treated them with actual kindness. The massacre at the Ghat was certainly planned with Satanic genius, and by a master mind, which latter the Nana certainly did not possess."[65]

It is futile now to try to find out whose was the master-mind behind the plot. But we should not forget that in 1857 neither party was swayed by consideration of humanity. It is admitted that when the Mutiny broke out at Kanpur, not a single sepoy laid a violent hand on his officer, while on the admission of Mowbray Thomson, after the first few days of the siege, every prisoner taken by the English was despatched without any formality. Colonel Ewart and his wife had gloomy forebodings about the former's impending doom. Why? Who fired the first shot on that fateful morning? When did the carbineers of the 2nd Cavalry open their fire?—Before the boatmen were shot from Thomson's boat, or after? Above all, were the sepoys ignorant of the inhuman atrocities perpetrated by Neill and his men? Maulavi Liakat Ali had already arrived at Kanpur and must have reported Neill's doings at Allahabad. "Old men who had done us no harm," says Holmes, "helpless women with sucking infants at their breasts, felt the weight of our vengeance".[66] It was no consolation to the kith and kin of his victims that Neill felt no delight in burning villages and shooting inoffensive people. The massacre of Sati Chaura Ghat followed, and did not precede, Neill's performances. If Nana is held legally responsible for the crimes of his followers, the moral guilt must be shared by Neill. If he had not scared away the villagers by his strong measures, there is reason to believe that he might have reached Kanpur before Wheeler capitulated.

Jawala Prasad, Azimullah and Bala Rao have been held guilty along with Tatya Tope for the treachery of the 27th June. But there were lesser persons who had old scores to settle. Hoolas Singh, the Kotwal, did not go to the Ghat that morning because he had heard two days earlier of the contemplated massacre. Hoolas Singh said that one Kazi Wasiuddin was maturing plans for the massacre. "Two days before the boats for the Europeans

[65] Maude and Sherer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 108-109
[66] Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 220

were got ready, in the evening the Kazi with two sirdars of the cavalry regiment whose names I don't know, was concerting measures . . . for their death. At that time I arrived at the house and heard that to murder the Europeans having got them out of the entrenchment was lawful and proper; this I heard, but I don't remember who was present.''[67] We must not forget that some of these witnesses were out to save their own necks and some were fishing for a reward. In normal times most of this evidence would have been rejected by a criminal court, but during the Mutiny the most sensational stories passed for unimpeachable facts. Forjett tells us that Europeans at Bombay not only believed but reported to Lord Elphinstone that a public man, of Jagannath Shankar Seth's reputation, and a scholar, of Bhau Daji's erudition, were in communication and conspiracy with Nana. He was convinced that the Raja of Jamkhandi would in all human probability have been hanged if he had not employed an eminent Barrister of Bombay, Mr. Barton, for his defence.[68]

The boats were collected and fitted on very short notice. They did not belong to the boatmen, but to banias of Maheshwari and Agarwal section. The proprietors were duly compensated for their loss. On the evening of the 26th when the Committee of Inspection went to see them, many of the boats still lacked their bamboo platforms and roofs of straw. But thousands of labourers worked all night to remove these deficiencies. If Nana meditated treachery from the first, one wonders why so much money and labour were wasted on the boats, for once out of the entrenchment, the English would be as helpless in the midst of a hostile crowd on land, as they were on the river. They had their arms, and it could not be expected that they would let their women and children be slaughtered without a desperate fight.

While Wheeler and his companions were desperately fighting against sepoys and starvation, Neill was busy suppressing Mutiny at Allahabad. Soon after the news of Meerut and Delhi reached Canning, Neill and his Fusiliers had been summoned from Madras to Calcutta. A stern and relentless man, he did not believe in half measures or suspended action. A Christian of the old Puritan school, he would have been in his proper environment among Cromwell's Roundheads. His self-confidence made him an excellent leader but an inconvenient lieutenant. Neill

[67] Depositions, p 59

[68] Forjett, *Our Real Danger in India*, p 58; for suspected Indians of unimpeachable character see p 100

arrived at Calcutta and his treatment of the railway staff at Howrah, who would not delay the train for his troops, was characteristic of the man. The un-accommodating station-master, the engineer and the stoker were placed under guard, his troops were safely entrained, and when the trains started ten minutes late, Neill did not omit to tell the railway gentlemen, that their conduct was that of traitors and rebels and that it was fortunate for them that he had not to deal with them. Neill's ultimate objective was to reinforce Kanpur and Lucknow but his immediate destination was Benares.

Benares was causing the Government of India considerable anxiety, not because it was a sacred place of the Hindus, but because it had become, in course of time, a resort of state prisoners of all religious persuasions. For many years some scions of the imperial house of Delhi had made the city their home, and it was feared that they might exploit the political difficulties of the Government to their own advantage. Moreover, the strategic importance of the station, for it commanded the line of communication between Patna and Allahabad, could not be ignored. But Benares was in safe, if not strong, hands. Gubbins, the Judge, had given ample evidence of courage, tact and resolution as Magistrate of the district. Lind, the Collector, did not easily lose his head. Tucker, the Commissioner was an evangelist. While Neill believed that God helps those who help themselves, Tucker, firm in his faith, preferred to rely more on Providence, while he performed his assigned duties indifferent to, but not unmindful of, the gathering storm. He drove through the city unarmed, except for a riding whip. "My game", he wrote to the Governor-General, "is to keep people in good spirits", and he played his game with spectacular success until Neill "came to strike and to destroy". The military personnel at the station were less steady, Ponsonby, the Brigadier, had earned his laurels in Afghanistan, fifteen years previously. In sheer courage he yielded to none. But when the news of the Mutiny reached Benares, Olpherts and Watson persuaded him that the wisest course would be to evacuate Benares and retire to the fortified stronghold of Chunar. Against this counsel of despair the civilian officers opposed a united front. They not only stuck to their post but sent all European troops that came from down country to Kanpur. Though military opinion was against such reckless self-denial, Tucker could not ignore the pressing appeals of Sir Henry Lawrence.

Neill arrived at Benares on the 3rd June. Kanpur was still quiet but Mutiny had already broken out at Lucknow. On the 4th

came the news of disturbances at Azamgarh. The sepoys had seized the treasure, the Irregulars escorted their officers to a safe place but would not fight their comrades-in-arms. The military authorities lost their nerve and feared that the example of Azamgarh might prove infectious. Their fears were confirmed by Gubbins' spies. It is not clear when Ponsonby met Neill, or where, but there is no doubt that he communicated to Neill his decision to disarm the 37th N.I. the next morning, but Neill pressed for immediate action. Whether the 37th were really disaffected has not been proved except by the logic of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. Major Barrett, their commander, had no reason to suspect their loyalty. The Sikh regiment was considered reliable and so were the Irregular Cavalry. It was with their help, and that of the Europeans, that the suspected sepoys were to be disarmed. The parade was called at five in the evening. The 37th were ordered to lodge their muskets in the bell of arms. No resistance was offered; six companies, in succession, obediently surrendered their arms. Then the European troops appeared on the scene with cartridges and grapeshots in their hands. In the Punjab the coming of the Europeans had meant death for the sepoys, and the cry ran that the Europeans had come to kill them. Ponsonby tried to reassure them. The sepoys protested that they had committed no offence. Ponsonby had no answer to give except that they should do as they were ordered, "as so many of their brethren have broken their oaths and murdered their officers who never injured them". The sepoys cannot be blamed if they considered such vicarious penance uncalled for, and some of them instinctively scrambled for their arms and tried to defend themselves. The Europeans instantaneously opened fire. The Sikhs and the Irregulars meanwhile had come to parade, unaware of its purpose, and the deliberate firing roused their suspicion and they also started shooting. While thus the loyal soldiers were being driven to mutiny, Neill assumed the command. The account is confused, and it is difficult to ascertain whether Ponsonby, suffering from sunstroke, voluntarily made over the command to Neill, or that officer, in his fiery zeal, convinced himself that he alone could save the situation, and relieved the senior officer of his responsibility. It was not a great feat of arms for the armed few to disperse the unarmed multitude. But Tucker was definitely of opinion that the business of disarming was very badly managed and the Governor-General concurred with him.[69]

[69] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, pp 216-26

Neill was not content with the suppression of the mutiny that his own policy had caused. The mutineers and the disaffected people of the district had to be taught that the British arms had not yet been paralysed. "Already our military officers were hunting down criminals of all kinds and hanging them up with as little compunction as though they had been pariah-dogs or jackals or vermin of a baser kind," writes Kaye. A clergyman wrote a month after the occurrence that the sight that greeted the eyes was "a row of gallowses, on which the energetic Colonel was hanging mutineer after mutineer as they were brought in."[70] "On one occasion, some young boys, who, perhaps, in mere sport had flaunted the rebel colours and gone about beating tom-toms, were tried and sentenced to death." "Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts, and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion. One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite 'in an artistic manner,' with mango-trees for gibbets and elephants for drops, the victims of this wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in 'the form of a figure of eight'."[71] Not for nothing did the natives think that the European soldiers were "demons in human form".

The Mutiny of Benares had widespread repercussions. Sepoys at Allahabad and Fatehpur, at Faizabad and Jaunpur learnt how unsuspecting soldiers had been treated by their suspicious officers, and they felt that even the most faithful of them was not safe against British faithlessness. It was Neill's hand that signed in letters of blood the doom of Kanpur and decreed the ordeal of Lucknow.

The news of Benares reached Allahabad the very next day. European women and non-combatants were at once ordered into the fort, but many of them did not take the warning seriously. An outbreak was apprehended in the night, but as nothing happened, some people returned to their bungalows in the morning. Instructions had arrived from Kanpur to man the fort with every available European, but there were not many of them at hand. Sixty artillery pensioners had come from Chunar, there were a few sergeants, and these were now reinforced by about eighty civilian volunteers. The main strength of the garrison consisted of 400 Sikhs, commanded by Captain Brasyer, and eighty men of the 6th Native Infantry. The rest of that regiment were posted in their lines, two miles away. They had volunteered

[70] Martin, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp 286-87
[71] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, pp 236-37

to march against Delhi, and the thanks of the Governor-General-in-Council for their unexpected offer and loyalty were communicated to them at an evening parade on the 6th, but before many hours passed they rose in arms. It has been suggested that the 6th N.I. were saturated with treachery from the beginning, and they had been waiting so long because they wanted to carry the Sikhs with them. But several men from Benares had found their way to the lines and the sepoys learnt that the men of the 37th N.I. had been disarmed first and then killed. The British officers had matured a plan of exterminating the entire Bengal Army. Fitchett, a drummer, later deposed that the sepoys had heard that Europeans were coming to disarm them. He had not heard of any previous plot. As soon as the sepoys rose a city mob, as elsewhere, joined them and the convicts were released. Europeans were hunted out and killed. Bungalows were burnt and plundered and anarchy reigned supreme. It was not Christians alone, but Hindu pilgrims also, who suffered at the hands of the rowdies.

Inside the fort the Sikhs were restive but Brasyer kept them steady. He had begun his life as a gardener and had earned his commission by his personal prowess. He not only kept his men under control but with their help succeeded in disarming the men of the 6th N.I. posted in the fort. The 6th regiment had mutinied in panic, and after loading themselves with loot, dispersed for their homes without participating in the subsequent fighting.

An obscure man came forward to take charge of the administration at this crisis. Maulavi Liakat Ali was a man of humble origin from the pargana of Chail. According to one account, he was a weaver by birth, and a schoolmaster by profession. That he commanded the respect of his fellow citizens cannot be gainsaid, for they unquestioningly acknowledged his leadership. As birth and wealth had not contributed to his elevation, it may be assumed that his pre-eminence was due to his personal character and reputation for piety. He stood forth at once as the champion of his faith and the old order of which the Badshah was the symbol, for he ruled in the name of the King of Delhi and as his representative. He tried to restore order and establish the rule of law, as he understood it. That he failed was no wonder, for he had not even the rudiments of the military science, which alone would have enabled him to exercise an effective control over the insurgents, nor was he endowed with that towering personality to which common folk readily pay their homage of obedience. It stands to his credit that many Indian Christians

were permitted to purchase their lives at the price of their religion, not a small thing, when death, on the least suspicion, was the order of the day.[72]

But Neill was not long in arriving at Allahabad. He left Benares on the 9th June and reached Allahabad on the 11th. The road was deserted and horses were not to be found. But that caused him no impediment. He made the peasants draw his coach but could not escape the extreme heat of the season. When he reached the fort "he was exhausted by his dash from Benares" and could "only stand up for a few minutes at a time".[73] But the situation brooked no delay. The fort had been saved but the town was still in rebel hands. Both the Europeans and Sikhs were drinking to excess, and unless discipline was immediately restored, the safety of the fort might have been endangered. Fire was opened on Daraganj and Kydganj, and the city was soon cleared of the insurgents. The Maulavi had to leave his headquarters by the 17th.

Neill did not proceed to Kanpur immediately. He considered it his first task to punish the guilty and terrorise the waverers, and punitive expeditions were sent both by land and the river. The civilians surpassed the military in their zeal for burning villages and hanging "niggers". The Government subsequently came to learn "that the indiscriminate hanging not only of persons of all shades of guilt, but of those whose guilt was at the least very doubtful, and the general burning and plunder of villages, whereby the innocent as well as the guilty, without regard to age or sex, were indiscriminately punished, and, in some instances, sacrificed, had deeply exasperated large communities not otherwise hostile to the Government."[74] Neill forgot that the entire population of India could not be exterminated, and without the co-operation of the local people, he could not collect transport animals and carts. His strong measures had scared away the peasants and farmers from the countryside, and with them disappeared the humble labourers who administered to the daily needs of the army.[75] Even if he could leave Allahabad on the 20th, Kanpur would have been saved, for Wheeler had been sending spies to seek information about coming reinforcement.

[72] Thompson's Report, p 9. Willock's Report, p 13

[73] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 367

[74] Parliamentary Papers, 1857-58, Vol. 44, Pt I, pp 11-12, Letter to Court, 24 December 1857

[75] Kaye writes, "Everywhere the terror-stricken Natives stood aloof from the chastising Englishmen. It was as though we had dried up the wells and destroyed the crops, from which we were to obtain our sustenance." Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 274

But on the 23rd, carriages and provisions were still difficult to get, though 400 Europeans and 300 Sikhs were ready to march. Five days later, things had not improved, but Major Renaud was expected to march with the column on the 30th. On the 30th June, Havelock arrived at Allahabad and took over command. The news of Wheeler's capitulation reached him from Lucknow soon afterwards.

Henry Havelock had been forty-two years in the army. It was not his fault that promotion had been slow. He had served in Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Persia before he was called upon to relieve Kanpur and Lucknow. He was a diligent student of military science and was reputed to have thoroughly studied the campaigns of Napoleon. At Lucknow his spare hours were devoted to Macaulay's *History of England*. A devout Christian, he intimately associated himself with the Serampore missionaries. A man of austere life, his manners were not calculated to earn him distinction in Calcutta society. Lady Canning wrote, "General Havelock is not in fashion, but all the same we believe he will do well. No doubt he is fussy and tiresome but his little old stiff figure looks as active and fit for use as if he were made of steel." None but a man of steel could keep Neill in his place. Havelock ordered Renaud to halt where he was and "to keep a good look out to rear, front, and flanks. I will then strongly reinforce you with the column that is to march to-morrow the 4th instant. Burn no more villages, unless actually occupied by insurgents, and spare your European troops as much as possible." Neill did not believe that Kanpur had already fallen. "My opinion is we ought never, if possible, to stand, but always be advancing," he wrote to Sir Patrick Grant, the officiating Commander-in-Chief, and against all military etiquette, tried to get Havelock's order countermanded. Luckily for Renaud, Havelock was as good as his word and overtook him before he encountered Nana's troops on the 12th July. Havelock had left his camp soon after the previous midnight and joined Renaud early in the morning. Both parties were surprised. Renaud had expected only a handful of sepoys at Fatehpur and Nana's men had no information of Havelock's approach. But for the timely reinforcement he brought, Renaud's little band might have been completely annihilated.

The British officials, with the exception of Judge Tucker, had left Fatehpur on the 9th June. Up to the 6th the station was quiet. Then "the Natives in the bazar received a garbled account of the Benares mutiny: it was said, that the Europeans had fired on the Poorbeas and the Seikhs, while they were standing quite

passive on the parade ground",[76] and the situation became critical three days later. The station was thus recovered after a short interval of thirty-two days. Then followed the battle of Aong on 15th July, and the same day the river Pandu was crossed. The river was swollen but the bridge was still intact and it was feared that it might be blown up any moment. That is why Havelock hurried to occupy it before it was too late, and gave his tired soldiers no rest. It is difficult to explain why the bridge had not been destroyed, but the passage was hotly disputed. The river was crossed but the fight for Kanpur was not yet over. Havelock was anxious to rescue the prisoners, women and children, who were known to be prisoners in Nana's hands. Nana was not prepared to abandon his headquarters without a fight, but his last stand was as unsuccessful as the previous ones and Havelock entered Kanpur at the head of his victorious army on the 17th July, ten days after he had left Allahabad. But the satisfaction of relieving his unfortunate country-women was not to be his.

After the massacre at the ghat the survivors were taken prisoners. The men were shot but the women and children were lodged in the Savada House. From there they were removed to a building called Bibighar. When the rebel leaders were convinced that they could not hold Kanpur any longer, these unfortunate prisoners were all killed and the dead bodies were thrown into a well. When Havelock's troops entered Kanpur the bodies were still there and the floor of their late prison was still wet with their blood. The horrid details of this cruel massacre, so vividly described by men of high literary skill, are, however, based on very slender evidence. Sir George Forrest, writing nearly half a century after the event, rightly observed, "There are, it is true, the depositions of sixty-three witnesses, natives and half castes, taken under the directions of Colonel Williams, Commissioner of Police in the North Western Provinces, but they are the depositions of men who had, or thought they had, the rope round their neck. Their evidence is full of discrepancies, and must be treated with extreme caution. There are also confidential reports from officials, private petitions, depositions of witnesses, unofficial examinations which have been studied by me with care. They showed that although the darkest tints predominate, the picture was not so black as it has been painted."[77] This moderate warning, conveyed inconspicuously in a footnote, has attracted

[76] Macnaghten's Report, p 5
[77] Forest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 478-79

little notice, while the story of Kanpur, reconstructed on the basis of the very evidence, thus condemned by Forrest, has gained wide currency. The literary excellence of Sir George Trevelyan's narrative and the sincere conviction, with which he relates the incidents, so completely carry away the reader that he does not feel inclined to examine his evidence in detail. Trevelyan himself never felt the necessity of examining the *bona fides* of his witnesses, and Rice Holmes was not more careful. Both of them treat Nanak Chand's journal as a genuine record though Sir John Kaye had pointed out at least one glaring discrepancy in it.

For the massacre of Bibighar also Nana has been held guilty. But on such evidence as was tendered before Colonel Williams, no criminal court would convict the most notorious malefactor. Absence of reliable evidence however does not necessarily connote absence of guilt. Nana was legally and morally responsible for the lives of his prisoners and the massacre was committed in his name. Until it is conclusively proved that he had no knowledge of it, he cannot be absolved of the charge of connivance and must share the obloquy and opprobrium of that shameful act. Nana himself denied that he had ever committed any murder. In an *Ishtaharnama,* addressed to Her Majesty the Queen, the Parliament, the Court of Directors, the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor and all officers, civil and military, and delivered to Major Richardson in April, 1859 he asserted that he had nothing to do with killing of women and children. "At Cawnpore the soldiers disobeyed my orders and began killing the English women and the ryots. All I could save by any means I did save, and when they left the entrenchments provided boats in which I sent them down to Allahabad, your sepoys attacked them. By means of entreaties I restrained my soldiers and saved the lives of 200 English women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoys and budmashes at the time that my soldiers fled from Cawnpore and my brother was wounded, after this I heard of Istiharnamah that had been published by you and prepared to fight and up to this time I have been fighting with you, and, while I live, will fight."[78] Tatya Tope's deposition was taken in the same month exactly ten days earlier. While Tatya alleges that Nana was actually surrounded and imprisoned by the rebels, Nana says that he yielded to threats and pressure from his own soldiers who had rebelled. Tatya held the sepoys responsible for

[78] The original was in Urdu. It was delivered by a Brahman to Major Richardson. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 65, 27 May, 1859

the Sati Chaura Ghat massacre but made no reference whatever to the final killing.

The question is when was the Bibighar massacre committed; before Nana had left for Bithur or after? It is impossible to settle that point at this distance of time unless some new evidence comes to light. It is, however, worth noting that Kusma Bai, Baji Rao's daughter, believed her brother to be innocent. When in her old age she paid a visit to Poona, V. K. Rajwade and Pandoba Patwardhan interviewed her and she told them that Nana had tried his best to restrain the rebel troops and he had nothing to do with the massacre. Kusma Bai was about ten years of age at the time of the Mutiny and the question arises how much the child was likely to know about the politics of her brother's stormy court.[79] To pronounce any definite verdict on Nana's share in the massacre is not easy. Sherer was probably nearest the truth when he said, "Of his individual influence there seems no trace throughout. We know something of what Azimoollah did; and the hand is not difficult to discover, at times, of Jowala Pershad, Baba Bhut, Tantia Topee, and the rest; but the stolid, discontented figure of the Nana himself, remains in the background".[80] When he says that his own troops and tenants compelled him to join the rebels, that his family was at the mercy of the mutineers and he was a stranger in the midst of the local people with whom he had no ties of kinship, we need not reject his plea as altogether untenable. When he asserts that he was not privy to the planned killing at Sati Chaura Ghat, and that the final slaughter of the women and children took place in his absence, we are constrained to ask for convincing evidence.

Sherer was one of the first few to visit Bibighar. He says that the "whole story was so unspeakably horrible that it would be quite wrong in any sort of way to increase the distressing circumstances which really existed. And I may say once for all that the accounts were exaggerated." "The whole of the pavement was thickly caked with blood. Surely this is enough, without saying 'the clotted gore lay ankle deep,' which, besides being most distressing, is absolutely incorrect." "Of mutilation, in that house at least, there were no signs, nor at that time was there any writings on the walls."[81] Sherer, with Havelock's permission, had the well filled up.

Nana evacuated Bithur on the 18th July under cover of night. He had staged a suicide by drowning in the Ganges but it was

[79] Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, *Varshik Itivritta*, Shake 1835, p 425
[80] Maude and Sherer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 220
[81] *Idem*, Vol. I, pp 207-208

known before long that he had safely crossed over to Oudh. On the 19th Major Stephenson marched to Bithur and destroyed the Peshwa's palace. On the 20th, Neill arrived and Havelock started his preparations for the relief of Lucknow. On the 25th, Havelock crossed the Ganges; his victorious troops were already on the Oudh side of the river.

Neill was left in charge of Kanpur. It was his business to restore order in the city and bring the refractory to their senses. Havelock had plainly warned him that so long as he was at Kanpur Neill had no power or authority there and was not to issue a single order.[82] On the 25th he was free to use his discretion. He believed that "severity at the first is mercy in the end", and he issued an order which "however objectionable in the estimation of some of Brahminised infatuated elderly gentlemen", he thought "suited to the occasion". Neill directed that each person sentenced to death would be taken to the house of slaughter and forced to clear a small portion of the blood stains. The poor wretches were made to lick the blood in the shedding of which they very probably had no hand. Sherer says that the order remained almost a dead letter, except in two instances. Neill himself refers to more than two. Sherer suggests that Neill was the psychological victim of excessive admiration: "He could not but suppose that whatever position he was in, something marked would be expected of him. Hence some of his orders, particularly the unfortunate one about the cleaning up of the blood".[83]

Those who were condemned to death, and their number was not small, died with extraordinary composure—"The Mahomedans, with hauteur and an angry kind of scorn; and the Hindoos with an apparent indifference altogether astonishing." "Some of the Hindoos treated death exactly as if it were a journey."[84]

[82] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 482
[83] Maude and Sherer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 224
[84] *Idem*, Vol. I, pp 251-52

# APPENDIX

## NANAK CHAND AND HIS JOURNAL

Of the English who left the entrenchment on the 27th June only four survived the massacre of that day. Of the prisoners of Bibighar none lived to tell the tale of the slaughter of the 16th July. Yet the Right Hon. Sir George Trevelyan found no difficulty in compiling a vivid account of the horrors of Kanpur in all their details. His narrative is mainly based on:

1. "The Depositions of sixty-three witnesses, natives and half-castes, taken under the directions of Colonel Williams, Commissioner of Police in the North-West Provinces.

2. A Narrative of Events at Cawnpore, composed by Nanukchund, a local lawyer.

3. Captain Thomson's Story of Cawnpore.

4. The Government Narratives of the Mutiny, drawn up for the most part by the civil officers in-charge of the several districts".

Captain Thomson's story is limited to his own personal experience. The value of the official narratives including that of Colonel Williams depends on the evidence on which they rest. The sixty-three witnesses (of whom Nanak Chand was one) who appeared before Colonel Williams often contradicted one another on vital points and Sir George Forrest found it unwise to accept their statements at their face value. Both Trevelyan and Rice Holmes had implicit faith in Nanak Chand's testimony and treated his so-called journal as a day-to-day record of events at Kanpur. Contemporary English Officers however did not treat the journal as a genuine document nor did they give its author much credit for veracity.

Sir George Trevelyan thought that Nanak Chand was a lawyer. In his deposition before Colonel Williams he described himself as a mahajan or businessman. He used to reside in old Generalganj, a suburb of Kanpur. In 1842, he was a commission agent for Messrs. Bathgate Porters & Co., Government Grain Contractors.[1] There is reason to believe that he was at one time

[1] See Appendix to his petition dated 31 July, 1863. Military Department, Rewards, Prize Consultations, Jan., 1864, Nos. 78-82. Procdgs. B. Nos. 44-48

in the employment of Lala Isri Prasad, a rich businessman of Kanpur. When Nanak Chand claimed a reward for revealing the secrets of Nana's treasure at Bithur, his application was referred to G. E. Lance, Collector of Kanpur. On 15th May 1862 Lance wrote as follows: "Nanak Chand was a common informer and had disgusted everyone that has had anything to do with him. I know not the particular cause for the rejection of his claim to reward by Sherer (if indeed he did really point out the treasure) but I know that the officer latterly never admitted him inside his compound. His so-called diary is generally supposed to have brought him in a handsome sum of money as it depended upon what he received whether a person's name was entered as a rebel or well-wisher. Had he rendered the service which he pretends to I am sure my predecessor would not have allowed him to remain unrewarded. I am informed that it was a matter of notoriety that the Nana had ordered a part of his wealth to be thrown down this well and that his followers on their return to Bithoor on General Havelock crossing the Ganges was employed a whole night in endeavouring to empty it."[2] Sherer also was at one with Lance and held that the hiding place of the treasure was common knowledge and was no exclusive property of Nanak Chand. These documents were probably not before Sir George Trevelyan and Dr. T. Rice Holmes, but there is sufficient internal evidences to show that the so-called diary could not be a day-to-day record and must have been compiled much later. It is significant that Sherer attached no value to it when he wrote his account of the Mutiny and subsequent events at Kanpur, though Nanak Chand says that he made over a copy of his journal to Mr. Sherer and Major Burrows (Bruce) on the 7th December 1857. Sherer makes no reference to it in his *Account* and his conclusions are sometimes diametrically opposed to the evidence of Nanak Chand, e.g. Nana's conspiracy with the sepoys prior to the Mutiny. Nor is it clear why Nanak Chand withheld this precious diary from the Collector and the Superintendent of Police till the last month of 1857, though he claims to have waited on Sherer in the last week of August.

Trevelyan thought that Nanak Chand was a lawyer because he interested himself in the case of Chimnaji Appa, but strangely enough, Nanak Chand was not well informed about the paternity of his client. He introduces him as the son of Chimnaji Appa, Baji Rao's brother, but a son is never named after the father,

[2] It should be noted that Nanak Chand complained that he was on bad terms with Lance

though in Maharashtra a grandson sometimes bears the name of the grandfather. According to official reports, Baji Rao's brother Chimnaji died on May 30, 1832, leaving a widow Kaveri Bai, about eleven years of age, and an unmarried daughter, Dwaraka Bai somewhat younger. Dwaraka Bai later bore a son, who went by the name of Chimnaji Appa. When Baji Rao II died, the official reports mention this young man as one of his dependents. He was to get Rs. 50,000 when he came of age. He could not have any claim to Baji Rao's property, according to Hindu or any other law, so there was no need on Nana's part "to grease the palm of the judge", who dismissed his case.

Equally unfounded was the charge that the "Maharaja kept in confinement against their will the widows of his predecessor; for whose younger daughter he planned a marriage inconsistent with the rules and traditions of the family; an act of outrageous tyranny in the estimation of high Brahmins. He wedded the eldest sister to a husband whom she was never allowed to see; and when her death occurred after no long interval, it was whispered in the neighbourhood that there had been very foul play in every sense of the term." Baji Rao II was a much married man. Only two of his wives, Sai Bai and Maina Bai, survived him. He also left two minor daughters, Yoga Bai and Kusma Bai, whose mother had predeceased her husband. Their maternal grandfather Balavant Rao Athavale (wrongly described by Nanak Chand at one place as the Peshwa's brother-in-law) claimed to be their guardian. His claim was not admitted by the Government of India. Yoga Bai was married to a scion of the famous Patwardhan family and she died within a year or eighteen months. None but Nanak Chand whispered foul play and there was nothing unusual in her not leaving the paternal roof immediately after her marriage. Kusma Bai, otherwise known as Baya Bai, was married to Baba Saheb Apte, a Sardar of Gwalior, and in no sense was it a misalliance for her. Nanak Chand was unaware of her marriage though it was celebrated before he started writing his diary. She accompanied her brother, as did her two step-mothers, to Nepal, and she joined her husband after peace was completely restored.

The second Chimnaji, Baji Rao's grand-nephew, belonged to the Thatte family. It is claimed by his son that Baji Rao II wanted to adopt a fourth son and his choice had fallen on Chimnaji. It is difficult to reconcile this story with the current practice that limits the choice to the adoptive father's family and its colateral branches. In the case of Nana, Dada and Bala, this custom had been strictly honoured. Chimnaji's son Lakshman

Thatte says that about 1880 he was adopted by Sai Bai in Nepal.[3] This settles the question for good, for both the father and the son could not be adopted by, or on behalf of, the same father. Chimnaji was still a minor when a case was instituted for him. It is not unlikely that Nanak Chand interested himself in his case. In India there is a class of people, derisively designated as 'touts', who make their living out of other people's troubles. In a letter dated 28th January 1858 Lala Isri Prasad wrote to Cecil Beadon —"About two years ago and long before any suspicion was entertained, regarding the recent mutiny, I yielded to the solicitation of some mutual friends, to afford pecuniary assistance to Chimna Appa, in a Law suit, he had commenced, to recover a large sum, which had been under the care of Government, and which he affirmed had been erroneously paid to one Mahadeo Punth."[4] It is not suggested that Nanak Chand was one of the friends who recommended Chimnaji to Isri Prasad, but Nanak Chand was in Isri Prasad's employ (though he denied it) and might at that time have made the acquaintance of the minor litigant who was expected to come to money before long.

Nanak Chand made no secret of his objective in writing the journal. He wanted to establish his own loyalty and secure a reward. Unfortunately for him no reward fell to his lot until 1865, and that also fell far short of the expenses he claimed to have incurred for the benefit of the Government.[5] It is to be noted that there are serious discrepancies between the journal and the petitions he later submitted pressing his claim on the Government's generosity. In the introductory part of his journal we read that he spent ten months in the Commander-in-Chief's camp collecting intelligence for him, but the Commander-in-Chief makes no mention of Nanak Chand. In later petitions, however, he confessed that he had attached himself to Major Bruce, and it was on that officer's recommendation that the Government sanctioned for him a reward of Rupees five thousand, not indeed for any military intelligence that he might have supplied, but for information about Nana's treasure.

It is also noteworthy that Nanak Chand was not a habitual diarist, but when the news of Meerut and Delhi arrived at Kanpur, he at once perceived the possibility of an outbreak there, and realised that a day-to-day account of the events would be

[3] I am indebted to M.M. D. V. Potdar for a copy of a manuscript statement of this gentleman

[4] Home Department, Pub. Consultations, No. 90, 5 March, 1858

[5] In his petition of July 31, 1863 he claims to have spent Rs. 7027-3-0 for collecting information for the Government

useful to the Government. He went in hiding for fear of his life, but according to his account, never failed to jot down at the end of the day what he came to learn about the progress of events, and nothing escaped him that happened in the city, at Bithur, in Nana's camp and even in the entrenchment. He does not, however, mention what agency he employed in collecting information about the besieged Britishers in the entrenchment. On the 8th of June he left his house for fear of his life and reached the residence of Lala Isri Prasad which was then vacant. There he spent a day, the Lala's agent having fed him but we are told at the same time that having written his diary he left his house at candle-light and went to Sirseeaghat when one Hira Gangaputra gave him a room to spend the night in.[6] Apparently he returned home some time before candle-light, just to write his diary, but did not find it safe to spend the night there, and betook himself to riverside. Obviously he valued the diary above his life. On the 13th when he had just finished the first para of his diary at Jajamau, Nana's men came to seize him. He fled for dear life but was molested and robbed by some peasants on his way. A kind zamindar offered him a night's shelter and then he proceeded to cross the river. When he reached the other bank he remained senseless for four hours. When he regained his senses it was 10 A.M. and he was three miles from his hide at Badraka. Was his diary lost? No, despite robbery and other mishaps, we find it intact and the day's entry made as usual. Yet the journal is not a continuous record. It was continued from the 15th of May to 22nd July and again resumed on the 25th November to be concluded on the 7th December. On the 17th August he compiled a list of loyal and disloyal Tahsildars. Obviously, he had constituted himself the Censor of Public Morals, but he is candid enough to confess that the journal was not presented, in its original form: "This journal," he says "was commenced before the Mutiny, and has been brought down to the day on which the rebellion was extinguished, and it has been *corrected* after minute enquiries made, *since the reoccupation* of Cawnpore by the British, to prove to the authorities that I have been a loyal subject, and also to establish a good name."

Obviously he failed "to establish a good name" with Sherer, who forbade him his house, and Lance, who treated him as a common informer and blackmailer. Though he "corrected" his journal after "minute enquiries" it still suffers from the charac-

[6] Nanak Chand, p x

teristic discrepancies from which no fabricated evidence is free. One such glaring discrepancy did not escape the notice of Sir John Kaye. Nanak Chand claims to have seen Generals Havelock and Neill at the Kotwali of Kanpur on the 17th July. But Neill had not reached Kanpur till the 20th. Curiously enough, Nanak Chand contradicted himself when he wrote his petition of the 17th February 1866, "On the 17th July 1857 General Havelock arrived at Cawnpore and General Neill did so perhaps after a day or two and they stayed there till the 19th of August evening." In correcting one mistake Nanak Chand committed another, for Havelock was not at Kanpur all those days. This is, however, not the only inaccuracy from which the journal suffers. According to the journal, the General (of the British) was at Bithur on the 18th July and took Nana Narayan Rao to task for taking away some of the guns to his own house. In para 14 of his petition of the 31st July, 1863, Nanak Chand correctly states that the General reached Bithur on the 19th July.[7]

It is interesting to note that in this day-to-day record events are sometimes antedated. One important instance of such wrong dating relates to the second batch of Fatehgarh refugees, among whom were Colonel Goldie, Colonel Smith and Major Robertson. They left Fatehgarh on the 4th of July. The first batch had come a month earlier and their capture was noted by Nanak Chand on the 11th June. He was at Jajamau at the time. "My servant Jhain Singh came and informed me that the Europeans, arrived from Furruckabad, had been tied together and slaughtered". As the fugitives had left Fatehgarh on the 4th of June, there is nothing inherently improbable in Nanak Chand's statement that they were caught and massacred on the 10th. On the 15th June Nanak Chand again wrote, "News of Cawnpore, events of yesterday, reached me today at 10 A.M. The first is, that the gentlemen and ladies of Furruckabad, who were left behind, to the number of 40, more or less, were apprehended by Jussa Singh, budmash . . . . and sent down to Bithoor; that the Rao Saheb, budmash, had detained them at Bithoor, and sent word to the great budmash the Nana, and that the Nana had summoned the prisoners to his presence. I wonder what fate awaits them."[8] As the first party of Fatehgarh fugitives had been disposed of on the 10th June and the second did not leave the fort before the 4th July we cannot account for the Europeans

[7] Probably Major Stephenson is meant
[8] Nanak Chand, pp xii and xiv

arrested on the 14th June. Yet Nanak Chand was corroborated by six others, three of whom Appaji Lakshman, Appa Shastri and Nana Abhyankar belonged to Bithur. Fateh Singh, one of Nanak Chand's spies, was positive that no European came in July. Col. Williams, unable to account for this discrepancy, correctly dates this event but refers without any comment to witnesses who antedated it. Nanak Chand had heard of two parties of Fatehgarh prisoners, but not knowing the date of the arrival of the second and last batch, made a wrong entry and his agents and spies were in duty bound to support him.

Similarly, the date of Hulas Singh's appointment as Kotwal is also doubtful. According to Nanak Chand's record it was on the 9th June but Hulas Singh himself says that his appointment took place seven or eight days after the rebels returned from Kalyanpur. As he had several predecessors in the office, one of whom is said to have acted for two or three days, Hulas Singh could not possibly have been appointed earlier than the 10th.

Nanak Chand claims to have noticed the conflagration in the entrenchment on the 11th when he was at Jajamau. Shepherd, who was in the entrenchment says that the barrack caught fire at about 5 P.M. on the 13th June.[1] Delafosse places this event on or about 12 June and Mowbray Thomson says that the dreaded calamity came after about a week which also works out to the 13th. But Rice Holmes accepted Nanak Chand's date because "he was a very careful diarist". So careful was he that on the 17th July he confidently told his readers that for a month he had not been out of his house, though in the meantime, according to his own account, he had been at Jajamau and Badraka and back to Kanpur.

Nana's agents also seem to have been exceptionally lenient to him. A price of one thousand rupees was put on his head. Nana's men traced him to his hide at Badraka but let him alone, not out of human charity, but for money consideration. Not a single rupee was paid in cash, but these unscrupulous ruffians willingly accepted a handnote for rupees one hundred and twenty five, or ten per cent of what they would have got from their master if they had arrested the mahajan.

Nanak Chand is sometimes contradicted by his own informers. Before Williams he deposed that Munshi Kalka Prasad, an employee of Thomas Greenway, was one of the many persons on whom he relied for information. Kalka Prasad says, "Even after I was taken prisoner and released by Brigadier Jwalla Pershad,

[1] Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p 44

he ordered me to be in attendance daily and used to question me about my master's money." That explained how Kalka Prasad happened to be in Shah Ali's tent on the 25th June when he overheard Azimullah, Jawala Prasad, and others talking about the projected massacre. But if the Greenway treasures had already been unearthed then there remained no excuse for Kalka Prasad to frequent Shah Ali's quarters. Nanak Chand definitely states that the Greenways' compound was dug up and the treasure carried away as early as the 6th June. Again while Nanak Chand says that Edward Greenway, his mother and sisters were brought prisoners from Najafgarh on the 9th June, Kalka Prasad deposed that Nana's troops went to Najafgarh on the 8th and brought the Greenways prisoners. It was not for nothing that Sir John Kaye dismissed Nanak Chand as an untrustworthy witness.

In one instance at least Sir George explains his preference for Nanak Chand as against witnesses inside the entrenchment. He rejects Mowbray Thomson's identification of Nana's East Indian emissary with Mrs. Greenway because "the confidential servant of Mr. Greenway" affirms that the choice of the Nana fell upon Mrs. Jacobs, and "his statement is supported by the majority of the depositions." It has already been pointed out that several witnesses were in league with Nanak Chand and corroborated whatever he had recorded. But the identity of the emissary was not the only subject on which Mowbray Thomson differed from Nanak Chand and Kalka Prasad, Mr. Greenway's confidential servant. Nanak Chand recorded and Kalka Prasad deposed that he saw Mrs. Jacobs proceed to the entrenchment on the 24th June about 9 or 10 A.M. and he again noticed her return about 12 at noon and go to Nana's tent. This witness was always present at the right place and at the right moment to see things and hear comments that involved Nana in the massacre of the 27th June. But Delafosse is definite that Nana's emissary visited the entrenchment on the 25th June and Mowbray Thomson, who "lifted her over the barricade", "recognised her as Mrs. Greenway". Thomson further adds that "While the deliberations were going on, Mrs. Greenway stayed in my picket" and "she returned at night to the Nana's camp".[10] The very next day Nanak Chand was informed of the intended treachery and he records that Edward Greenway was duly warned by Kalka Prasad. Why he did not treat this warning seriously, coming as it did from his trusted employee, is another

[10] Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp 151-52. The 23rd June in *The story of Cawnpore, p 151 is an obvious misprint, for on p 148 Thomson says that the lady came to* his picquet on the twenty-first day of the siege

mystery that cannot be explained. But such inconsistencies do not worry Trevelyan or Holmes where Nanak Chand is concerned.

Sir George Trevelyan has copiously quoted "an eye witness", who claimed to have seen the tragedy of the Savada house and the horrors of Bibighar. John Fitchett was a Christian drummer, attached to the 6th N.I. at Allahabad. When the Mutiny broke out there he, like others of his community, saved his life by accepting Islam. He and his fellow converts travelled to Kanpur and were present there when Wheeler capitulated and Havelock restored British authority. He claimed to have been lodged in the Savada house when the women came from the river, and he not only witnessed but remembered every detail of the second massacre. He stated that on the day of his arrival at Kanpur he was taken to the Savada house and was confined there in a small room which was to the south east of the house and that Clarke and Decruz were with him. It was from this point of vantage in the Savada house that he saw the melancholy group of women and children in tattered clothes, with blood and mud on them, come from the riverside. Clarke and Decruz roundly denied that they were ever confined with Fitchett in the Savada house or anywhere else. Clarke said that the statement, made by John Fitchett, "is entirely false, neither of us were ever confined in the Savada house". They were encamped, he asserted, about a mile to the east of the Savada House. Decruz was equally definite but went further, he told Col. Williams that Fitchett was with them in the camp and not in the Savada house. "This statement, made by John Fitchett, is entirely false; none of us were in confinement, but were in camp on the open plain with the sepoys, and John Fitchett was also with us." "We . . . . encamped in a plain about a mile away from the Savada house." He never went to that place after the 27th June.[11] It was natural that these unfortunate people, having apostatised, should be allowed to move freely and if Fitchett was not in the Savada house, but in a camp a mile away, he could not have possibly seen the survivors of the Sati Chaura massacre come to their prison. It is also strange that he should have been singled out for confinement in Bibighar when the prisoners were transferred there. In this case also Sir George Trevelyan and Holmes ignored Sir John Kaye's warning. "The principal witness, whose narrative is the most detailed, and seemingly the most authentic of all (John Fitchett, drummer of the Sixth Native Infantry), who

[11] Depositions, pp 4, 14-17

stated that he had been a prisoner with our people, was clearly convicted of a direct falsehood in this respect; and it is only where his evidence was supported by others that it is to be entirely trusted."[12] But the other drummers had also to take care of their necks. By their own admission they had embraced Islam and joined the sepoys.

Nanak Chand contradicted his diary in his subsequent petitions and the 62 other witnesses who appeared before Colonel Williams made contradictory statements on vital points. Neither Sir George Trevelyan nor Dr. T. Rice Holmes can claim greater authority than the sources they relied on, and Nanak Chand and the witnesses who deposed before Colonel Williams are obviously unreliable.

[12] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 372

## Chapter Five

# OUDH

Oudh was an old subah and a new kingdom. The subah dates back to the Moghul days; the kingdom had a brief history of thirty-eight years only, during which five successive kings came to the throne. The ruling dynasty was of Persian extraction and professed the Shia faith. The founder of the line was a noble of the Moghul court. During the days of Moghul decadence the office of Wazir or Imperial Chancellor became hereditary in his family with the province of Oudh as its appanage. For long the rulers of Oudh retained all the forms of subordination with the substance of sovereignty. Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah shared the adventures of Shah Alam when he invaded one of his father's nominal dependencies, the subah of Bihar. The joint army of the prince and the prime minister met with a serious reverse in the battle of Buxar (1764) at the hands of Sir Hector Munro. A diplomatic triumph consolidated the military victory when Clive concluded the treaty of Allahabad with the Emperor and his Wazir. The Emperor appointed the East India Company his Dewan for the triple province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the Wazir surrendered his right of contracting any political alliance with foreign powers other than the British.

Successive Nawabs of Oudh faithfully observed all the obligations of this alliance, but the stronger party steadily tightened its control and extended its demands until the original territories of Oudh shrank nearly to its half and the ruler's status was reduced to that of a feudatory. After the death of Asaf-ud-daulah, the son and successor of Shuja-ud-daulah, who had made a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the Company, the succession was disputed by his reputed son, Mirza Ali, and his brother Sadat Ali, then a British protégé at Benares. Sadat Ali's claim found favour with the East India Company but the Company's nominee had to agree to a substantial increase in the annual subsidy for the British force maintained for his benefit. Within four years the treaty was revised and Sadat Ali had to cede to the British Government lands in the Doab yielding an annual revenue of Rupees 1,35,25,474 in lieu of the old subsidy. By Article 6 of

the treaty of 1801, Sadat Ali engaged to establish "in his reserved dominions such a system of administration, to be carried into effect by his own officers, as shall be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and property of the inhabitants". He further undertook to consult and "act in conformity to the counsel of the officers of the said Honorable Company."[1] Thus the East India Company rendered themselves morally responsible for the welfare of the people of Oudh and the Nawab engaged to follow the advice of the Company's officers in matters of internal administration. He doubtless expected the British troops to fight his battle with his feudal lords, who with their armed retainers and fortified castles had successfully established an *imperium in imperio* and placed themselves above the law of the land. But the British authorities were reluctant to intervene between the barons and their overlord unless they were satisfied that the king's was the right cause. Sadat Ali always felt that he had paid too high a price for the British protection and subjected himself to humiliation whenever he asked for military aid. In 1814 Sadat Ali died and was succeeded by Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, his son. The new Nawab earned the good opinion of his suzerain allies by rendering substantial financial aid during the difficult days of the Nepal War, and the Company's Government not only made important territorial concessions in his favour but raised his status to that of a king.[2] Nasir-ud-din Haidar, Muhammad Ali Shah and Amjad Ali Shah in turn succeeded to the newly created title, and in 1847 the last of the line, Wajid Ali Shah became king. With the exception of him the kings of Oudh had munificently subscribed to Government loans with the double purpose of ingratiating themselves with the Company's officers and ensuring the punctual payment of pensions to their favourite stipendiaries after their death.

In spite of the specific stipulations made in the treaty of 1801 the administration steadily deteriorated. The king, safely ensconced behind foreign bayonets, left the government entirely to his favourites, and they in their turn were naturally anxious to make the most of their present opportunities. The more powerful of the feudal lords held their own against the encroachments of the corrupt officials but the lesser zamindars badly suffered at their hands. Things went from bad to worse until Oudh became a by-word for corruption and misrule. The Company's Government awoke to their responsibility, and when private re-

[1] Aitchison, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp 124-25
[2] *Idem*, Vol. II, pp 69-70

monstrances failed, tried to force a new treaty (1837) on Muhammad Ali Shah. Article 7 of the new treaty was unambiguous in its drastic purpose. "In modification of Article 6th of the Treaty above referred to, it is hereby provided that the King of Oude will take into his immediate and earnest consideration, in concert with the British Resident, the best means of remedying the existing defects in the Police, and in the Judicial and Revenue Administrations of his dominions, and that if His Majesty should neglect to attend to the advice and counsel of the British Government or its local representative, and if (which God forbid) gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oude dominions, such as seriously to endanger public tranquillity, the British Government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portions of the Oude territory, either to a small or to a great extent, in which such misrule as that above alluded to may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary, the surplus receipts in such case, after defraying all charges, to be paid into the King's treasury, and a true and faithful account rendered to His Majesty of the receipts and expenditure of the territories so assumed." By the next Article (Article 8) the Governor-General undertook, should it be necessary to invoke Article 7, "to endeavour, as far as possible, to maintain (with such improvements as they may admit of) the native institutions and forms of administration within the assumed territories, so as to facilitate the restoration of those territories to the Sovereign of Oude when the proper period for such restoration shall arrive."[3] No self-respecting sovereign could confess to gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule by putting his sign manual to such a document, and Muhammad Ali Shah must have perceived that the treaty really called for his abdication. But he knew that he was absolutely at the mercy of the British Government and his assent, though reluctant, was given at last. The home Government, however, did not approve of the treaty, which was abrogated, but the evil day was not averted, it was only postponed.

The subsidiary system had its inherent evils. Assured of British protection against internal and external enemies, the Indian princes had no incentive for exertion and enterprise and lapsed into a life of lethargy and licentiousness. At best, they were well-meaning nonentities; at the worst, they were self-centred debauchees, given to the lowest vices and a menace to

[3] Aitchison, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp 176-77

public morality. The only person they dared not offend was the British Resident, and the Resident did not interfere unless conditions became absolutely intolerable. In Oudh successive kings had wantonly relinquished the responsibilities of their office to worthless favourites and paid little heed to the remonstrances of the Company's officers. Even a mild-tempered Governor-General like Lord Auckland foresaw the necessity of relieving the king of his own agents.

Wajid Ali Shah followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. He had some taste for poetry and music and undertook to write a history of his family in verse.[4] It would have been better for all concerned, if he had contented himself with the company of poets and literary men, but his father had permitted him to associate himself with low-born musicians and he preferred singers and dancing girls to men of letters. His minister could see him once a week or a fortnight for a few minutes only, not at the palace but at the residence of a favourite drummer; and these disreputable favourites could sell any office of the State to any one they pleased. "Oude is now, in fact, without a Government," wrote Sleeman in 1849. "The King sees nobody else save the singers and eunuchs, and does not even pretend to know anything or care anything about public affairs."[5] A change of ministers would be of little use, he opined, so long as the low-born favourites remained the power behind the throne. He suggested that the administration should be vested in a Board. The king should be required either to transfer his authority formally to the Board, or to abdicate in favour of the heir apparent, in which case the Board should act as a Council of Regency. But the Government of India naturally hesitated to take so drastic a step and persisted in their old policy of warning and persuasion. The king continued in his old ways, heedless of warning and arguments alike. He did not know that the treaty of 1837 had been abrogated, and probably consoled himself with the idea that, at the worst, he would be deprived of his ruling power, which in any case he did not exercise, and the revenue of his kingdom would at all events be at his disposal.

Outram succeeded Sleeman as Resident in 1854. He found the affairs of Oudh "in the same state, if not worse, in which Colonel Sleeman from time to time described them to be".[6] The king's "days and nights are passed in the female apartments, and

[4] Sleeman, *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude,* Vol. I, p lxxiii
[5] *Idem,* Vol. I, p lxi
[6] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War,* Vol. I, p. 141. Lee-Warner, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p 319

he appears wholly to have resigned himself to debauchery, dissipation and low pursuits''. The treaty of 1801 did not contemplate annexation, it only provided for reform and improvement of the administration through native officers. The abrogated treaty of 1837 stipulated for transfer of the government, and not for annexation. Dalhousie was not in favour of outright annexation of the kingdom and abolition of the kingly title; he would, if he could, enter into a fresh treaty for voluntary transfer, in perpetuity, of the administration to the East India Company, in lieu of a guaranteed subvention for the king, his successors and members of the royal family. His colleagues in the Council held that, despite the specific provisions in the existing treaties, the Company's Government had the moral right and legal authority to interfere in the internal affairs of Oudh in the interest of five million people, whose welfare could not be sacrificed to the convenience of a single individual. One of them argued that the Company had succeeded to the paramount authority, formerly exercised by the Emperor of Delhi, and was therefore vested with absolute and unlimited power over the subordinate states. The home authorities could not immediately make up their minds and their approval was not received until January 1856. Meanwhile Dalhousie was not idle, he had matured his plan and completed all the arrangements. If the king refused to sign the new treaty the kingdom would be annexed. Outram had a painful task before him. It was anticipated that the king would not willingly consent to his virtual deposition. If he decided on the manful course of armed resistance it would have been easy for the Resident to overpower his troops and effect a forcible annexation. But the king threw himself on the mercy of the Resident, he handed over to him his turban as a token of complete submission, and requested him to intercede in his favour with the Governor-General. He reminded the Resident of the loyal cooperation that the Company's Government had always received from his predecessors, and he declined to sign the treaty. If he and his advisers had banked upon the indulgence and leniency that the Government of India had so long shown in their dealings with the kings of Oudh, they were doomed to disappointment. The ultimatum had been rejected by Wajid Ali Shah, and his kingdom became a province of British India.

The government of the new province was vested in Sir James Outram as Chief Commissioner, and three senior civil servants were promptly despatched, with the necessary quota of troops, to organise divisional administration. It was fondly expected that the long-suffering people of Oudh would welcome the British as

their friends and deliverers, but it was not realised that they would wait for some tangible evidence of their benevolence and good will. It was ignored that in spite of oppression and misrule, of which successive Residents had complained, few peasants had cared to migrate from Oudh and seek a new home in the neighbouring districts of British India. It requires years of patient labour to improve the administrative institutions of a country; a millennium cannot be brought about overnight.

Foreign rule tends to upset the social and economic order of a country. After the kingdom was annexed, the nobility of Oudh could no longer aspire to the highest offices of the government, which became the close preserve of the ruling race. Sixty thousand of the king's troops were at once thrown out of employment and only a small portion of them could be absorbed in the armed police force. The political revolution caused uneasiness and anxiety in many walks of life. The Court maintained a large number of artisans and craftsmen and they were now without any ostensible means of livelihood, as the new rulers had a different taste based on a different culture. If Sir James Outram had continued in his office or if a man of Sir Henry Lawrence's statesmanship had been placed at the head of the new administration, probably adequate measures would have been adopted in time to reconcile the people, adversely affected, to the new order. But Outram went on leave soon afterwards and he was succeeded by Coverley Jackson, a civilian of long experience, who would have done well in one of the older provinces of the Company, but who lacked the sympathetic imagination that his new office demanded. He appropriated for his own residence Chhattar Manzil, a palace reserved for the members of the royal family. He was subsequently censured for his indiscretion and had to quit the palace, but public feeling had already been outraged. The Qadam Rasul was regarded by the Muslims as a building of special sanctity, as it housed a stone bearing the impress of the Prophet's footprint. The new Government converted it into a store house for arms and ammunition. The king's stipendiaries, and many of them claimed royal descent, went without their pension for more than a year until Sir Henry Lawrence came to Lucknow and took steps to relieve their misery. Precious time was lost, but nothing was done to allay the natural fears of the people of Oudh; on the contrary the reforming zeal of the revenue officers led to widespread discontent.

It was a foregone conclusion that a new revenue settlement would be made with a view to safeguarding the interests of the peasants. The peasant was very unfairly treated under the old

regime. He was at the mercy of the landlord and the official rent-collector alike, and he had to pay a number of vexatious taxes and cesses. If some of the old taxes were abolished, the reform brought no relief to the man in the street, for more obnoxious duties were imposed in their place. Rees observes, "We had been so very anxious to show a large balance-sheet in our favour, that we were less careful to make the people happy than to make them fill our treasuries. There was a duty on stamps, on petitions, on food, on houses, on eatables, on ferries. There was an opium contractor, a contractor for supplying corn and provisions, a salt and spirit contractor, and in fact contracts were given for everything that in Paris would come under the name of *Octroi.*" "The tax upon opium especially caused an immense discontent throughout the country, but particularly in the city. Opium was an article as extensively used in Lucknow as in China, and the sudden deprivation of this drug was most severe upon the poorer opium-eaters. Many who could not obtain it at the increased rates actually cut their own throats in desperation."[7] General McLeod Innes roundly accused the Oudh administration of breach of faith as they failed to fulfil the promises made in Lord Dalhousie's proclamation.[8]

Nor was it possible to improve the police and the judiciary all at once. The new Government could not dispense at once with all the old officers and the old officers could not divest themselves of their old habits and methods. Bribery and corruption continued as of old, but the discredit was now attached to the new rulers, who had so loudly proclaimed themselves the champions of even-handed justice. Even the new revenue settlement caused little satisfaction. The settlement officers started with the theory that the peasant was the rightful proprietor of the land and the talukdars and zamindars were, as a rule, fraudulent usurpers. They failed to notice that the talukdar was, in many cases, not only the feudal overlord of the peasant but also the head of his tribe. So, between the tenant and his master there was the more abiding tie of tribal kinship and feudal allegiance

[7] Rees, *A Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow,* pp 34-35

[8] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny,* p 8. The proclamation concludes as follows: "To those who shall, immediately and quietly, submit themselves to the authority of the British Government, whether Amils or public officers, Jageerdars, Zamindars, or other inhabitants of Oude, full assurance is hereby given of protection, consideration, and favour.

The revenue of the districts shall be determined on a fair and settled basis.

The gradual improvement of the Oude territories shall be steadily pursued.

Justice shall be measured out with an equal hand.

Protection shall be given to life and property; and every man shall enjoy, henceforth, his just rights, without fear of molestation." p 316

which could not be lightly disowned. Many of the landed nobility held their fiefs as much by the right of the sword as by the willing consent of their tribesmen. They could not substantiate their long established claims by documentary evidence. So they lost many of their ancestral villages, and as they had an evil reputation for freebooting propensities their mud forts were demolished and their armed retainers were dispersed. It cannot be gainsaid that no government could put up with baronial presumptions, and if the reign of law was to be restored, the lawless barons and their men-at-arms had to be ruthlessly suppressed. But they swelled the ranks of the disaffected, and some of them had genuine grievances in as much as they had been deprived, they thought, unjustly of their hereditary property. The peasant sympathised with his master and did not look kindly on the new regime. Gubbins admits that in a few cases the talukdar was unfairly treated but those cases were limited to the Faizabad division alone.[1] We have already seen that Christian, Commissioner of Sitapur, did not approve of the elimination of the landed aristocracy and the introduction of peasant proprietorship. The assessment was lowered but it was still heavy. Gubbins confidently held that "the worst British Government in India is preferred by the people generally to a native rule." The Mutiny proved that the native rule was not so unpopular after all.

Oudh was annexed in February 1856, it was not until March 1857 that Sir Henry Lawrence was called upon to assume the office of Chief Commissioner and to conciliate the disaffected elements by prompt attention to their genuine grievances. Sir Henry was not in the good books of Lord Dalhousie, but his sympathy for the Indian aristocracy, who stood to lose everything they cherished in consequence of British conquest and annexation, was well known. He at once set to heal the wounds; the stipendiaries were paid their arrears, the talukdars received from the Chief Commissioner the courtesy due to their rank, pensions and gratuities were no longer held in abeyance. But Sir Henry had come too late. The sepoy was already agitated over the grease and the slightest error of omission and commission was likely to cause a commotion. But there were care-free folks who refused to read the signs of the times. Early in April, Dr. Wells, a surgeon attached to the 48th N.I., committed an indiscretion which nothing but ignorance of Indian customs could excuse. While on a visit to the medical store he felt indisposed and

[1] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 75

"applied to his mouth a bottle taken from the hospital medicines containing a carminative."[10] No Hindu could use this polluted mixture and patients in the hospital refused to touch any medicine. Dr. Wells was rebuked, the contaminated bottle was destroyed in the presence of the native officers, but the sepoy was not in a mood to forgive or forget. Here was a clear attempt to interfere with their caste rules, and their suspicion was not easily allayed. The doctor's bungalow was fired, and he barely escaped with his life. On the 18th April a clod was thrown at the Chief Commissioner, whilst driving, by an unknown hand. The offender might not have been a sepoy, but so gross an insult to the head of the administration was a sure indication of deep-seated discontent.[11] It was decided to remove the 48th N.I. from Lucknow but the Chief Commissioner was convinced that "the present bad feeling" was not to be attributed to the cartridge or any other specific cause, "but to a pretty general disaffection at many recent acts of Government, which have been skilfully acted upon by the incendiaries". One of the old regimental officers, added the Chief Commissioner, was of opinion that "if the Sepoy is not speedily redressed, he will redress himself."[12] On the 2nd of May the 7th Oudh Regiment "refused to bite the cartridge when ordered by its own officers, and again by the Brigadier." Why the sepoys were ordered to *bite* the cartridge, when that practice had been officially discountenanced, has not been explained. Probably some overzealous officer was guilty of this wilful blunder, and he was backed by the Brigadier in the interest of discipline. Prompt action was taken and Indian regiments co-operated with the European troops in bringing the recalcitrant Oudh sepoys to book. The so-called mutineers did not offer any resistance. They "were perfectly quiet", and most of the men ran away when they saw guns drawn up against them. They were pursued and some of them were brought back. The disarmed men were ordered to their lines. The regiment was later disbanded and the trouble ended for the time being.

Sir Henry had to be on his guard. He could not discount the possibility of further troubles, and had to take precautionary measures for the protection of the white population of the city and the cantonment. At the same time he would not precipitate the crisis by unnecessary exhibition of fear and suspicion. He would try to rally the moderate elements in the army, if he could, but he would not do anything to ruffle the restless spirits. The

[10] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 3-4
[11] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 175
[12] *Idem*, Vol. I, p 177

7th Oudh Irregulars had addressed a letter to the 48th N.I. The 48th was suspected to be tainted, but a sepoy and two native officers, in whose hands the letter fell, faithfully delivered it to their superiors. A sepoy of the 13th N.I. handed over to Captain Germon three men from the city who had approached him with treasonable proposals. Lawrence decided to reward these men in a public darbar. The darbar was held on the 12th May. It was attended by the principal civil and military officers of the station, all the native commissioned officers of the cantonment and two non-commissioned officers and six sepoys from each of the regiments were posted there. Sir Henry addressed the gathering before dresses of honour and purses were presented to the sepoys and native officers who had given unmistakable evidence of their fidelity. He reminded his audience of the kindness which they had always received from the British Government. He contrasted the harsh treatment accorded to Hindus by Aurangzib and to Muslims by Ranjit Singh with the tolerance shown by the British to all their subjects without discrimination.[13] "The history of a hundred years, said he, should teach them the falsehood of those who would now deceive them with assertions that the Government entertained designs against their caste."[14] He referred to the glorious traditions of the Bengal Army and urged them not to tarnish the good name their forebears had earned. Thus did he appeal to the sentiments of fidelity and honour, of gratitude and affection, that so long held the Hindu and Muslim soldiers and their Christian masters together. Nor did he fail to refer to the vast power and resources of England.

The discourse did not leave the sepoys unmoved, but all of them did not react to Sir Henry's appeals in the same manner. While some appreciated the speech, others attributed it to fear. It is strange that Sir Henry Lawrence did not realise the futility of his arguments. None knew better than he how the sepoys suffered from frustration. He himself had written to the Governor-

[13] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 31-37. The full text of Sir Henry Lawrence's address has been reproduced in this book from the *Central Star* of May 13th. The persons rewarded were Subadar Sevak Tewari, Havildar Hira Lal Dube, Sepoy Ramnath Dube, and Sepoy Husein Baksh

Sir Henry said, "Alumgeer in former times, and Hyder Ali in later days, forcibly converted thousands and thousands of Hindoos, desecrated their fanes, demolished their temples, and carried ruthless devastation amongst their household gods. Come to our times. Many here present well know that Runjeet Sing never permitted his Mohammedan subjects to call the pious to prayer—never allowed the muezzin to sound from the lofty minarets which adorn Lahore, and remain to this day a monument of their magnificent founders. The year before last a Hindoo could not have dared to build a temple in Lucknow. All this is changed." p 33

[14] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 14

General a few days earlier. "The sepoy feels that we cannot do without him; and yet the highest reward that a sepoy can obtain, at fifty, sixty, and seventy years of age, is about one hundred pounds a year, without a prospect of a brighter career for his son. Surely this is not the inducement to offer to a foreign soldier for special fidelity and long service." He was of opinion that it was wrong to expect "that the energetic and aspiring among *immense* military masses should like our dead level, and our arrogation to ourselves (even, where we are notorious imbeciles), of *all* authority and *all* emolument."[15] Some of his audience were doubtless reminded of this dead level and arrogation of all authority and all emolument when Sir Henry referred to the religious intolerance of Hindu and Muslim rulers of India. If some of them did not tolerate free exercise of religions other than their own, they did not fail to accord due recognition to merit even among non-believers. Hindus rose high in the military service of the Muslims and the Sikh ruler of Lahore did not exclude foreigners from high command. No Indian in the service of the Christian Government could ever expect to rise to the position of trust and influence that the Fakir brothers occupied at the court of Lahore. Even the recently deposed Muslim rulers of Oudh did not exclude Hindus from high office. Sir Henry Lawrence's discourse, therefore, was not calculated to convince everybody. Some of the loyal men, rewarded on the 12th May, later joined the rebels. But his efforts to rally the loyal elements did not altogether fail, for Indian troops played as conspicuous a part in the defence of Lucknow as their European comrades. It was a master stroke of statesmanship on his part to summon the military pensioners to Lucknow. He was still prepared to trust these veterans, and they in their turn proved that his trust was not misplaced.

On the 14th May the news of Meerut reached Lucknow; the news of Delhi followed the next day. Sir Henry asked for plenary power in Oudh and got it. He was raised to the rank of Brigadier and became the head of the army as well as the civil administration. The troops were scattered over different places. Three infantry regiments were posted at the cantonment of Muriaon, a few miles from Lucknow, and the cavalry was at Mudkipur, but Sir Henry knew that he could not hold all these posts with the few European troops and the loyal sepoys under his command. He still lived in the cantonment and decided to consolidate his defence at two centres in the city; the Machchhi Bhavan, a large fortified

[15] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 178

palace, perched on a natural eminence, and his own city residence —the Residency. These two places were strengthened and provisioned, and women and children were ordered to be removed from the cantonment. The choice of the Residency, as the last place of refuge, was later criticised by Lord Clyde and Sir Henry Havelock. Havelock was of opinion that Lawrence should have left Lucknow to its fate and moved to Kanpur with the troops. But it would have been difficult to move out of Lucknow with the large number of women and children who were there, and even Lord Clyde with a much stronger force had to arrange the evacuation under cover of night. Politically, the evacuation of the capital of Oudh would have been a serious blunder. It would have shaken the confidence of the local people in the British arms and added immensely to the prestige of the rebels. Sir Henry had not abandoned his hope of enlisting Indian support and still thought of recruiting new troops. He could not afford to betray the least sign of diffidence.

General McLeod Innes, who was in charge of one of the posts at the Residency, considered the place fairly suitable for the purpose for which it was selected. "With the one drawback that the earthwork portion of the circle of entrenchment would have to be improvised, the Residency site seemed to possess in a fair degree every qualification that was required. It was sufficiently extensive, healthy, and well supplied with water. It had an ample amount of house accommodation and shelter. It commanded the river face and the adjacent ground for half its circle. Nowhere was it commanded by artillery sites, and the higher portions of the buildings in its immediate neighbourhood could be demolished, and so deprived of any command. The features along its trace allowed of good defensive sites and batteries. It was already one of the three posts that were being held in close connection with each other; and lastly, it would be readily accessible to relief by a force advancing through the comparatively open country on the north of the Goomtee."[16] As General Innes has pointed out, no alternative site had ever been suggested.

Sir Henry was not entirely on the defensive. He knew that fear engendered fear and trust begot trust. It would have been a reckless folly on his part not to prepare for an emergency; but, at the same time, it was necessary that the waverers should not be led to feel that he was in the least uneasy. A demonstration of his strength might postpone, if not avert, the crisis. An appeal for military aid had already come from Kanpur and Captain

[16] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 77

Fletcher Hayes was sent there with some Oudh troops. Hayes reached Kanpur in safety, but he thought that a movement up country might help to keep the road open. His men rebelled later near Mainpuri and he was killed. One of his companions returned to Kanpur only to share the fate of the besieged. A detachment under Captain Weston was sent to the Muslim town of Malhiabad, where some signs of unrest had been perceived. A third detachment under Captain Gall proceeded towards Kanpur.

Meanwhile the European troops at Muriaon were always on the alert, as rumours predicted a rising every now and then. At last on the 30th May the sepoys rose in arms at nine at night. Though there was some loss of life no serious fighting took place. The loyal men of the 13th and the 71st N.I. at once joined the European troops of the 32nd Regiment. A detachment of the 13th guarded Sir Henry's house in the cantonment. The road to the city was effectively blocked, so the rebels could not move in that direction. The next morning the sepoys were attacked in front of their lines but they broke away without making a stand. The long suspense was at last over. It was now definitely known who were friends and who were not. An outbreak in the city was easily suppressed by the police who along with some local regiments still remained quiet.

The prisoners were tried by a Court Martial and many of them were hanged. A gallows was set up in front of the Machchhi Bhavan where an eighteen-pounder was placed to intimidate prospective evil doers. The crisis called for stern measures; and soldiers, actually caught in the act of mutiny, suffered the extreme penalty. The rebels marched to Delhi.

But what was to be done with the loyal remnants of the rebel regiments? Some of them had actively participated in the action of the 30th May and compromised themselves irrevocably with their former comrades. Others had dutifully kept at their assigned posts. Martin Gubbins, the Financial Commissioner, demanded that they should all be disarmed. Unfavourable reports about some detachments had caused anxiety among the European population and the numerical strength of the Indian troops placed the white minority at their mercy. Gubbins, therefore, considered them to be a source of weakness and not of strength. He asserts that Sir Henry Lawrence was inclined to agree with him but he was persuaded by others to postpone necessary action. Sir Henry was not a weak man. He had called in old pensioners and he was not likely to alienate, at this crisis, faithful soldiers who had proved their worth by the ordeal of fire. Gubbins argued, "There was every reason to believe, in fact it might be looked upon as a

certainty, that most of the 1200 sabres and bayonets then nominally on our side, would be turned against us, so soon as those who carried them found us sufficiently engaged against other enemies. By disarming them, on the other hand, the danger was removed. The well-disposed would remain, and might hereafter, if thought fit, be entrusted with arms."[17] It cannot be said that Gubbins' apprehensions were altogether baseless. There was desertion at Chinhat, but still 500 Indian soldiers remained to defend the Residency against their own countrymen. It was doubtful whether their fidelity would have survived so gross a humiliation as Gubbins suggested. Even if they had dispersed without changing sides, the result would have been disastrous, for the European troops, reinforced by the volunteers, were too few to man all the posts. If Gubbins had his way, Lucknow might have shared the fate of Kanpur. The Indian soldiers in the besieged Residency were treated with suspicion and distrust after Sir Henry's death, but Colonel Inglis, on whom the burden of defence fell, knew that he could not dispense with them if Lucknow was to be saved. The policy was not one of *laissez aller*, and Sir Henry later left his sick bed against medical advice to resume his office when he heard that Gubbins still persisted in the policy of denuding Lucknow of its brown defenders.

Mutiny was not confined to Lucknow and it soon spread to the outstations of Oudh. There was no unity of plan, no concerted action. Each regiment followed its own way, and in some cases official indiscretion converted suspicion into fear and drove wavering regiments into active revolt.

The province of Oudh was for administrative purposes divided into four divisions and twelve districts. On the 3rd June disorders broke out at Sitapur, the headquarters of Khairabad division. The Commissioner, J. G. Christian, was a man of strong conviction and therefore an inconvenient subordinate. He did not see eye to eye with Martin Gubbins, the Financial Commissioner, and did not approve of the policy of uprooting the age-old baronial system. The assessment in his division was comparatively fair but it was soon perceived that the zamindars with whom the new settlement had been made were coming to terms with the dispossessed talukdars. At Sitapur were stationed the 41st N.I. and two regiments of Oudh Irregulars. Till the 30th May Christian was confident that he could rely on the Irregulars and there was nothing to worry about his division. In fact, the 41st N.I. had marched against the Lucknow rebels then on their

[17] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 132

way to Delhi, and fired on their vanguard. They did not betray any inclination of fraternising with them. As a measure of precaution Christian had invited all the ladies and children of the station to come and stay at his bungalow. It was a good place for defence but there was no easy way of retreat in case of an emergency. The concentration of the white population at the Commissioner's bungalow was regarded by the Irregulars as an evidence of distrust in them, and one of their native officers actually told the superintendent of the Commissioner's office to have more confidence in them. On the 2nd June the station was disturbed by a rumour that the atta sent by the Kotwal for the consumption of the army was adulterated, and the soldiers insisted that the suspected foodstuff should be thrown into the river. Though the atta was consigned to the water the sepoys did not quieten down.[18] Next day the Mutiny broke out. Colonel Birch, who commanded the 41st N.I., was shot dead. The Oudh Irregulars made common cause with the 41st N.I. Christian tried to effect an escape with his family and the party at his bungalow. With a few exceptions they were all shot down. But the armed police force not only protected their commander, Captain Hearsey, but rescued at his request two ladies hiding in the neighbouring jungle.[19] They were later escorted to a safe distance from Sitapur.

The story of Faizabad was quite different. In the month of February a mysterious person, to be known later as the Maulavi of Faizabad, appeared in the city. Nobody knew who he was and where he came from. He was variously known as Ahmad Ali Shah and Sikandar Shah and according to one account Arcot in the Madras Presidency was his native city. He travelled from place to place, accompanied by some armed men, and had his disciples all over India. He openly declared holy war against the Firinghis and made seditious speeches. The police forcibly disarmed him and his followers when they refused to surrender their arms, and as the civil prison was not considered safe enough, the Maulavi was placed in military custody. He was a prisoner when the Mutiny broke out.[20]

The Mutiny at Faizabad was, like the outbreak at Allahabad. the direct result of the disarming at Benares. It was said that the native troops at Benares had been first disarmed and then

[18] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion,* p 444

[19] *Idem,* p 450. Hearsey's men refused to do him any harm though 41st N.I. suggested that he should be killed

[20] Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Mutinies in Oude,* pp 22-23. From his seal on the Rahadari granted to Hukum Singh the Maulavi's name appears to be Ahmadullah

massacred by the artillery and the European infantry. At Faizabad the sepoys took possession of the treasury and asked the European officers to leave in peace. They furnished them with boats and money and allowed them to take away their arms and such property as they could. The cavalry did not favour their peaceful evacuation, but the infantry was firm and the safety of the fugitives was solemnly guaranteed. Two boats however were intercepted at Bairamghat by the 17th N.I. from Azamgarh and many of the passengers including Colonel Goldney, the Commissioner, were killed. It has been suggested that the 22nd N.I. of Faizabad had deliberately warned the 17th of the movements of the Europeans. Had they intended treachery they could easily have massacred the whole party while the boats lay moored at Ajodhya for hours.[21]

The local nobles were still friendly and many women and children from Faizabad found shelter in the fortress of Shahganj, the headquarters of Raja Man Singh, while Colonel Lennox and his family were accommodated by Mir Muhammad Hasan, the ex-Nazim of Gorakhpur. Man Singh did not belong to the old aristocracy and was not a Rajput. He was a Brahman by caste, and his father and uncle had exploited the opportunities that their office of Aumil or revenue collector in the Nawab's service offered to acquire extensive landed property. After the annexation Man Singh had fallen into arrears and he was suspected to be in league with Ali Naki Khan, Wajid Ali Shah's minister. He had been taken in precautionary custody and was released when mutiny was apprehended. He had offered to receive into his fort women and children but he refused to admit men as they were likely to attract the notice of the rebels. But he had not the courage to keep the fugitives at Shahganj for an indefinite period and sent them down the river to Danapur. On their way they were befriended by Babu Madho Prasad of Birhar and the Raja of Gopalpur. Nazim Muhammad Hasan also was worried on account of the safety of his guests. He contacted the Collector of Gorakhpur and a party of horsemen came to their rescue and Colonel Lennox and his party reached Gorakhpur. Both Madho Prasad and Muhammad Hasan subsequently joined the rebellion.[22]

The other talukdars of the Faizabad division distinguished

[21] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp 209-10

[22] Captain Reid, Deputy Commissioner of Faizabad, says that several other Hindu and Muslim Talukdars and the Mohants of Hanuman Ghari offered asylum to one or all of the civil officers' families. *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, pp 457-58. For the statement of Colonel Lennox see pp 466-70. Lennox says that the Maulavi of Faizabad also offered to protect him and his family

themselves at this time by their traditional Rajput chivalry. Rustam Shah of Deyrah had extended his hospitality to the refugees from Sultanpur. In the old days when these bold barons had to defend their rights against their liege-lord, his stronghold, situated in the ravines of the Gomati behind the shelter of an impenetrable jungle, had often defied the arms of the Nawab of Oudh. After annexation he had suffered badly at the hands of the settlement officers and had been wrongly deprived of many of his ancestral villages. He could not forget these wrongs but his ancient code of honour demanded that he should not refuse protection even to his worst enemy.[23] Lal Hanumant Singh of Dharupur had similarly suffered at the hands of the new rulers, but he readily responded to the appeals of Captain Barrow, Deputy Commissioner of Salone. Here also the mutineers caused no bloodshed. They simply refused to receive their orders from the British officers and asked them to depart. Hanumant Singh met the fugitives outside the station and escorted them to his fort. A fortnight later he accompanied his guests with five hundred retainers to the banks of the Ganges, opposite Allahabad. When Barrow expressed a hope that the Raja would help the Government in suppressing the rebellion, he replied, "Sāhib, your countrymen came into this country and drove out our king. You sent your officers round the districts to examine the titles to the estates. At one blow you took from me lands which from time immemorial had been in my family. I submitted. Suddenly misfortune fell upon you. The people of the land rose against you. You came to me whom you had despoiled. I have saved you. But now,—now I march at the head of my retainers to Lakhnao to try and drive you from the country."[24] The true-hearted Rajput, however, did not fight his new masters.

The Commissioner of Bharaich Charles Wingfield left his post with the first premonition of disorder. He later rose to the high office of Chief Commissioner. In May 1857 he was not at his official headquarters but at the military station of Sikrora. There were no European troops at the station. One regiment of Irregular Horse, one regiment of Infantry and a body of Irregular Horse Artillery formed the garrison at Sikrora. The ladies and children had been safely removed to Lucknow. So the officers were free from any anxiety on their account. As elsewhere, the sepoys were suspected of mutinous intentions but the infantry was not on good terms with the artillery. The European sergeants

[23] Gubbins, *op. cit*, p 158

[24] *Idem*, p 160. Malleson *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 407-408. When his fort of Kala Kankar was fired on from the river, he returned the fire

were told to watch the movements of the sepoys and to warn their officers if they noticed anything suspicious. At midnight on the 8th June, a sergeant thought that he perceived unusual activities in the infantry lines. The battery was immediately brought out and ranged against the barracks but was afterwards withdrawn as nothing happened to confirm the report. The next morning the sepoys complained that their officers were going to massacre them in their sleep and they had been saved only by their friends of the artillery. The old misunderstanding between the infantry and the artillery was forgotten and they demanded that Captain Boileau should at once order a parade and distribute ammunition. Boileau tamely submitted and Wingfield quietly rode to Gonda without informing other British officers. The sepoys next insisted that a company should be sent to Bairamghat to prevent the officers from crossing the river. Captain Boileau again submitted, but feeling insecure as the sepoys grew more and more suspicious, the officers with one exception left Sikrora to join their colleagues at Gonda. Lieutenant Bonham who was in charge of the artillery was the only officer to remain at his post. The troops asked him to take the command and he agreed to do so on condition that they should march to Lucknow. The sepoys were at first willing to follow him but the situation gradually deteriorated and they requested Bonham to leave. He was advised to avoid the main road and he safely reached Lucknow.[25]

Wingfield did not stay long at Gonda. He and his companion found a safe asylum with the Raja of Balarampur. Dr. Bartrum, who was one of the party, later wrote to his wife—"The sepoys at the last seemed very well inclined, many accompanying us on our way, shedding tears; the native officers made their salaams, but none desired us to stay; indeed the havildar major came to us at dawn and showed us a letter just received from Secrora, desiring the regiment to stop the officers and treasury; so this was our only chance".[26] It is idle to speculate now whether Bharaich could have been saved if Wingfield trusted the sepoys, and whether the sepoys would remain staunch but for that midnight misadventure. In the prevailing atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust it was difficult to heed Sir Henry Lawrence's warning that "until we treat Natives, and especially Native soldiers, as having much the same feelings, the same ambition, the same perceptions of ability and imbecility as ourselves, we shall never be safe."[27]

[25] Bonham, *Oude in 1857*, pp 74-89
[26] Bartrum, *Widow's Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow*, p 74
[27] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 178

By the middle of June British authority had collapsed throughout the province of Oudh. But the city of Lucknow was still open and fugitives from the outstations still found their way to this last refuge of the new regime.

Immediately after the outbreak Sir Henry transferred his headquarters from the cantonment to the Residency. He was not in good health. Only an uncommon sense of duty had called him to Oudh when he badly needed prolonged rest. Anxious to provide for every contingency, he wired to the Governor-General on the 4th June, "If anything happpens to me during present disturbances, I earnestly recommend that Major Banks succeeds me as Chief Commissioner, and Colonel Inglis in command of the troops, until better times arrive. This is no time for punctilio as regards seniority. They are the right men, in fact the only men for the places. My Secretary entirely concurs with me." His medical advisers now pressed for the rest he had so long denied himself and a provisional Council consisting of five members—Martin Gubbins, the Financial Commisssioner, Mr. Ommanney, the Judicial Commissioner, Major Banks, Colonel Inglis, and Major Anderson, the Chief Engineer—was appointed. Gubbins naturally was the chairman. He at once brought forward his favourite proposal of disarming the remnants of rebel regiments. They were spared the humiliation of being deprived of their arms but were sent home on short leave.[28] The reversal of his policy at once recalled Henry Lawrence to his office. He dismissed the Council, resumed his duties and recalled the sepoys who had been sent home. Many of them returned and loyally served their masters during the siege.

The outbreak of the 30th and 31st May had been quelled. On the 31st the police had suppressed a religious rising in the city. But ten days later they rebelled. Sir Henry went on undismayed with his defensive arrangements. It was now decided that in the last resort the cantonment and the Machchhi Bhavan should be abandoned and the entire garrison should be concentrated at the Residency. Batteries were therefore built to the north and the south, tall ornamental trees were ruthlessly cut down, ditches excavated, breastworks raised; stakes were planted and slopes scarped, old walls strengthened and new ramparts constructed; and the cellars were reconditioned for storing ammunition. The military stores and provisions were quietly transferred from the Machchhi Bhavan to the Residency. Throw-

[28] The Council functioned for two days only. Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 166-69. Gubbins had the support of only one officer in his renewed proposal of disarming the loyal sepoys

ing all warnings of man and nature aside, Sir Henry took upon himself to supervise all work and attend to all details. "Often would he sally out in disguise, and visit the most frequented parts of the native town, to make personal observations, and see how his orders were carried out. He several times had a thin bedding spread out near the guns at the Bailey-guard Gate, and retired there among the artillerists, not to sleep, but to plan and to meditate undisturbed."[29]

It was lucky for the British residents of Lucknow that Sir Henry had ample time to complete his preparations during the month of June. The civil and military stations in Oudh were falling one after another; even where there was no armed force to create troubles, the civil servants had been instructed to withdraw in time. But Lucknow was left alone. Sir Henry knew that the crisis was sure to come, but the longer it was delayed the stronger would be his chance of tackling it with success: He had received the news of General Wheeler's capitulation and rightly surmised that the next objective of the rebel force would be Lucknow. On the twenty-eighth they were at Nawabganj, twenty miles from the city. Sir Henry at once withdrew his troops from the Cantonment to the Residency and the Machchhi Bhavan.

What was to be done next? Would it be wiser to await the enemy in an entrenched position, or would a bold attack at a strategic point outside the city produce better results? A decisive victory would have the double advantage of demoralising his adversaries and inspiring his own men with confidence and hope. It might even reassure the waverers among the local people. Sir Henry decided that the bolder would be the sounder policy.[30] But at Chinhat his troops met with a disaster. He had not counted on the defection of the Oudh gunners and the timidity of the native cavalry. Sir Henry Lawrence was not correctly informed of the enemy strength, and the casualties were very heavy. "The line of our retreat", says an eyewitness, "was marked by the bodies of the 32nd, their arms, their accoutrements; men were falling untouched by ball; the heat of a June sun was killing more than the enemy. . . . In one fatal day the 32nd have left 3 officers and 116 men to tell the tale of British heroism; but, alas! also of British failure."[31]

[29] Rees, *op cit.*, p 38

[30] Gubbins says, "Upon his death-bed Sir Henry referred to the disaster at Chinhut, and said that he had acted against his own judgment, from the fear of man." Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 223

[31] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 90. Rees quotes his friend John Lawrence who fought at Chinhat

The defeat caused widespread panic. "The Residency was one scene of confusion. Women and children were flying to the Resident's house from all the outposts, leaving their property unprotected. Everyone thought of his life only; men were seen running to the trenches with arms in their hands."[32] The victors, however, failed to take advantage of this confusion; had they followed closely in the wake of the retreating enemy they might have got a foothold within the entrenched position. The respite was a godsend for the garrison, as there was now no alternative but to stand a long and protracted siege.

Some of the batteries were still incomplete and labourers had to work day and night. The wages had gone up while credit had collapsed after Chinhat. In the first week of June Government securities were sold at a discount of forty per cent, and there was a further fall of thirty-five percent early next month. The normal wage for an unskilled labourer was two annas per diem but Martin Gubbins had to pay two rupees per night to every one who came to work at his defences. Yet the ordinary workmen did not profit by this extraordinary windfall. Domestic servants, including grooms, grass-cutters and sweepers were attracted by the high rate of wages,[33] but soon after the siege they began to desert. There was not sufficient shelter for the Europeans and the servants therefore were greatly exposed. In spite of the hardships they had to bear, some of the servants stayed with their masters throughout the siege. It was about this time that Christian servants from Madras came into popularity. Formerly they used to be employed by new-comers from England, as they had some knowledge of English, but they were not in general favour on account of their drinking propensity. The North Indian Muslim and Hindu were, therefore, preferred to the South Indian Christian. But during the war the South Indian found it safer to stay with his employers because his home was far off, while the North Indian servants fled to their villages.[34]

Stray animals proved a source of trouble. There was no attendant to look after them and they wandered all over the place in search of food. Some of them tumbled into wells and poisoned the water, others died of bullets and poisoned the air. Fatigue parties had to be formed to get rid of the stinking carcases and most of the horses had to be driven out. Sir Henry had stored sufficient fodder within the enclosure, for gun-bullocks supplied

[32] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 91-92
[33] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 217-18. For depreciation of Government promissory notes, see pp 185-86.
[34] *Idem*, pp 227-28

beef for the besieged and a few cows and goats were kept by their owners, as children needed milk. Their number was necessarily small and at least one baby is known to have died for lack of milk. When food was strictly rationed during the later months of the siege one of Mrs. Inglis's goats was appropriated by some hungry soldiers.

It was impossible for individual families to keep separate establishments. The men were busy fighting and could only pay occasional visits to their wives and children. Women and children were accommodated in the *tai khanas* or the underground rooms as offering the greatest safety from shots and shells. Every house was overcrowded and when cholera and small-pox broke out the patients could not be segregated. Many families found shelter in the Residency. Others enjoyed the hospitality of Dr. Fayrer and Mr. Martin Gubbins. Gubbins had "laid in a private store of grain and other articles against the coming siege. There were 500 maunds of wheat, 100 maunds of gram, thirty maunds of dall, a large supply of ghee and of rice, five maunds of soft sugar, and last, though, as proved, not least, one maund of tobacco." "Besides these" he "laid in a store of charcoal and wood." At Gubbins' house, therefore, there was no lack of provision though careful rationing had to be enforced. He had a good supply of beer, which was reserved for nursing ladies alone, and wine was sparingly used. "Our regular meals", says Gubbins, "had also been diminished from three to two." "After the siege had begun, and the Commissariat arrangements got into train, rations were issued of gun-bullock beef or mutton, with flour or rice, and salt, to Europeans, according to a fixed scale. These were made over to my servants and cooked by them; such additions being made to the meal as our store-room afforded. These consisted of spices, dall, or pulse, rice, and sugar. A few canisters of preserved salmon, and a few carrots, which we possessed were produced whenever we invited a friend from any of the other garrisons to dinner." "During the siege, luncheon was in my garrison represented by a plateful of chuppatties only, with which one glass of sauterne was allowed." At dinner "one glass of sherry, and two of champagne or of claret was served to the gentlemen, and less to the ladies."[35] Baked loaves were an unknown luxury, for there was no baker with the besieged. Gubbins had a few poultry and one of his guests had two cows. So at his house tea was served with milk and sugar and rice puddings invariably appeared at dinner. The ladies had to attend to many

[35] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 229-30

domestic duties, particularly where the servants had deserted. The lot of those who messed by themselves was harder still for only twelve ounces of meat were allowed to them at first. In August their daily ration was reduced to half. They had to find their own fuel, light their own fire, and cook their own food.

Among the besieged were people of all sorts. There were civil servants, clerks, merchants, and men of other professions. Every one of them had now to bear arms. All the Europeans did not come from the British Isles. There was the French adventurer, Duprat. He was a professional soldier before he came out to India to seek his fortune. He came of a good family and was an officer of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, and had served in Algiers. Rees tells us that Nana and Azimullah had met him during their brief visit to Lucknow in April 1857. After Wheeler's capitulation Nana offered the Frenchman the command of his troops. The terms were tempting but Duprat would not hear of it. His commercial ventures had brought him some money, but his wine store was rifled by thirty soldiers during the siege. He served as an artillery officer at Gubbins' battery. A light-hearted man of "loose" religious views, he denied that there was a Providence. The Roman Catholic priest, therefore, refused to give him a Christian burial when he died by a bullet after prolonged sufferings.[36]

There was another Frenchman, M. Jeoffroy and an Italian, Signor Barsotelli,[37] was also in the company. They were not residents of Lucknow but had been caught there by the Mutiny. Barsotelli had a sense of humour and had made himself exceedingly popular with the garrison. When a young volunteer was at a loss how to present arms when his post was visited by an officer at night, Signor Barsotelli was ready with his advice: "Never mind Sir, make a *leetle* noise; who is to see in the dark." As a soldier he more than proved his worth and was never found away from the post of duty. His trunk was carried off by a round shot and so the gallant Italian had a laugh at his own expense. Jeoffroy served at Anderson's post and sometimes exchanged pleasantries with the besiegers. Quite a different character was Schmidt, whose grandfather had been a German but who was himself born in India. An ill-tempered man with a sharp tongue, he was often guilty of indiscipline and had to be flogged.

With the besieged were high-ranking Indians who had been placed under detention as a precautionary measure. The chief of them was Mustafa Ali Khan, the elder brother of Wajid Ali

[36] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 217-19
[37] *Idem*, p 118

Shah, who had been excluded from the throne by his father because he was considered to be weak-minded. The British Government also found in his alleged imbecility a ground for his detention, as it was feared that he would be an easy tool in the hands of designing persons. Two princes of the Imperial house of Delhi, Mirza Muhammad Humayun and Mirza Muhammad Shikoh, were protégés of the Court of Lucknow. They too were arrested as the rebels might make political use of their connection with Delhi and Oudh. There was a potential claimant to the throne of Oudh, Nawab Rukn-ud-daullah, a son of one of the former rulers of the province, Sadat Ali. With the Muslim detenus was a powerful Hindu talukdar, the young Raja of Tulsipur. He had extensive estates in the Terai region and was suspected to be a parricide. These political prisoners had been lodged in the Machchhi Bhavan and the last two did not live long enough to leave Lucknow.[38]

With the beginning of the siege the reorganisation of the Intelligence Department became doubly necessary because communication with the world outside had been completely cut off. Major Gall had volunteered to go to Allahabad in disguise but he was detected and killed. Gubbins was in charge of the Intelligence Department and he had at his disposal many trustworthy messengers. But it was not easy to pass through the sepoy ring. It was as difficult to enter as to leave the beleaguered posts. Once a sepoy left in full uniform with the letter underneath the metal plate of his musket stock. He pretended to be a deserter but what happened to him later, nobody knew. Similarly an old woman was sent out to contact friends in the city, but nothing was heard of her either. Aodhan Singh, a sepoy of the 1st Oudh Irregular Infantry, safely delivered a despatch entrusted to him, but he could not bring a reply. The master spies of Lucknow were Angad Tewari and Missar Kanauji Lal. Angad was a pensioned sepoy and Kanauji Lal a minor employee of a mofussil court. Both of them gave evidence of uncommon daring and enterprise and established communication between the besieged garrison and the relieving armies.

The Residency was bounded on the north by the river Gomati. It was on this front that the besiegers had sufficient space to mass their forces for a general assault. They could also bombard the walls on this side from a convenient distance. To the south ran

[38] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 42. It is said that since his supersession Mustafa Ali Khan never wore a turban or cap. "A crown only," said he, "shall encircle my brow." Also see Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, pp 46-47. He wrongly includes Sharaf-ud-daulah in his list

the Kanpur front, to the west lay the city, and the Bailey guard defended the eastern side of the Residency. On these three fronts "intervening buildings and ruins protected the lower defences from being touched by artillery fire, and prevented the movement of large bodies of troops." From the centre of the northern front projected the Redan battery while its western flank was guarded by Innes's post, and at the eastern extremity was situated the hospital post. Next to it stood the Bailey guard. Further off at the south-east corner were the Kanpur battery and Anderson's post, while at southern limit of the west line that faced the city, was located the house of Martin Gubbins, which he had taken every care to strengthen and fortify. On account of the heavy casualties at Chinhat the whole of the northern line could not be held in strength. The southern line was more secure, for between the two extremities guarded by Anderson's and Gubbins's posts lay the Kanpur battery, Duprat's house, the Martinière, so called because the masters and boys of La Martinière were lodged here, the Brigade mess and the Sikh square. The besiegers lay closest to this line and in fact the Sikh deserters often held conversation with their brethren inside, so near they were to each other; but the ruins, covering the ground all along the southern front impeded their movements and protected the lower parts of the buildings from artillery fire. On the east side between the hospital and Anderson's posts were Dr. Fayrer's house, the Post Office and Germon's post in the back line and the Bailey guard, Saunders and Sago's post in the front. The north-east angle of this line was very powerfully protected. On the western or city front between Gubbins's and Innes's posts were the slaughter house, the sheephouse, and the servants' quarters of the Residency and the church, the cemetery and Evans' battery. The Residency was, therefore, well defended on every side. Four posts were entirely in the keeping of the loyal sepoys. The hospital was defended by the 71st and 48th N.I. The 13th N.I. had the charge of the Bailey guard, the Sikh square was named after the Sikh cavalry posted there and the Sikh infantry held Germon's post. Three posts were similarly in charge of European troops, while at the remaining posts and outposts mixed bodies of European and Indian troops were stationed in equal proportion.[39] The besieged numbered about 3,000 of whom 1,720 were combatants and 1,280 non-combatants. The Indians formed nearly fifty per cent of the total, the fighting men numbering 720 with 680 others. The fortified enclosure of the Residency was, however, open to musket

[39] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny, pp* 103-10

and rifle fire from the high buildings nearby which offered excellent perches for archers and sharp-shooters.

The strength of the besieging army was not accurately known. Innes thinks that it consisted of "Two regular N.I. regiments; eight Oude local regiments; the 15th Irregulars and detachments of other cavalry; two complete batteries of field artillery; and the contingents of three of the Oudé Talookdars".[40] Sir Henry Lawrence had tried to enlist the support of the talukdars of Oudh. The most powerful of them Raja Man Singh of Shahganj, had promised his support but Guru Baksh, the Hindu Raja of Ramnagar and Raja Nawab Ali, the Muslim chief of Mahmudabad, gave evasive replies and pleaded the paucity of their resources. In July their contingents joined the rebel army before Lucknow. Their troops consisted mainly of Pasi archers. They were excellent marksmen but were hardly a match for musketeers and riflemen in an open battle. But they were good at tunnelling and were mainly employed in the mining operations which might have caused greater anxiety to the besieged under better guidance and supervision. But at the beginning no attempt was made at breaching the walls or undermining the defences, the quarters inside the Residency being the real targets of sepoy fire. It is said that Barkat Ahmad, an officer of the 15th Cavalry, commanded the sepoy army while the talukdars' men were under the command of Khan Ali Khan, the lieutenant of the Raja of Mahmudabad.

Sir Henry Lawrence felt that the Machchhi Bhavan should now be abandoned and the garrison should be brought to the Residency. The isolated post was under the command of Colonel Palmer. It was not certain whether messengers could reach him and it was decided to communicate the message by means of semaphore. The machine on the roof of the Residency was not in good working order but Captain Fulton with two other officers succeeded, after three hours' labour in the face of heavy musketry fire, in sending the message—"Spike the guns well, blow up the Fort, and retire at midnight." The instructions were literally carried out without any casualty though a huge quantity of ammunition and military stores had to be sacrificed. By one o'clock in the morning the concentration was completed, a few hours later Sir Henry Lawrence was mortally wounded.

Shortly after dawn Sir Henry had gone round and visited all the posts. Having personally looked after everything he returned to his room in the Residency to dictate a memorandum on the dis-

[40] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 97

tribution of rations. The day previous, a howitzer shell had burst in his room without causing any damage. His staff requested him to leave the room and go to a more sheltered apartment. He promised to do so the next day, but he did not think that there could exist so good a marksman who could put a shell twice in the same spot. But the unexpected happened. A second shell burst in the self-same room. Captain Wilson was stunned to the earth, Sir Henry's nephew who was in the room escaped unhurt. Wilson, unable to see anything on account of smoke and dust, called out, "Sir Henry, are you hurt?" "I am killed," came the faint answer after a short interval. When the surgeon came Sir Henry asked, "How long have I to live?" "About forty hours," Dr. Fayrer thought. Lawrence was then removed to Fayrer's house where he died on the 4th. But the remaining hours of his life had not been wasted. After the holy rite was performed, he formally appointed Major Banks, his successor, and gave detailed instructions about the defence. "Major Banks's diary tells of Sir Henry's injunctions for the conduct of the defence: to check and control the firing; to spare and shelter the Europeans; to organize working arrangements for the hours of night; to entrench, to retrench, to traverse the enemy's fire; to enroll all native non-combatants for employment and pay them liberally; to make an inventory of all ammunition and supplies, and watch carefully the daily expenditure; to turn out all horses not needed for military contingencies; to keep up all possible communication with British authorities elsewhere."[41] Thus died Sir Henry Lawrence, mindful of his duties till the last moment. His death cast a gloom over the garrison. According to his own desire he was given a quiet burial and for a few days the news of his death remained a secret.

On the 3rd July the Judicial Commissioner, M. C. Ommanney, was hit in the head by a round shot and two days later he expired. He was a civil servant of twenty-three years' standing and his death removed a man who had so long shared the confidence of the Chief Commissioner. Major Banks, the new Chief Commissioner, was not spared long. He was shot through the head at Gubbins' post on the 21st July while watching his men fight. Twice within three weeks the Chief Commissioner's office fell vacant. By right of seniority Martin Gubbins should have filled the vacancy but he had been disapproved by Sir Henry Lawrence, and Brigadier Inglis decided that he should assume the sole responsibility of the defence as the head of the army.

[41] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 115

Civil authority thus came to an end, and Gubbins himself gracefully admits that "there was no occasion for the exercise of civil power. Martial law prevailed within the garrison, and we had no opportunity during the remainder of the siege of communicating with the native chiefs outside."[42]

Death found its victims everywhere. Mrs. Dorin, a Sitapur refugee, was killed by a bullet that came through a window of Gubbins' house. After this the windows were barricaded with bookcases. "The bookcases were closely stuffed with books which afforded very good protection against musket-balls; and we afterwards had frequent opportunity of observing the power of resistance possessed by 'letters' against missiles of war. A volume of Lardner's Encyclopaedia receiving a musket-ball on the edge, stopped it after it had penetrated less than half-way through the volume, damaging from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pages. On the other hand, I have seen a quarto volume of Finden's Illustrations of Byron, similarly struck by a three-pound ball, and completely destroyed, every page being hopelessly torn and crumpled. It had done its duty, however, for the shot only retained momentum sufficient to force the crumpled mass out upon the floor, and then fell, itself, expended."[43] But every window, every door, every passage could not be barricaded with ponderous volumes, and death continued to take its toll. "Our deaths", writes Rees, "were very numerous up to this day (7th July). They averaged about fifteen to twenty daily, and were mostly caused by rifle and musket-balls. Many owed their deaths to a rebel African, who, from Johannes' house, fired almost without ever missing his aim."[44] Every day the diarist had to record the loss of a friend. On the 8th died Major Francis, not a soldier's death while fighting, but a cannon-ball found him quietly sitting in the brigade mess. The next day died Bryson who thought that a bullet had not yet been moulded that was to hit him, yet a bullet went through his head. Luckily for the besieged, their enemies were short of artillery ammunition. On the 10th July Rees wrote that "the enemy's ammunition is evidently running out. Though their great guns are going again pretty fast, it is not always round shot that they are sending us They are now firing bullets of wood, pieces of iron, copper coins, and *'bullocks' horns'*."[45] Even these strange missiles sometimes found their mark.

[42] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 254
[43] *Idem*, p 255
[44] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 130
[45] *Idem*, pp 134-35

In the early days of July nature was propitious and it rained heavily on the 5th, 7th and 10th. This washed away a good portion of the filth and cleared the atmosphere of the foul stench caused by putrid animal remains. On the 7th the rain rendered the garrison an inestimable service besides improving hygienic condition. In front of the hospital battery was stored a huge quantity of *bhusa* or fodder for cattle. Some enterprising sepoys had set fire to this highly inflammable mass, and but for nature's timely help, the garrison might have found it hard to fight the conflagration with any amount of success.

From the trial of the men let us turn to the hardships their helpmates suffered. Mrs. Case, who lost her husband on the 30th June, thus describes the bedroom she had to share with five others. "Mrs. Inglis and her three children, Carry and myself, are all in a very small room, inside the square, near the brigade mess; . . . . . We have two sofas, on one of which I sleep. Mrs. Inglis, Carry, and the children all sleep on mattresses on the floor. . . . . We are, I believe, more comfortable than any other people in the Residency in one respect, for our servants and Mrs. Inglis's have remained with us. . . . . The firing is incessant night and day. The day after we were first besieged, it appeared to our ears, so unaccustomed to anything of the kind, to be most awful. We did not know what was going on, and as every man who could carry a musket was at his post, we could get no information, and thought every moment that the place must be taken by storm; and we knew that if the enemy did get in a dreadful fate would have been reserved for us. Mrs. Inglis was ill in bed, just beginning to recover from the smallpox. We three offered up our prayers to Him who could alone protect us."[46]

Mrs. Germon occupied an underground room infested by rats and mice. On the 24th July she writes, "Last night as I was making tea in the store-room the largest Bandy-coot rat ran through that I ever saw, the size of a little pig. At night the Tye Khana was so disagreeable that we were obliged to burn camphor and paper in it." On the 29th her sleep was disturbed by a mouse that ran over her neck.[47]

Prayers restored confidence and peace of mind for a brief while only; but the unceasing ping ping, boom boom, and rattle rattle were a constant reminder of lurking death. The average daily casualties among the Europeans had come down

[46] Case, *Day by Day at Lucknow*, pp 78-80
[47] *A Diary Kept by Mrs. R. C. Germon at Lucknow*, p 66 and p 69

to ten but that was still an alarming figure. In many of the messes all luxuries in the shape of food and drink had disappeared by the middle of July. "Even the stump of a cheroot is looked upon as a luxury by many a poor uncovenanted volunteer now." "Our fare," writes Rees on the 19th July, "is not particularly good: beef and chupattees, with a few extras."[48] There was shortage of fuel as well. Mrs. Inglis's Khansama "complained of being short of wood for cooking". "If things came to the worse," observed Mrs. Case, "we should have to break up our tables and chairs for firewood." But the Khansama found some fuel without any mishap. Everybody was not so lucky. "Mr. Need [a man who with his wife and two children had come here from Surora (*sic.*), and who lived under a gateway close to us] was shot through the lungs while he was picking up a few sticks for firewood."[49] Once "Col. Inglis was woke up by the intelligence that 400 of the enemy were inside our intrenchments." No wonder that men and women in the entrenchment should suffer from strained nerves and think of extreme measures, should their worst apprehension come true. On the 28th July when the besieged should have been in a more cheerful mood, Mrs. Case refers to the gloomy atmosphere of despondency that prevailed all around. "In the evening Mrs. Inglis went to see Mrs. Cooper, and found Mrs. Martin sitting with her. They all had a consultation as to what they would consider best to be done in case the enemy were to get in, and whether it would be right to put an end to ourselves, if they did so, to save ourselves from the horrors we should have to endure. Some of the ladies keep laudanum and prussic acid always near them."[50] To the credit of the besieged ladies it should be recorded that all of them did not suffer from such pessimism. Mrs. Case did not think it right to have recourse to such means, she would be prepared for death and "leave the rest in the hands of Him who knows what is best for us". Mrs. Inglis shared the feelings of her devout friend.[51] But men did not feel more confident. Colonel Inglis at one time talked of blowing the women up at the last moment.[52]

[48] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 142
[49] Case, *op. cit.*, p 110
[50] *Idem*, p 118
[51] Inglis, *The Siege of Lucknow, A Diary*, p 100
[52] *Idem*, p 116. Gubbins says, "At the commencement of the latter month (July) several of the men contemplated the destruction of their females, if the enemy should overpower us. I was, during those terrible days, one evening taken aside by a military man, who was one of my garrison. He had, he told me, agreed with his wife, that if the enemy should force his way in, he should destroy her. She had expressed herself content to die by a pistol-ball from his hand. He was, he told me, prepared, if I should fall, to do the same deed of despair in respect

Rees did not apprehend the immediate fall of Lucknow but he did not see any early prospect of relief. Day after day he saw friends and neighbours die either by bullets or of cholera, and asked in despair, "When shall we be relieved? They say troops are coming; but when? and where from? Cawnpore in the hands of the enemy; other parts of India have no doubt been also disturbed. I fear there can be nothing in the many reports they confidently give out as true, that we are to be soon relieved. Talk of reinforcements! Where from? Maybe the Cham of Tartary and the Grand Lama of Thibet, at the head of an army of 'Cashmere goats!' No troops yet in Cawnpore, and they talk of them here."[53]

The daily bulletin was discouraging in all conscience. On the 14th July Rees writes, "A poor clerk of the name of Wiltshire . . died of cholera to-day. Conductor Baxter, who was shot on the 11th, also died. Lieutenant Lester was killed. A number of other poor fellows went to their long homes." On the 17th we read, "'Brown shot—leg amputated: Now he will die; he *shall* die; for it is a law in medical science, as practised by the garrison surgeons, that death follows amputation as sure as night follows day." Among the wounded was Dr. Brydon, the hero of Jallalabad, but he lived to reach home and die a natural death after many years of retirement.

During the long siege of the Residency the sepoy leaders only made four serious attempts to carry it by a general assault. The first was made on the 20th July. A mine exploded near the Redan but no damage was done to the battery and no breach was effected owing to a miscalculation of distance. But the sepoys attacked the place from all directions and their fire was steady and well directed. It was suspected that their artillery was commanded by a practised European officer. The defence was equally determined, party after party of the advancing sepoys were mowed down by grape but fresh leaders were not wanting to lead a new wave of onslaught. The fight commenced at nine in the morning and continued till four in the evening. After hours of hard fighting the besiegers gave way. Their loss was naturally much heavier than that of their enemies who had the protection of their ramparts and barricades. The casualty on the British side was twenty-five killed and wounded, fifteen of whom were Europeans.

to my own wife ; and he required of me a pledge, that if he should first perish, I would act the same part by his. I declined to give it. The necessity, I told him, had not arisen ; there was, therefore, then, no need to provide for it. And besides I could not do it." Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 383-84

[53] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 135

If the result of the battle was cheering, the night of the 22nd brought still more cheerful news. Angad had left for Kanpur on the 19th June. He returned on the 22nd July. He brought no written message, for the missive he had been entrusted with was lost on the way, but he brought the news of Havelock's victories over Nana and the prospect of early relief. The news was too good to be believed and people were not lacking who gave Angad's information little credit. But he left for Kanpur again and came back with a letter from Colonel Fraser Tytler, Quarter-Master General of General Havelock's force. He wrote, "Your letter of the 22nd has reached us. We have two-thirds of our force across the river, and eight guns in position already. The rest will follow immediately. I will send over some news to-night or to-morrow. We have ample force to destroy all who oppose us. Send us a sketch of your position in the city, and any directions for entering it or turning it that may strike you. In five or six days we shall meet. You must threaten the rear of the enemy if they come out, and we will smash them." The postscript ran, "We have smashed the Nana, who has disappeared, and destroyed his palace, Bithoor. No one knows where his army dispersed to, but it has disappeared."[54] The letter came when relief was considered impossible and death and desertion had thinned the ranks of the defenders. Several of the Sikhs and sixteen men of the 13th N.I. had already left the entrenchment. Colonel Tytler's letter went a long way to raise the drooping spirits of the besieged. Colonel Inglis sent Angad back the following night with a letter giving necessary information and suggestions to the relieving force. He wrote, "If you have rockets with you, send up two or three at 8 P.M. on the night before you intend entering the city, by way of warning to us, at which signal we will begin shelling the houses on both sides of the road. Ignorant of the strength of your force and of its formation, I can only offer these suggestions with the assurance that the utmost our weak and harassed garrison is capable of, shall be done to cause a diversion in your favour as soon as you are sufficiently near."[55]

Anxious eyes must have patiently scanned the sky for the next few nights, but the rockets were not to be seen. Rees reflects the disappointment of the garrison when he writes, "But the 27th passed, and no troops came; the 28th, and still no aid; the 29th, the 30th, the 31st; yet no sign of reinforcements coming to our assistance. It was sad, indeed! We had so trustfully buoyed

[54] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 133
[55] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 281

ourselves up with hope, we were so sanguine in our expectations, so confident that our friends outside must soon arrive and beat the rebels, that our depression, on not seeing our hopes realised, was proportionately great. Our hearts began to sink, and many (of whom I, however, was not one) gave up even the last glimmering of hope, and delivered themselves up to a sullen, obstinate, silent despair. Thus, hopeless of life, and hoping only to kill before being killed, their existence became almost a burden to them, and many a one cast envious glances at the poor fellows carried to their grave every evening."[56]

The gloom was sometimes relieved by premature hopes which led to greater dejection. Mrs. Case wrote on the 30th July, "Yesterday, about six o'clock, while we were at dinner, the greatest excitement prevailed, the sound of distant guns being heard, and loud cheering from English voices. Everyone was rushing about in a frantic manner, exclaiming that the relief had arrived; and one would have supposed that they were actually at the gates, waiting for admittance. We all, like the rest, rushed out to see what it was, . . . Colonel Palmer rushed up to Mrs. Inglis, shook hands with her, and congratulated her on the arrival of the reinforcements. For my own self, I must say I had no sooner got out of the room where we dined, than I began to think it was just as likely to be the enemy getting in. The excitement was tremendous, but lasted only for a few minutes, and then it subsided. Nobody knew what was the matter. The only thing that was quite evident was, that the relief had *not* arrived."[57] But there were still stout-hearted optimists in the garrison who read a good omen in every trifling incident. On the 30th July Captain Anderson and his friends noticed a beautiful peacock. The bird perched on the rampart and plumed itself. It would have been a welcome addition to their exhausted larder and some of the famished admirers wanted to send it to the cooking pot. But Anderson regarded it as a bird of good omen and let it depart in peace.[58] The peacock, if it was really a harbinger of good, did not immediately bring any relief. But if the bird was spared equally inoffensive plants were not so easily let off. "Some times the moon, shining on the leaves of the castor oil tree, used to look like men's turban, and more than once", says Anderson, "we were induced to fire at them."

At the end of July, the hospital was always full. "The spectacle which it presented was heart-rending. Everywhere wounded

[56] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 169-70
[57] Case, *op. cit.*, pp 120-21
[58] Anderson, *A Personal Journal of the Siege of Lucknow*, p 74

officers and men were lying on couches, covered with blood, and often with vermin. The apothecaries, hospital attendants, and servants, were too few in number, and with all their activity could not attend to everybody; and as for a change of linen, where was that to come from? We had one or two dhobhies, it is true, who at most exorbitant prices now and then washed,—badly, insufficiently, and without soap, of which there was a great dearth in the garrison; but they were overwhelmed with labour, and would do little; and besides, there was very little linen. This was, indeed, a luxury which few were permitted to enjoy. There were not even bedsteads enough for all."[59] The ladies of the garrison, in spite of their sorrows and sufferings, willingly took up hospital duties and did their best to minister to the comforts of the sick and the wounded.

While the besieged were counting their days with anxiety and expectations, Havelock had not been idle. He had arrived at Kanpur on the 17th July. On the 20th, part of his army had crossed over to the Oudh side of the river. By the 25th, the passage was completed and the General himself had joined his troops. On the 26th, he encamped at Mangalwar, five miles on the Lucknow road. Three days later his progress was contested at Unnao. After a hard-fought battle he dislodged the sepoy force from their strongly held position. They gave way only to challenge their victorious enemy at the walled town of Bashiratganj, a few miles ahead. Havelock won a second victory, but at a loss his small force could hardly afford. His calculations were further upset by the news of the mutiny at Danapur. No longer could he expect prompt reinforcement from Calcutta, and the rebels, apparently, were determined to dispute his advance at every convenient post. Tytler had underestimated the strength and resolution of the rebel army. Havelock had not at his disposal "ample force to destroy all who oppose" him. He had to take a disagreeable decision that caused his troops no small disappointment. He decided to fall back on Mangalwar and there await reinforcement, without which he felt it would be unwise to advance. To the Commander-in-Chief he explained, "My force is reduced by sickness and repeated combats to 1364 rank and file, with ten ill-equipped guns. I could not, therefore, move on against Lucknow with any prospect of success, especially as I had no means of crossing the Sye or the canal. I have therefore shortened my communications with Cawnpore, by falling back two short marches, hitherto unmolested by an enemy. If I am speedily

[59] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 161

reinforced by 1000 more British soldiers and Major Olpherts' battery complete, I might resume my march towards Lucknow, or keep fast my foot in Oudh, after securing the easier passage of the Ganges at Cawnpore by boats and two steamers; but I might recross and hold the head of the Grand Trunk Road at Cawnpore."[60]

Havelock's decision to fall back called from his disgruntled second-in-command, General Neill, an unfortunate, if not impertinent protest. "I deeply regret," ran his admonition, "that you have fallen back one foot. The effect on our prestige is very bad indeed. . . . All manner of reports are rife in this city that you had returned to get more guns, having lost all you took away with you. In fact, the belief among all is, that you have been defeated and forced back. It has been most unfortunate your not bringing back any of the guns captured from the enemy. The natives will not believe you captured one. The effect of your retrograde movement will be very injurious to our cause everywhere. . . . You ought to advance again, and not halt until you have rescued, if possible, the garrison of Lucknow." Havelock was not the man to tolerate such presumptions on the part of a subordinate, however distinguished, and prompt went the reprimand that he did not want and would not receive any advice and reproof from an officer under his command. "Understand this distinctly," he wrote, "and that a consideration of the obstruction that would arise to the public service at this moment alone prevents me from taking the stronger step of placing you under arrest."[61]

On the 3rd August Havelock received a small reinforcement and proceeded for a second time on his way to Lucknow. The sepoys had reoccupied Bashiratganj in force on his retreat and there the General won a fresh victory. But it was soon evident that he was not strong enough to relieve Lucknow. The question was whether he would risk the loss of his own little force or leave Colonel Inglis to his fate. The destruction of his army would ensure the fall of Lucknow. But if he waited and kept his force intact, some error on the part of the rebels might afford him an opportunity of striking a blow at them and enable the garrison to cut their way out. The second defeat of Bashiratganj, however, had not so dispirited the sepoys as to permit Havelock an undisturbed retreat to his base at Mangalwar. He had to fight an action at Burhia-ka-Chauki before he fell back. Meanwhile he learnt

[60] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 490
[61] *Idem*, Vol. I, pp 491-92

from Neill that Bithur and Kanpur were threatened by a strong insurgent army, and without support he could not expect to do anything beyond holding the entrenchment. "All the country beyond this and Allahabad will be up," Neill feared, "and our powder and ammunition on the way up, if the steamer, as I feel assured, does not start, will fall into the hands of the enemy, and we will be in a bad way." So Havelock could not wait at Mangalwar and had to hurry back to Kanpur. On the 13th August he recrossed the Ganges and on the 16th the battle of Bithur was fought. Once again sepoy valour yielded to superior leadership, but Havelock could not but admire their courage and gallantry. In his despatch he wrote, "I must do the mutineers the justice to pronounce that they fought obstinately; otherwise they could not for a whole hour have held their own, even with much advantages of ground, against my powerful artillery-fire."[62] In every battle in which the Indo-British army engaged the insurgents the victors had the advantage of superior arms. If the Enfield caused the Mutiny, the Enfield helped to overthrow the mutineers.

The month of August was one of great privations and trial for the besieged at Lucknow. They lost all hope of early relief, and disappointment had made such sceptics of them that they could not persuade themselves to believe the reports of Havelock's victories. The besiegers openly boasted that they had beaten back Havelock's column. On the 6th August, Aodhan Singh, a sepoy employed on intelligence service, returned to the Residency, but he had brought no letter with him. He brought the news of two successive victories but his report of the retreat to Mangalwar was far from re-assuring. Another sepoy, who had been to the town, corroborated Aodhan Singh but the corroboration went only to confirm their worst fears. How long would the provisions last? How long would the battered walls stand the cannonade? How long could the steadily thinning garrison hold the entrenchment against the mining operations of their enemies?

The ration had to be reduced in quantity. "Our grand diet", wrote Rees, "consists of coarse, exceedingly coarse, 'attah' (ground corn with all the husks unsifted), 'mash dall' (a nasty black slippery kind of lentils), and bitter salt, with, every other day, a small piece of coarse beef, half of it bones. The whole of this, when passed under the hands of my *chef-de-cuisine,* a filthy black fellow, who cooks for three or four others, and whom I am obliged to pay twenty rupees a month, results in an abomination

[62] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny,* Vol. I, p 505

which a Spartan dog would turn up his nose at. I have been robbed of nearly half my cigars, too; and a smoke is now a luxury which I must only occasionally indulge in."[63] Those who had been more provident and had the foresight to lay up stores, were better off. But there was a general scarcity of everything. Mrs. Case writes on August 3rd, "It is now said we have only provisions for twenty days more." "The commissariat butcher came to ask for three of Colonel Inglis's goats this morning, to kill them for food, which looks as if we are beginning to run short of meat."[64] The price of foodstuffs soared high. When Sir Henry Lawrence's things were sold a ham fetched £7 and a tin of soup sufficient only for one day's dinner sold for 25 shillings. As much as £20 were paid for a dozen of brandy, £5 for a small box of vermicelli and the price of four small cakes of chocolate was £2. 10s.

The siege had its tragedies, one of the most poignant has been recorded both by Mrs. Case and Lady Inglis. On the 14th August a respectable looking woman came to see the Brigadier's lady. Her father was a clergyman in Kent and her father-in-law an officer in the army. Her husband was an overseer of the works. He was shot through the lungs and died almost immediately. On the first day of the siege a baby was born to her but she had gone dry owing to grief and worries. She wanted nothing except some nourishment for her child. She had previously lost three children and was anxious to save this one if she could. Mrs. Inglis had a couple of milch goats and the widow asked whether a little could be spared for her baby. Unfortunately Mrs. Inglis's children also wanted milk and there was not enough to go for all. The widow survived the privations of the siege and went home after the final relief by Sir Colin Campbell, but the baby could not be saved. Many little children died of malnutrition, others succumbed to cholera and dysentery.

Shortage of opium proved more distressing than scarcity of food. A roaring business was in fact going on in smuggled opium, for the besieged in the Sikh square could get a supply from the deserters outside, but every addict could not pay the black-market price. Among the sufferers was a man called Jones. "He was a fair, European-looking man . . . very fond of brandy, but more so of opium." He had recently been made a sergeant. The European soldier got his daily dram but Jones and his friends had to go without their habitual dose. At last he decided

[63] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 174-75
[64] Case, *op. cit.*, pp 128-29

to desert. With him went several of the King of Oudh's musicians, all native Christians. A number of servants accompanied them, but all of them did not go empty-handed. "They left inscribed on the walls in several places, 'Because I have no opium' ".[65] What fate awaited them outside was not precisely known, but Rees heard later that they had all been put to death.

On the 11th August part of the Residency collapsed and half a dozen men of the 32nd were buried in the ruins. Two of them were dug out but only one survived. "They, as well as those who are digging them out," wrote Mrs. Case, "are under fire the whole time. It certainly is the most dreadful thing that happened to us since the siege began; and now when the life of every man is of such value, one cannot sufficiently lament such a loss."[66] While loss by death and desertion was lamented, suspicion about the good faith of the survivors caused greater worry. The suspected persons could not be turned out of the entrenchment, but they could not be left unwatched. On the 23rd the back verandah of the Residnecy fell but there was no casualty. On the 26th August Mrs. Inglis found her husband examining a native soldier about the feelings of his brother sepoys. "The Sikhs were suspected of disaffection," she writes, "John had taken necessary precautions, and had so placed them that they were completely commanded by the 32nd, and could not desert their posts without endangering their lives; still, it was terrible to think of treachery within our walls."[67] Mrs. Case observes that the Sikhs were suspected merely because "they were overheard saying that they wanted their pay". One can well imagine what a treat a bouquet of roses, myrtle and tuberoses must have been to Mrs. Germon in this unhappy atmosphere.[68]

On the 6th August the besiegers exultingly announced to their enemies the coronation of their king. "We have crowned our king", they said. "The rule of the Feringhee is over, and we'll soon be in your Bailey-guard." The rebel army badly needed a legally constituted head, a symbol of authority under whose banner they could rally. The legitimate king was a prisoner at Calcutta and the choice fell upon a minor son of his, who was selected as Nawab on the 7th July, if General Innes is right. It is doubtful whether Birjis Qadr actually assumed the title of King or Nawab, for in his proclamation he is usually styled as

[65] Capt. Birch in Inglis, *op. cit.*, p 137
[66] Case, *op. cit.*, pp 146-47
[67] Inglis, *op. cit.*, p 133
[68] Her husband sent her a bouquet on August 26. *A Diary Kept by Mrs. R. C. Germon at Lucknow*, p 82

Wali. His deposed father was independent of Delhi, but one of the conditions of the installation of the new ruler of Oudh was that he, or to be more accurate, his advisers should implicitly obey all orders from Delhi. The more responsible sepoy leaders obviously realised the need of integration. The principal offices of the state were distributed among the Hindus and Muslims alike, and the services of some of the old ministers were wisely enlisted. Sharaf-ud-Daulah was appointed Prime Minister, but the finance portfolio, or its equivalent, went to Maharaja Balkishan. If Mammu Khan was elevated to the Chief Justice's office, Raja Jailal Singh became war minister. But the claims of Barkat Ahmad, the victor of Chinhat, were strangely ignored, and courtiers without any tried military ability were placed in charge of the army. Begam Hazrat Mahal, the mother of the minor Wali, exercised all authority on his behalf.

General Innes says that there were other aspirants to kingly power. Ahmadullah Shah, the Maulavi of Faizabad, was at Lucknow, and his personality and past record naturally earned him an important place in the rebel council. It is doubtful whether he aspired to the throne of Lucknow, for according to the legend on his seal, he styled himself as Khalifat-ullah or vicegerent of God. His was an office which combined temporal and spiritual authority, and his claims could not be reconciled with allegiance to any earthly power. Barkat Ahmad and the cavalry were said to favour the claims of Suleiman Qadr, a prince of the royal house of Oudh. This probably explains his supersession in favour of the members of the dominant party. The booming of the cannon that raised false hopes in the entrenchment of approaching succour celebrated the formal installation of Birjis Qadr. The coronation must have improved the sepoy morale and inspired them with fresh confidence.[69]

If the coronation raised the spirit in the city, the besieged were destined to mourn the loss of another of their principal leaders. They had already lost Sir Henry Lawrence, Mr. Ommanney, and Major Banks; now it was the turn of Major Anderson, the Chief Engineer. He did not die by a bullet but of dysentery. He had contracted the disease before the siege but worked so hard that he had no time to leave his headquarters. It was only when he was physically unable to supervise the engineering operations in person that he relegated his duties to Captain Fulton. Major Anderson was a victim of over-work, worry, and want of rest.

[69] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 117



*Begam Hazrat Mahal*

The second retreat of Havelock seriously affected the talukdars of Oudh. They could no longer withhold their support from the Wali, and many of them now sent their levies to Lucknow. Whether these ill-armed, ill-trained, ill-disciplined contingents of peasants and Pasi archers were really an accession to the military strength of the insurgents is more than doubtful. But number naturally contributed to improve their morale and that was no small gain, for they were still short of shot and shell. On the 21st August a young boy of eleven was caught picking up bullets. He was brought inside the entrenchment and interrogated. "He said that the enemy had been stealing some arms belonging to us at the Redan." "He did not appear to give any particular information, but he describes the enemy as being in great numbers, and says that they intend going out and fighting our reinforcements in the open field when they arrive."[70] In August the strength of the besieging force was variously estimated from twenty to forty thousand. Captain Anderson later heard that they numbered full one hundred thousand.

August was mainly a month of mining.[71] The Pasis were excellent tunnellers and the ground favoured their operations. The subterranean contest really began from July. A strict watch had to be kept for any suspicious sound and the mines had to be countermined. The brunt of the mining campaign fell on Captain Fulton who would patiently wait at a suspected spot for hours like a terrier at a rat-hole. Sometimes the two contending parties had only a thin wall of a few feet of earth between them. The Residency was for the second time seriously threatened on the 10th August. About eleven in the morning a mine exploded near the Martinière clearing about fifty feet of the palisades. Then followed a furious fusillade; Colonel Inglis had a narrow escape, the man next to him being shot dead. Another mine exploded on the east side and two European soldiers were blown into the air but they suffered nothing more than a little shaking. One fell within the compound, the other was thrown outside but he jumped over the wall and ran to safety. Despite unremitting vigilance another mine was exploded near the Sikh square, causing a breach thirty feet wide. If a determined rush had been made immediately the sepoys might have effected a lodgment inside the square, but the defenders took the fullest advantage of

[70] Case, *op. cit.*, p 165

[71] From July 20 to August 9 there were eight mining attacks; from August 10 to September 4, there were no less than 16. For a tabular statement see Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, pp 165-69

their brief hesitation and a nine-pounder gun was brought into a position which enfiladed the breach. At night the breach was completely barricaded under the personal supervision of Colonel Inglis.

But August was not a month of unrelieved gloom for the besieged. If death was staring them in the face from every corner, they were soon assured that they were very much in the minds of their friends. Angad was long in returning, but he did bring a second message from Colonel Tytler on the 15th August. The letter was dated 4th August and announced the second attempt of Havelock to relieve Lucknow. "We march tomorrow morning for Lucknow," it ran, "having been reinforced. We shall push on as speedily as possible. We hope to reach you in four days at furthest. You must *aid us in every way, even to cutting your way out, if we can't force our way in. We are only a small Force.*"[12] Angad had fallen into enemy hands. When he succeeded in making his escape Havelock had already recrossed to Kanpur.

The news of the second retreat was far from satisfactory and Colonel Inglis apprehended that Tytler had not realised how desperate his position was. He, therefore, thought it necessary to supply detailed information and addressed the following letter to General Havelock. "A note from Colonel Tytler to Mr. Gubbins reached last night, dated at Mungulwar the 4th inst., the latter paragraph of which is as follows—'You must aid us in every way, even to cutting your way out, if we can't force our way in,' —has caused me much uneasiness, as it is quite impossible, with my weak and shattered force, that I can leave my defences. You must bear in mind how I am hampered; that I have upwards of 120 sick and wounded, and at least 220 women, and about 230 children, and no carriage of any description, besides sacrificing twenty-three lacs of treasure, and about thirty guns of sorts. In consequence of the news received, I shall soon put the foree on half rations, unless I hear again from you. Our provisions will last us then till about the 10th of September. If you hope to save this force, no time must be lost in pushing forward. We are daily being attacked by the enemy, who are within a few yards of our defences. Their mines have already weakened our post, and I have every reason to believe they are carrying on others. Their 18-pounders are within 150 yards of some of our batteries, and from their position, and our inability to form working parties, we cannot reply to them, and consequently the damage done hourly

[12] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 287. The sentences in italics were in Greek characters

is very great. My strength now in Europeans is 350, and about 300 natives, and the men are dreadfully harassed; and owing to part of the Residency having been brought down by round shot, many are without shelter. Our native force having been assured, on Colonel Tytler's authority, of your near approach, some twenty-five days ago, are naturally losing confidence, and if they leave us I do not see how the defences are to be manned. Did you receive a letter and plan from me from this man 'Ungud'? Kindly answer this question."[73]

The letter shows to what straits the garrison had been reduced. But the food position was not so serious. The ration had, it is true, been reduced to half in most cases; but Sir Henry Lawrence had anticipated a prolonged siege and had laid by sufficient stores. Whenever rich Indians offered their services Sir Henry used to ask them to send grains. Their contribution was stored in a large plunge bath in the banqueting hall, and Colonel Inglis and his advisers had no knowledge of this extra supply.[74] Gubbins complained that his suggestion to amend this part of the letter was rejected by Colonel Inglis. The Brigadier had to accept the figures supplied by the commissariat and Gubbins was not expected to be better informed. It was not until Outram and Havelock had cut their way into the Residency that the existence of this hidden store was brought to light. It would not be fair to insinuate that Inglis deliberately exaggerated his distress and thereby compelled Havelock to run unnecessary risks.

The cry for relief did not go unheeded. On the 29th August Angad returned with a reply. The straight road was not safe and he had to go to Fatehpur Chaurasi, the residence of a rebel talukdar where Nana had taken refuge after his defeat at Bithur. He crossed at the Nanamau Ghat and contacted Havelock. Havelock did not promise immediate relief but conveyed the welcome news of Sir Colin Campbell's arrival in India. "I have your letter of the 16th inst.," Havelock wrote, "I can only say do not *negotiate*, but rather perish sword in hand. Sir Colin Campbell, who came out at a day's notice to command, upon the news arriving of General Anson's death, promises me *fresh troops* and you will be my first care. The *reinforcements* may reach me in from *twenty to twenty-five days*, and I will prepare

[73] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, pp 289-90. Gubbins writes "In the general purport of this letter I agreed; but thought that the dangers of our position, especially as regarded the supply of food, were exaggerated"

[74] Captain Birch in Inglis, *op. cit.*, p 156. The military authorities were under the impression that only a fortnight's supply was left

everything for a march on Lucknow.'"[75] Nothing remained for it now but to wait for the reinforcement with patience.

The garrison, however, was not always on the defensive. Frequent sorties were made by small parties of daring men in which both Europeans and Indians distinguished themselves. But these minor operations only helped to improve the morale of the besieged as they demonstrated that the initiative was not always on the other side. The most outstanding achievement of August was the demolition of Johannes's house which overlooked the Kanpur battery. Here was posted a sharp-shooter of remarkable marksmanship. Every bullet he fired from his double barrelled rifle found its mark, and the admiration of his enemies had christened him Bob the Nailer. From his safe roost, he had done more execution than any other individual on either side. The building was raided by a surprise party, the inmates were taken unawares and Bob was killed at his post. But the house was soon reoccupied and others came to prove that Bob was not the only sharp-shooter in their ranks. Captain Fulton, therefore, drove a mine from Duprat's house. The mine was fired on the 20th August and Johannes's house was completely destroyed. The explosion was followed by a raid and demolition of some of the neighbouring buildings.

Mr. and Mrs. Gubbins had a providential escape. The upper storey of their house was riddled with round shot. One struck the bed in which the Gubbinses were sleeping and "made them jump a good deal frightened".

September was the lucky month for the English. It witnessed the fall of Delhi and the reinforcement of Lucknow. But reinforcement did not mean relief. Meanwhile prices soared sky-high. On the first day of the month Rees records, "Articles of consumption are sometimes obtainable, how and wherefrom we do not ask. 'Attah' (coarse flour), one rupee per seer; 'ghee' (melted butter), very rancid, 10 rupees, per seer; sugar, 16 rupees a seer; country leaf-tobacco, 2 rupees a leaf; a dozen of brandy, 150 rupees to 180; a dozen of beer, 70 rupees; a ham, 90 rupees; a bottle of pickles, 20 rupees; and all other things in proportion. I have given up smoking tobacco, and have taken to tea-leaves and neem-leaves, and guava fruit leaves instead, which the poor soldiers also are constantly using.'"[76] Cigars sold at three rupees each. On the 7th Mrs. Case reports that "Soap is become so scarce an article now that little square pieces are selling for seven

[75] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 292. The words in italics were written in Greek characters
[76] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 205-206

rupees ! ! !''[77] Few people in the entrenchment could afford many changes. In fact, the men had no time to change even when the clothes were available. Colonel Inglis had not slept with his clothes off since the 16th May. Scarcity of soap therefore deprived the sorely harassed population of the Residency of the little hygienic relief that they still had. Nor could they afford the services of a Dhobi, for there were few of them in the entrenchment, and ten rupees per dozen was the washing charge without starch and soap. Many people went without milk and sugar. On the 17th September Mrs. Inglis purchased some coffee at three rupees per pound, a pound of tea sold at eight rupees ! On 19th September Captain Mansfield's things were sold; an old flannel shirt fetched 55 rupees and a bottle of brandy twenty-one.[78]

On the 5th September, reports Mrs. Case, a great part of the wall of the ladies' rooms was knocked down when they were at dinner, so they had now to dine in their small sleeping room. ''The only change we had in the twenty-four hours was going into the other room for our meals; so we are greater prisoners than ever.''[79] The ladies' square was practically deserted, most of the inmates had moved to safer places.

Early in the month Raja Man Singh, the powerful talukdar of Shahganj, encamped with a large army in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. The news did not bring unmixed cheer to the garrison, for the attitude of the Raja was still uncertain. He had not positively committed himself to the British cause and was negotiating for terms. His presence, therefore, was a source of anxiety as well as hope. If he chose to join the rebels the handful of Englishmen and Indians in the Residency would be simply crushed by overwhelming numbers. On the other hand, if he decided to help them the garrison could reasonably expect to hold their own and beat back the enemy. On the 14th September, however, occurred an irreparable calamity. Captain Fulton was struck by a round shot in the head and instantaneously killed. In a sense Fulton was the soul of the defence. Gubbins says that it was he who first detected the error of holding a second post at Machchhi Bhavan. He did not underestimate the dangers that beset the defenders of Lucknow but he did not permit himself to be upset by them and his cheerful optimism inspired others with confidence. ''To Fulton all will join in conceding the deserved title of 'The Defender of Lucknow'.''[80]

[77] Case, *op. cit.*, p 185

[78] *Idem*, pp 197-98. On September 18, Mrs. Case got a cheaper Dhobi, who charged fourteen rupees per hundred, without soap or starch

[79] *Idem*, p 183

[80] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 321

Though Fulton's death was a serious blow, cheerful news was not long in coming. On the 16th September Angad was again sent out with a letter. "Since the date of my last letter," wrote Inglis to Havelock, "the enemy have continued to persevere unceasingly in their efforts against this position, and the firing has never ceased either day or night. . . . I shall be quite out of rum for the men in eight days; but we have been living on reduced rations, so I hope to be able to get on pretty well until the 18th proximo. If you have not relieved us by that time, we shall have no meat left, as I must keep some bullocks to move my guns about the position; as it is, I have had to kill nearly all the gun bullocks, as my men could not perform the hard work without animal food. I am most anxious to hear of your advance to reassure the native soldiers."[81]

In fact the Indian soldiers had become a problem to their masters. They were suspected of clandestine correspondence with the rebels. It is true there was no documentary evidence, but Angad had reported more than once that the besiegers outside were well informed of everything that happened in the entrenchment.[82] Some Sikhs and local men had deserted and it was suspected that they had their contact with their brethren inside. Precautionary measures were therefore taken to prevent further desertion. Men of uncertain loyalty were quietly transferred to posts where escape would ordinarily be difficult. Gubbins asked them to deposit their savings with him so that the fear of losing hard-earned cash might provide a further check.[83] But distrust is generally infectious. The Indian felt that he was not trusted and the example of his officer was not always likely to inspire faith and hope. Lieutenant James Graham committed suicide and this could not but have a depressing effect on the whole garrison.[84] The besiegers often taunted them as apostates, who had not only forsaken their religion but were fighting against it. They gradually lost all hope of success. Angad's messages were no longer treated seriously. It was insinuated that he never left the Residency, but periodically came out of his hiding with false stories of British victories to mislead them. Some of them felt that they had ranged themselves on the losing side. It was, therefore, high time that they should have some tangible evidence of coming relief or reinforcement. Luckily for the exhausted garrison, such evidence promptly came. On the 22nd Angad came back with

[81] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I., pp 324-25
[82] Gubbins, *op. cit.*, p 307
[83] *Idem*, p 306
[84] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 220

the news that the relieving force was near at hand. He brought a letter not from Havelock but from Outram, dated the 20th September, which bore the welcome news that "the army crossed the river yesterday, and all the material being over now, marches towards you to-morrow, and with the blessing of God will now relieve you. The rebels, we hear, intend making one desperate assault on you as we approach the city, and will be on the watch in expectation of your weakening your garrison to make a diversion in our favour as we attack the city. I beg to warn you against being enticed to venture far from your works. When you see us engaged in your vicinity, such diversion as you could make without in any way risking your position should only be attempted."[85] On the 23rd the sound of distant guns was distinctly heard on Kanpur side and the reports became louder and louder as the day wore on. On the 25th Havelock and Outram entered the Residency. But Lucknow was not relieved, it was only reinforced.

Sir James Outram had been in Persia when the Mutiny broke out. An urgent summons called him back and he reached Calcutta on the 31st July by sea *via* Bombay and Ceylon. In the meantime the Governor-General was seriously worried about the security of the lower provinces. The sepoys had mutinied at Danapur and the disaster at Arrah further aggravated the situation. Originally it had been intended to place Outram in command of the Central Indian Army but the emergency demanded his services in the upper country. The Danapur and Kanpur divisions were, therefore, combined and placed under him. It was his special task to preserve peace in the lower provinces from Berhampur to Benares. Havelock's position at Kanpur was not very happy; war and epidemic had sadly decimated his ranks and he had only an effective force of 706. If the insurgents of Gwalior moved upon him he could not hope to hold Kanpur with his reduced strength. With an army of 2,000, he was prepared to defy any rebel army, relieve Lucknow, and march to Agra or Delhi; but unless he was reinforced in time and, if the Gwalior troops came against him, he would have no alternative but to abandon Kanpur and fall back on Allahabad.[86] A member of the Governor-General's Council had counselled that course, as telegraphic communication with Benares had been interrupted. But the brave garrison of Lucknow could not be sacrificed. Lucknow was the last post held by the British in Oudh and Lucknow must be saved. Outram's original plan was to march to Lucknow from Benares by the

[85] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p 327
[86] *Idem*, Vol. II, pp 14-15

Jaunpur road and avoid the numerous nalas that intersect the direct road from Kanpur. But he changed his plans as soon as he heard of the perils that threatened Havelock. The troops were accordingly diverted to Kanpur. His decision was also considerably influenced by the information that he received about the Banni bridge. He was under the impression that the bridge had been destroyed. When he learnt that it was still intact he readily abandoned his former plan of relieving Lucknow by the Jaunpur route.

Outram and Havelock were old friends. Havelock had served under Outram in Persia. The appointment of Outram to the combined command could not, therefore, be strictly interpreted as a supersession. But still it must have been a grievous disappointment to Havelock. His Kanpur campaign had been marked by an unbroken series of successes. It was not his fault that he came too late to rescue Wheeler or the unfortunate prisoners of Bibighar. He was not to be blamed for the failure to relieve Lucknow. He had scored three important victories over the rebel army but had been compelled by prudence to withdraw his men. It was hard luck to be deprived of the glory of relieving his countrymen, now that reinforcement was at last coming. It looked almost like disapproval of his action by the higher authorities. On the last point he was soon reassured by the Commander-in-Chief. A highly complimentary telegram acknowledged that "the sustained energy, promptitude and vigorous action by which your whole proceedings have been marked during the late difficult operations deserve the highest praise".[87] Yet the supreme satisfaction of recovering the capital of Oudh appeared to elude him when it was almost within his grasp.

But Outram did not deny Havelock the crowning glory of his military career, the chance that does not come to a man twice in his life. He had proceeded from Calcutta to Benares by steamer *via* Bhagalpur and Danapur; and from Benares he sent the following communication to Havelock, "I shall join you with the reinforcements, but to you shall be left the glory of relieving Lucknow, for which you have already so nobly struggled. I shall accompany you only in my civil capacity as Commissioner, placing my military services at your disposal, should you please to make use of me serving under you as a volunteer. Encourage the Lucknow garrison to hold on. Spare no cost in effecting communication to Colonel Inglis." It was a noble act worthy of the best traditions of chivalry, even if its propriety was not beyond

[87] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, p 13

cavil. Was it proper on the part of Outram to relegate the heavy responsibilities, which his office imposed on him, to other shoulders? Who would be answerable if anything went wrong? If every commander entrusted his own duties, at a critical moment, to the next man, how could military discipline be maintained? Outram looked only at one side of the question, the credit that the enterprise was likely to attend success, but he ignored the consequences of failure. It is difficult to say how far magnanimity should go when the fate of an empire hung in the balance. But in defence of Outram, it can be argued, that he knew Havelock and he also knew that he should always be at his elbow to assume command, the moment it was necessary. Moreover, Outram's decision was communicated to the Commander-in-Chief and had his, as well as the Governor-General's, approval. At the time of Outram's appointment the Governor-General-in-Council were not aware of Havelock's second retreat, they probably assumed that he had already fulfilled his mission. Campbell and Canning made themselves equally responsible, by their concurrence, for this extraordinary abnegation on the part of Sir James Outram, and it was clear that they also did not intend to deny Havelock the opportunity to which his achievements fully entitled him.

Outram arrived at Kanpur on the 15th September. He had with him as his Chief of Staff, a soldier of rare ability and great distinction, the future Lord Napier of Magdala. On the 18th the floating bridge was completed; and the next day the army began the journey once again for Lucknow, this time to reach their destination. The relieving force now consisted of 2,779 European troops of all arms and 400 natives, of whom no less than 341 were Sikhs. They encountered the first opposition at Mangalwar, but this time there was no fight at Unao or Bashiratganj. Strangest of all, the passage of the Sye over the Banni bridge was not disputed, and in their headlong flight the rebel army had not stopped to destroy the bridge. The British generals certainly did not expect such good luck and they reached Alambagh in the neighbourhood of Lucknow on the 23rd. Here a strong force was drawn up to contest their progress. But the rebels were put to flight and the road to Lucknow lay open.

The shortest way is not always the safest. The most direct route lay over the Charbagh bridge and the canal, but this would have involved severe street fighting involving heavy loss of life. The safest way was to proceed east, and march as far as Dilkhusa and cross the river Gomati, and then to turn left, seize the iron bridge and recross to the city side, occupy Badshah Bagh and relieve the Residency. But heavy rain had made part of the road

impassable for heavy artillery, and this route had also to be rejected. The relieving force could also reach their destination by what Innes called the *Inside Canal* route, which also lay across the Charbagh bridge; but instead of striking straight for the Residency, the army was to turn right, "circle round the city on the *inside* of the canal till reaching open ground; then to turn to the left, and advance to the Residency by the plain between the Kaiser Bagh and other palaces; and the river."[88] This was the route preferred by Outram and followed by Havelock on the morning of the 25th September because no serious fight was apprehended beyond the bridge. The passage over the bridge was hotly contested but the next move of the British army had not been anticipated. The Oudh leaders had strongly barricaded the direct road leading from the bridge to the Residency and they did not realise their mistake until their enemies had carried the Begam Kothi and reached Sikandar Bagh. The British column halted at Moti Mahal, 1,100 yards from the Residency. Between the Moti Mahal and the Residency intervened the Chhattar Manzil group of palaces. There was no entrance to the Chhattar Manzil, and a circuitous route had to be followed through Khas Bazar. The column headed by the two generals found their way into the Residency through Saunders' post. This great feat was accomplished at a tremendous loss. The small British column lost 207 officer and men, in killed and wounded, before they left Alambagh. Their loss on the 25th and the 26th mounted to 31 officers and 504 men. Among the killed was the valiant Neill, "the idol of the British Army".

"Although the loss sustained by Havelock's force is to be deplored," observes Lieut.-General McLeod Innes, "it was trifling in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome, and the strength of the opposing army. A desperate feat cannot be accomplished without loss." He further comments that "this junction on the evening of September 25th, though it may not have been a relief of the Lucknow Residency in the technical military sense, was a relief of the garrison in all essentials from a common-sense point of view. It was a succour in the direst straits. It was a rescue from a situation of the most imminent peril. It was a relief from the most harrowing and agonising dread of the ever-impending chance of a breach in the defences, without a moment's warning, through which the enemy, already prepared, might rush in overwhelming numbers which nothing could withstand. Further, when the imminent accession of the Sepoys from

[88] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 218

Delhi is remembered, as well as the sceptical feeling that existed in the minds of Sepoys in the entrenchments, there can be little doubt that Havelock's arrival saved the garrison of Lucknow from the fate of Gordon at Khartoum."[89] Another inmate of the Residency also was of opinion that Havelock and Outram had reached Lucknow in the nick of time. "But for their timely arrival, our native troops, who had up to that time behaved nobly and adhered to us with exemplary fidelity, would certainly have abandoned us. Nor could we have reasonably found fault with them had they done so, for life is sweet, and hope had almost entirely left us." He further added that it would have been impossible to hold out much longer. "Cawnpore would have been re-enacted in Lucknow, or we would, as we once talked of doing, have been compelled to blow up our women, children, and wounded, to prevent their falling into the hands of the insurgents, and to have died fighting on the ruins ourselves."[90]

The first relief was not without its tragedies. The European troops of Havelock had learnt to treat every black face as an enemy, and the first victims of their wrath were a few of those loyal sepoys, who had so long shared the privations of the siege and the hardships of the defence.[91] But a more poignant tragedy was that of Mrs. Bartrum. Her husband was a military surgeon at Gonda. When Sir Henry Lawrence directed women and children from the outstations to be sent to Lucknow, she came first to Sikrora and was thence escorted to Ramnagar by a party of sepoys. She found there other refugees, and in their company found her way to Lucknow. Dr. Bartrum who remained behind later found a safe asylum with the Raja of Balarampur. He parted with the sepoys as friends, many of whom accompanied him on his way, "shedding tears". Dr. Bartrum joined Havelock's army and the day before the relieving force arrived his wife learnt that her husband was with them safe and well. She dressed herself and her child as nicely as she could and sat waiting for the happy reunion. Some of the officers told her that Dr. Bartrum was expected the next day but he never came. At last she learnt the terrible truth, her husband had been killed just outside the Residency gates. Her child was dreadfully weak and thin, and the little vitality it possessed was exhausted by lack of nutrition during the siege. The little fellow died at Calcutta, and

[89] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 225
[90] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 248
[91] Joyce, *Ordeal at Lucknow*, p 235. Havelock's soldiers "had vowed never to give quarter to a mutineer. Indeed, they were so prone to take every dark face for an enemy's that it was thought well to distinguish the loyal sepoys who took part in the sorties by means of a red armlet." p 268

Mrs. Bartrum made her lonely voyage home, bereaved of her husband and only child.[92] War takes little account of aching hearts and broken homes. The Mutiny hit the white and the black alike.

The feeling of exultation in the Residency soon gave way to a sense of general dejection. Mrs. Case writes on the 27th September, "After all this has been a very painful day; everyone is depressed, and all feel that we are in fact *not relieved*. The fighting men we have are too few for our emergency, and too many for the provisions we have in the garrison." It was reported that the besiegers outside were about 100,000 strong and Nana Saheb was with them.[93] The garrison was yet unaware that Outram was seriously thinking of cutting his way back to Alambagh and there await further reinforcements. To remove the women, children and the sick, was beyond his capacity, and to stay longer in the entrenchment would be a drain on the scanty provisions. On the 2nd October Colonel Inglis took his wife into his confidence. "This morning John called me out to speak to him, and told me what was only known to himself, Mr. Cowper, and the two generals—namely, that our relieving force was going to leave us in consequence of the scarcity of provisions, and were to try and fight their way to Alum Bagh, there to wait until further reinforced."[94] But it was soon discovered that they would not be able to get through the city and that provisions were not so meagre as Colonel Inglis had feared. Sir Henry Lawrence's secret hoard of grain in the plunge-bath was at last discovered, and it was found that it would be possible to retain Outram's men with reduced rations.

Rations were reduced at once. No longer could atta be supplied by the commissariat. Wheat was given instead, and everybody had to get it ground as best as he could. Dal was entirely stopped, salt was reduced and only six ounces of beef, bones included, were permitted per day. No wonder that able-bodied men went hungry unless they could somehow supplement their meagre fare. Rees confesses that once he took a well-gnawed bone from the breakfast table of an absent friend, and picked it clean afterwards.[95] Sometimes he managed to get an extra

[92] Inglis, *op. cit.*, pp 225-26. Mrs. Bartrum's own account is to be found in *Widow's Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow*

[93] Case, *op. cit.*, p 210, p 218

[94] Inglis, *op. cit.*, pp 174-75

[95] Rees, *op. cit.*, p 256. The garrison, however, was not so badly off immediately after Havelock's arrival. Rees says, "We had, for some days after Havelock's arrival, luxuriated in a number of good things. The spices I had found served to make capital stews and curry, and, as we hoped to be soon released from our

chapati, but he does not tell us how. Yet men were not wanting in the garrison who were making money out of the common misery. When the British position was extended after Outram's entry and some of the palaces were plundered, besides jewels and shawls, silks and brocades, pictures and illuminated manuscripts, stores of eatables were also appropriated by far-sighted men with business instinct. One of them succeeded in obtaining several boxes of tea, tobacco, soap, candles and other useful articles which later brought him more than a thousand pounds in cash alone. On the third of October sugar was not available at any price. Twenty-five rupees for a seer was offered without success. A bottle of brandy cost twenty-five rupees and Mrs. Inglis bought some soap; "4 rupees for a very small cake of *common* brown!"[96] In a fortnight no soap was available and "bason" was used as a substitute.[97] Colonel Inglis had laid a small store of provision and people on his establishment were better off than others, but even they had nothing but "beef, rice, dahl, and chuppatties."

On the 24th, further reduction of the ration was decided, so that provision might last till the 1st December. Two days later Mrs. Case writes, "We are now commencing on two attah chupatties each a day, and two made of gram between us all. I am more distressed about the want of soap than anything else."[98] Sir James Outram sent a man out with 1,000 rupees to get some sugar but he never returned.[99] Dr. Fayrer tried to offer some variation in this monotonous menu by providing the inmates of his house with a novelty. Mrs. Germon has the following entry against October 18, "Amused to hear we were going to have a sparrow-curry for dinner. Dr. F. had shot 150 sparrows for it; most pronounced it very delicious, but I could not be induced to try it."[100] In July a peacock had been allowed to leave unharmed but in October one hundred and fifty sparrows were slaughtered for a dish of curry. In November hungry soldiers would often appropriate a chapati and leave a rupee for its price. Once "two of Colonel Inglis's kids, and a fine large goat of Mrs. Cooper's, were killed

imprisonment, we were rather profuse with our few vegetables, which tasted deliciously after that unvaried round plain coarse beef and dall." pp 254-55

[96] Case, *op. cit.*, pp 221-22

[97] *Idem*, p 239. Mrs. Case found it to be the best substitute for soap. Mrs. Harris finished her last piece of soap on Oct. 15. *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow*, p 138

[98] Case, *op. cit.*, p 250

[99] *Idem*, p 247

[100] *A Diary Kept by Mrs. R. C. Germon at Lucknow*, p 108

by some of the Fusiliers who were on guard.''[101] But the women did not grumble. Caroline, Mrs. Case's sister, writes to her cousin on 6th November, ''We have been living upon beef and rice for the last four months; no vegetables. Now we do get occasionally some green herb resembling spinach, and a great treat it is. I like the rice, which I don't tire of. The meat, with the exception of two or three times, has been good and tender. I hear people, however, complaining very much about it. This last week we have had some mutton. Our substitute for bread is chupatties, upon which the natives live. Since we have reduced rations, and learnt that we must spin out our provisions to the 1st December, we have restricted ourselves to a certain number a day. We have enough to eat, and it is wonderful how long the provisions have lasted, particularly when one thinks of the addition the new force made to our numbers.''[102]

Meanwhile, Man Singh's negotiations did not come to much. He did not definitely commit himself to any side but he professed allegiance to the English. Obviously, he wanted to be on good terms with both the belligerents until the war took a decisive turn. In July he had addressed a circular letter to his brother talukdars urging them to stand by the British. This letter does not appear to have influenced their decision to any appreciable extent. But before he left the neighbourhood of Lucknow he had helped to arrange the escape of Miss Madeline Jackson of Sitapur and Mrs. Orr who were in rebel custody. His Karinda was on this account richly rewarded.[103] Outram had come with the definite object of withdrawing the garrison from Lucknow after forming a provisional government of the local grandees, who would hold the place on behalf of the British until it could be reoccupied. He was not in favour of abandoning Lucknow as it would, he feared, lead many well-affected chiefs of Oudh and Rohilkhand to conclude that British rule in Oudh had ended. But he soon realised that it would not be practicable to evacuate the women, children and the sick, and it was not even possible to establish contact with Alambagh. Obviously he would have to be on the defensive until relief arrived. But Outram felt that the defence would be

[101] Case, *op. cit.*, p 263
[102] *Idem*, pp 65-66
[103] It was Man Singh who enlisted the services of Daroga Wajid Ali. Wajid Ali and Ananta Ram, Man Singh's Karinda or agent, contrived to carry Mrs. Orr's child to safety through the camp of the Maulavi (7th March, 1858) and also arranged the flight of Mrs. Dahan and her family. Correspondence was opened with Miss M. Jackson and Mrs. Orr when Man Singh withdrew to Chinhat at the direction of Sir J. Outram. Wajid Ali got a cash reward of Rs. 100,000, and Ananta Ram Rs. 5,000 besides an estate of Rs. 2417 at a Government rent of Rs. 590. Foreign Political Consultations, Nos 889-921, 30 Dec., 1859 (supp.)

facilitated if the lines were extended. A number of sorties were, therefore, made and a few neighbouring buildings were occupied so that the old positions were now safe from rebel fire. Outram was not entirely out of touch with the world outside. He learnt of the concentration of Nana's troops and the Gwalior contingent at Kalpi, and he advised the Commander-in-Chief to make Kanpur safe before he came to the succour of Lucknow. The besiegers confined themselves mainly to subterranean attacks but few of their mines caused real anxiety. Outram's real worry was about food. On the 28th October he wrote, "We can manage to screw on till near the end of November on further reduced rations!" But he did not have to wait so long, relief came by the middle of the month and the relieving army brought with it sufficient provisions.

On the 7th November a messenger came from Kanpur with a letter from Major Bruce. Sir Colin Campbell himself, it said, was coming at the head of a strong army and was expected at Alambagh in three days' time. Sir Colin Campbell entered the army in 1808 and had his baptism of fire in the Peninsular War at Vimiera. He had served in the West Indies and fought in China and was a soldier of mature ability and established reputation when he landed in India in 1846. He was present at Chilianwala and Gujrat and commanded the Peshawar division. His disagreement with Lord Dalhousie led to his retirement on half-pay, but the Crimean War soon recalled him to active service. On the 11th July 1857 he was made the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, and started for India at a day's notice, and arrived in Calcutta on the 13th August, a critical month in the history of the Sepoy War. Sir Colin Campbell was sixty-five at the time. He did not leave at once for the seat of war, but devoted himself to administrative and organisational work. When the reinforcements arrived from England they were promptly sent up-country, for their transport, tent equippage, arms and ammunition were all ready. On the 27th October he left Calcutta and narrowly escaped being captured by the rebels on his way from Benares to Allahabad. At Allahabad he learnt that Outram was prepared to hold out till the end of November on reduced rations. The Commander-in-Chief reached Kanpur on the 3rd November. He had to decide at once whether he should go to the relief of Lucknow first or march against the Gwalior contingent that threatened Kanpur. They had mobilised at Kalpi and Nana was reported to be on his way to join them. He could not leave sufficient troops for the defence of Kanpur, should it be attacked during his absence, but he apprehended that unless relieved at an

early date, the starving garrison at Lucknow might fail to hold their post. He, therefore, left Windham with a small detachment at Kanpur and left for Lucknow. "In case of an advance on Kanpur", Windham was ordered "to show the best front he can, but not to move out to attack unless he is compelled by threat of bombardment."

Campbell left Kanpur on the 9th November. He had with him an excellent siege-train manned by the sailors of Peel's Naval Brigade and a detachment of cavalry and horse artillery led by Hope Grant. The fall of Delhi had enabled Brigadier Wilson to send out two columns, one of which under the command of Colonel Greathed proceeded to Agra *via* Bulandshahar and Aligarh. At Agra Greathed routed the Indore rebels who tried to surprise the city, and the column proceeded on its way to Kanpur. At Firuzabad Colonel Hope Grant assumed command and the column reached Kanpur in the last week of October. Hope Grant then marched for Alambagh and fought an action with a rebel force at Bantera. He arranged for the transport of the sick and wounded from Alambagh to Kanpur, and halted at Bantera according to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, who joined him there after a forced march of thirty-five miles. Sir Colin Campbell was pressed for time. He wanted to return to Kanpur before the rebel force, then at Kalpi, came against it.

Campbell knew that his task would be considerably facilitated if he could get a European guide, familiar with the ground. Thomas Henry Kavanagh, one of the besieged at Lucknow, volunteered to accompany an Indian spy to the Commander-in-Chief's camp. He was an uncovenanted clerk in the Deputy Commissioner's office at Lucknow, but the siege had made a soldier of every civilian. He sought out the spy who was to carry Outram's despatch and plans, but that man hesitated to have a European for his companion. He thought that alone he could negotiate the city and the outposts, but no disguise could be effective with a man of Kavanagh's height and tell-tale blue eyes. Moreover, his accents might easily betray him. Unlike Angad, who had ceased to operate, Kanauji Lal, the new scout, was not a sepoy. Before the outbreak he used to work in a court of law as a nazir, and a man of his profession did not usually attach himself to the intelligence service. But unusual times call forth unusual qualities in a man and Kanuji Lal, like Kavanagh, found scope for his adventurous spirit during the Mutiny. After persuading Kanauji Lal to let him come, Kavanagh approached Napier. Napier did not consider the enterprise practicable, but introduced Kavanagh to Sir James Outram. Outram at first dis-

couraged the idea, though he realised that the services of a man like Kavanagh, who knew the defences and the city so well, would be invaluable to the relieving force. When he found that Kavanagh's resolution was unshaken he permitted him to go out. Kavanagh painted his face and hands with lamp black, and in a colourful native dress—a yellow silk kurta with a pink turban, tight trousers and country-made shoes—he looked his part, a Lucknow Badmash, and Napier could not recognise him. Outram gave him another daub before he left under cover of night. To pass through the British lines was not difficult. The couple next waded through the river and went along the left bank until they reached the stone bridge where they crossed to the city. The streets were neither crowded nor well-lighted and they safely reached the open fields outside. Here they lost their way and blundered into the Dilkhusa Park. Their journey was full of adventures. Once they roused the dogs of a sleeping village and had the barking pack after them. Two women helped them to find the right track. Next they came upon a sepoy picquet but were allowed to go on after a few questions. Then they found themsevles in a swamp and had to wade through knee-deep water for two long hours. Kavanagh's unaccustomed feet got wearied, the paint had nearly gone off his hands; and despite Kanauji Lal's remonstrances he would not move a step and rested for fifteen minutes. Next they met some villagers who were flying for their lives from the English. When the night was nearly spent and moonlight was fast waning, they arrived at a mango grove. Kavanagh could not go any further and he insisted on an hour's sleep, but Kanauji Lal was anxious to reach the British camp before the dawning of day. His companion was, however, unable to move further and sent him in search of a guide. When the Indian was gone the Englishman was challenged by a Sikh horseman of a British cavalry outpost. So good luck had prevailed and unknowingly he had stumbled into the right place. The Sikhs guided him to the tent of the Commander-in-Chief. "As I approached the door an elderly gentleman with a stern face came out and going up to him I asked for Sir Colin Campbell." "I am Sir Colin Campbell", the old man said, and Kavanagh brought out of his turban the short note of introduction Outram had given. A preconcerted signal informed anxious people in the Residency that Kavanagh's mission was successful. His valour earned him the Victoria Cross though he was not a military man. The Government of India rewarded him with a cash present of 20,000 rupees and he was promoted to the office of an Assistant Commissioner—"great rewards, but certainly not

more than were deserved."[104] Kanauji Lal, Kavanagh's guide, was later appointed a tahsildar. He got a cash reward of Rs. 5,000 and villages assessed at 837 rupees per annum were settled on him. Angad Tewari had stipulated for a cash reward for each of his successful trips. For the last one alone he got Rs. 5,000, a big sum for a man of his station. He did not ask for rent-free lands, but he also got a jama of 3,000 rupees.[105]

Sir Colin wanted to avoid the tortuous Lucknow streets in his advance on the Residency. Though he had with him an army much stronger than that led by Havelock and Outram in September, he refused to take more than ordinary military risks. His movement was cautious and slow. He marched from Alambagh on the 13th November and occupied Dilkhusa and La Martinière, and there his troops spent the night. His real objective was Moti Mahal where Outram, according to the preconcerted plan, was to join him, but in order to mislead the enemy he opened fire on the Begam Kothi. On the 16th Sir Colin crossed the canal near its juncture with the Gomati and attacked the Sikandar Bagh. The rebel leaders had not expected any attack in this direction and all the gateways on the opposite side had been closed. The sepoys defending Sikandar Bagh had no guns but the walls were strong and they resolutely fought till the last. But muskets were no match for heavy artillery and the place was carried by assault. Caught in a trap, the sepoys were slaughtered to the last man and two thousands of them lay dead about the garden. There were many feats of individual heroism and many hair-breadth escapes. Lord Roberts bears testimony to the gallantry of a Punjabi Muslim, Mukarrab Khan. The heavy doors of a gateway through which a body of sepoys was retreating were about to be closed against the assaulting troops. Mukarrab Khan "pushed his left arm, on which he carried a shield, between them, thus preventing their being shut; on his hand being badly wounded by a sword-cut, he drew it out, instantly thrusting in the other arm, when the right hand was all but severed from the wrist."[106] In recognition of his gallantry Mukarrab Khan was given the Order of Merit, for Indians were not entitled to the Victoria Cross.

Qadam Rasul and Shah Najaf were next carried. Shah Najaf was the tomb of a former ruler of Oudh and its strong walls could not be easily breached. By accident some Highlanders of the 93rd regiment discovered a small opening at the back and an entrance was effected. Outram had in the meantime blown up the buildings

[104] Norman, quoted by Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, p 127
[105] See the official list of persons rewarded
[106] Roberts, *Forty-one years in India* (one Volume edition, 1908) p 181

leading to Moti Mahal and on the 17th the besieged met the relieving force which had lost in killed and wounded 496 officers and men in four days' operations. Among the wounded was the Commander-in-Chief himself.

Lucknow was relieved at last and the besieged were now to taste the sweets of freedom and the pleasures of life. "An orange was brought in; it tasted deliciously. A loaf of bread and some fresh butter was given us. No epicure ever enjoyed a meal with greater relish than we did this simple food. Some rum was handed to us. The most exquisite liquor was never drunk with such real enjoyment. But a still greater pleasure was yet to come. Several cart-loads of letters and newspapers had arrived."[107] But this delight of deliverance was in many instances clouded by unhappy memories of dear ones lost, of comrades gone. How many wives had husbands to mourn, how many mothers left their children buried within the entrenchment in winding sheets. Their trials were over, their anxieties gone, but the bereaved wife and mother left the abode of sorrow with heavy hearts. The hour of triumph was for them the hour of sorrow. Nor could the common soldier march with a light heart, for when the garrison abandoned the Residency, Havelock was in his death bed. Sir Colin Campbell met him on the 17th and he learnt that in appreciation of his first three victories he had been made a Knight Commander of the Order of Bath. To his wife he wrote, "The papers of the 26th September came up with him (Sir Colin Campbell) announcing my elevation to the Commandership of the Bath for my first three battles. I have fought nine since." But the campaign had completely undermined his health, privation and hard fare did the rest, symptoms of dysentery appeared, and on the 20th he had to be removed to Dilkhusa. He knew his end was near and would not let anyone but his son nurse him. Havelock was a great soldier and a devout Christian. Death in the battle-field had no terror for the soldier, the Christian was prepared to face death anywhere under any circumstances. "I have for fifty years so ruled my life", he told Outram, "that when death came I might face it without fear." He passed away on the 24th of November and his last remains were interred under a mango tree at Alambagh not far from the city with which his countrymen will always associate his name. Two days after his death a baronetcy was conferred on him. The appreciation of his sovereign found expression in a royal message to the House of Commons. "Her Majesty, being desirous of conferring a signal mark of her favour

[107] Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 337-38

and approbation on Major-General Sir Henry Havelock, Bart., K.C.B., for the eminent and distinguished services rendered by him in command of a body of British and native troops in India, and particularly in the gallant and successful operations undertaken for the relief of the garrison at Lucknow, recommends to the House of Commons to enable her Majesty to make provision for securing to Sir Henry Havelock a pension of 1000 *l.* per annum for the term of his natural life."[108]

Campbell did not consider it wise to hold the Residency any longer. His immediate task was to evacuate the women, children, and the sick. As a blind for his real movement, he kept a cannonade against Kaiser Bagh, and when the inmates left, with their lights burning, the sepoys had no suspicion that the Residency had at long last been abandoned. They continued their fire long after the place had been deserted. Outram wanted to be the last to leave but Inglis insisted that it was his right to shut the gates of his old garrison. But the last Englishman to leave the entrenchment was Captain Waterman. When the garrison left he was sound asleep. When he suddenly awoke he was oppressed by the unnatural silence that reigned all over the place. He went out but nobody was to be seen. He went to a post and found it deserted, then he ran and ran in mortal fright until he contacted the rear of the retreating column. It is said that he was temporarily out of his mind, so great was the shock. Of the four prisoners two only lived to accompany their gaolers. Rukn-ud-daulah had died before the siege was over and the stormy career of the young Raja of Tulsipur ended before he reached Alambagh. Sir Colin had no time to lose, for Kanpur was again in serious danger. He left Sir James Outram at Alambagh. That post was to be held as an earnest of the British resolution to return to Lucknow. There was no definite news from Kanpur. When Campbell reached Banni distant cannonade announced that the Gwalior contingent had at last attacked that place.

The Gwalior insurgents had been long inactive. They rose in arms as early as June. Why they had suspended action so long is no mystery. When the Indore men marched against Agra their Gwalior friends did not join them. When Havelock was in dire distress for lack of men, they did not move against Kanpur. Had they made up their mind to attack him then, Kanpur would have been evacuated and the rebel cause would have gained immensely in prestige. They assumed an attitude of idle indifference when the strategic station was denuded of the majority of its defenders

[108] Marshman, *Memoirs of Major-General Sir Henry Havelock*, K.C.B. p 453

and Havelock and Outram marched to Lucknow. A discerning leader would doubtless have struck at that crucial moment. Evidently there was not a single man among the Indian officers of the Gwalior contingent with eyes to see and a head to plan and the Gwalior men could not rise above the lure of the Sindhia's silver. The English friends of His Highness gave him and his Chief Minister Sir Dinkar Rao Rajwade credit for keeping the insurgents inactive at their old station by various devices. It was no mean service to the British cause that so strong a contingent should remain unavailable to the rebels so long. They might have besieged the fort of Agra, they might have joined the defenders of Delhi while yet there was time, they might have engaged in guerilla actions in the country around, but they did nothing of the kind. It was in October that they shook off their lethargy and moved towards Kalpi. Malleson says that the relief that the Sindhia felt after the fall of Delhi slackened his vigilance and he lost his influence over the contingent. Tatya Tope, whom Malleson describes as "a wary, capable, astute man", took advantage of their vacillation and assumed their command. What actually happened behind the scenes we do not know. Kunwar Singh was also on his way from Banda to Kalpi about the same time. Tatya's agents might have finally influenced the Gwalior men's decision but still they moved in a slow and hesitant fashion. They were 5,000 strong and had a good train of artillery. On the 9th November they reached Kalpi and placed themselves under Tatya's command.

Ramchandra Panduranga, alias Tatya Tope, was one of the few military leaders of ability produced by the Mutiny. He was a Deshastha Brahman. His father was one of Baji Rao's numerous dependents. Tatya was a personal adherent of Nana and was bound to his person by ties of loyalty and gratitude. John Lang, who saw him at Bithur, describes him thus: "He was a man of about the middle height—say five feet eight—rather slightly made, but very erect. He was far from good-looking. The forehead was low, the nose rather broad at the nostrils, and his teeth irregular and discoloured. His eyes were expressive and full of cunning, like those of most Asiatics; but he did not strike me as a man of eminent ability."[109] Of military experience he had none. He had probably the martial training received by the average youth of his generation. But a knowledge of fencing and shooting hardly qualified him for the unexpected role he was now to play. He had obviously inherited the natural instinct of his

[109] Lang, *op. cit.*, pp 410-11

race for guerilla tactics, and it is well known how he eluded his British adversaries when they thought that he had been safely netted. In November 1857 speed would have ensured success. If he had appeared before Kanpur on the 13th, when Campbell was engaged before Lucknow there was every chance of eliminating Windham, who was in command at Kanpur. But on the 17th, the day Sir Colin entered the Residency, Tatya's advance post was still fifteen miles away from his destination.

Windham had earned his laurels in the Crimea. In daring he yielded to none. But his Chief had commanded him not to fight outside the entrenchments unless he found it absolutely necessary. On the 17th Windham moved beyond the town. He thought that by a bold movement against vital points he could defeat the hostile army in detail and save the city and its suburbs from arson and pillage. In the meantime he had lost all contact with Lucknow. On the 24th Windham, encamped near the crossing of Kalpi road and the canal, resolved to strike the first blow. On the 26th he forced a division of Tatya's troops to beat a retreat leaving two guns behind them. But he had still to deal with the main army. The next day he was outmanœuvred and his army was routed. On the 28th Windham's position became still worse and he was forced to leave the city and take shelter in the entrenchment.

On the 28th when, warned by the roar of cannon, Sir Colin had rushed towards Kanpur, a letter was delivered to him asking for immediate assistance. Two more messages followed in quick succession, the last one bringing the dismal news that Windham had been driven into the entrenchment. The Commander-in-Chief left his troops and the convoy behind, and galloped with a few members of his staff. Luckily for him, the bridge of boats was still intact. When he crossed to Kanpur the British army was at the last gasp. But succour had arrived and Tatya missed the chance of his life.

Campbell could not strike at once. Until the convoy was safely on the road to Allahabad, he could not move. The safety of the women, children, and the sick he had escorted so far was his first concern. But Tatya did not leave him alone. A heavy fire was directed against the British camp, and on the 4th December he tried to mend a serious omission and tried to burn the bridge of boats by fire rafts. But it was too late, the bridge was now well guarded. On the 6th of December Campbell attacked Tatya. His plan was simple. Tatya's centre was almost invulnerable, his left could not be easily turned. Sir Colin therefore decided to strike at his right, separate the Gwalior contingent from Nana's troops

and then destroy them in detail. Numerically Tatya's army was superior to his enemy's, but the component parts were of unequal quality. Nana's following, estimated at 10,000, were raw recruits. The rebel army was taken by surprise. They were cooking their breakfast and their chapatis were still heating on the pan when the onslaught was made, and they fled all along the line. General Mansfield had been told off to circumvent their left and cut off their line of retreat. But Mansfield did not like to involve his troops among the enclosures and houses of the old cantonment and the rebels retreated along the Bithur road. Tatya's centre still held the city, but as his right was routed and his camp lost, he found his position no longer tenable and withdrew under cover of night. On the 8th Hope Grant was sent to Bithur but he learnt that the sepoys were at Serai Ghat. When he arrived there early next morning, they were already embarking their guns. An attack was immediately made and the rebels were once again compelled to retreat. Thus was Tatya's plan of capturing Kanpur and cutting Campbell from his base of operations foiled. His scheme was no secret and his movements had been regularly reported by vigilant scouts. There was no element of surprise behind what success he had achieved. Though his army was shattered, his guns captured, he still continued to be a menace to the British army.

Bithur next demanded the attention of the victors and Brigadier Hope Grant was sent there. It was reported that Nana had slept there the night before the battle, but his palace was not the only object of British wrath. Along with it the temples were also demolished.[110] But Hope Grant had not been sent on a mission of demolition only. Nana had not been able to carry away his treasures with him when he fled to Oudh in July. They were thrown into the great well in the palace. The well had to be pumped out but the sappers had no mechanical appliance with them. So the primitive method of drawing the water with buckets was resorted to. Everybody worked with a will under the impression that whatever was recovered from the well would be treated as lawful prize. When the water was removed some heavy beams of wood were discovered at the bottom. "As soon as these heavy beams of wood were removed, a great quantity of silver plate—solid silver, be it understood—was brought to light, which, owing to the action of the water, came up jet black. Among these silver articles, the State howdah of the ex-Peshwa, in solid silver, was fished up, besides quantities

[110] Capt Oliver Jones says, "His (Nana's) palace was laid low, his mosque blown up, and so completely, that there was literally not one stone left upon another." Jones, *op. cit.*, pp 50-51

of gold plate and other valuables. Below the plate, which was merely deposited loose in the water, as if in a hurry, the sappers came upon an immense number of ammunition boxes tightly packed with native rupees and gold mohurs (each gold coin being worth 16 rupees at least), the value of the coin alone being currently reported in camp on December 27 to be over £200,000, in addition to the value of the gold and silver plate and the ornamental jewellery.''[111] Forbes-Mitchell heard that the plate and other valuables were worth more than a million sterling and that each private soldier would receive over a thousand rupees in prize-money.[112] But the toilers at the well were doomed to disappointment. The coins were claimed by the Government as their property, for they were suspected to have come from the treasury. The plate and jewellery, the property of the ex-Peshwa, were also claimed by the Government and the troops got nothing.

Delhi had been captured, Kanpur saved, and Lucknow relieved. It now remained to recover Fatehgarh. A few miles from Farrukkabad, once the seat of a Pathan Nawab, Fatehgarh was a strategic post that commanded the road from Kanpur to Agra. A gun-carriage factory was established here and at the time of the outbreak the fort was commanded by Colonel Smith. The 10th N.I., posted at Fatehgarh, had crossed the sea to Burma and were considered safe. They had indeed suppressed an outbreak in the prison. But Colonel Smith considered it prudent to send the women, children, and the non-combatants to Kanpur early in June. Some of them came back but the rest fell into rebel hands near Kanpur. About the middle of June some of the native officers of the 10th warned Smith that they would not obey him any longer, and the few Europeans took shelter in the fort. Early in July, unable to hold the fort any longer, Smith and his surviving companions left the fort in three boats. These boats were fired on, but some of the fugitives succeeded in going downstream to be captured near Bithur.[113] On the 18th June the sepoys had formally placed themselves under the titular Nawab of Farrukkabad. By the treaty of 1801 the Nawab of Oudh had ceded the district of Farrukkabad to the English with the tribute that he used to receive from the local ruler. He in his turn ceded a year later his lands to the Company's Government in lieu of an annual pension of 10,8000 rupees for himself and his dependents.[114]

[111] Gordon-Alexander, *Recollections of a Highland Subaltern*, pp 194-95

[112] Forbes-Mitchell, *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, p 152

[113] Of the fugitives at least two survived. Jones and Churcher had sought refuge with kindly villagers and they remained with them until they could safely proceed to Kanpur

[114] Aitchison, *op. cit*, Vol. II, pp 36-40

When the British authority was overthrown the rebels naturally looked up to him, the legitimate representative of the former ruling dynasty, for leadership. He was formally proclaimed the ruler of his old principality but strangely enough there was no concord between him and his Hindu neighbour, the Raja of Mainpuri, who also had suffered wrongs at the British hands.

Sir Colin Campbell wanted to encircle the Fatehgarh rebels on all sides. A column under Colonel Seaton had been sent down from Delhi. The Commander-in-Chief sent a detachment under Colonel Walpole to join Seaton near Mainpuri. Sir Colin himself was to proceed later along the Ganges. The Doab was to be thus cleared of the rebels who were to be driven into Rohilkhand and Oudh. From Mainpuri Hodson rode with Seaton's despatches to the Commander-in-Chief's camp. It was an act of exceptional daring but it also demonstrated that the country between Mainpuri and Miran-ka-Serai, where Hodson found Campbell, was not entirely unfriendly, for Hodson covered the greater part of his way in daytime and found no sign of rebel troops anywhere. It was only on the return journey that he was told that a party of twenty-four sowars, whom he had left at Chibbramau had been cut off and that the rebels were lurking in the neighbourhood.[115] Before the Commander-in-Chief reached the Kali Nadi the sepoys had caused some damage to the bridge. The planks had been removed but the structure was not beyond repair. Strangely enough, the rebels were conspicuous by their absence while the repair work was in progress and opened fire only when the bridge had been completely repaired. Captain Oliver Jones, who was present on the occasion, remarked, "It is marvellous what fools those who direct the Sepoys and rebels are. If, instead of waiting till we had time to repair the bridge, they had arranged their operations so as to attack us when we first came to it, or rather when it was half completed, when the pickets and working parties on the left bank were isolated, . . . they would have caused us much delay and perhaps loss; for there was no ford near . . . and it is a very different thing to repair a bridge under a heavy fire, and to do so when unopposed."[116] When the Nawab evacuated the fort, Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon-Alexander informs us, "Government property of the value of over £100,000 was found, consisting of immense stores of seasoned wood for the use of the great gun-carriage factory there, guns of all calibres, stores of soldiers' clothing, tents, and ordnance stores of all sorts." "The rebels

[115] Hodson, *Hodson of Hodson's Horse*, pp 260-64
[116] Jones, *op. cit.*, p 82

had established in the fort both a gun, shot, and shell foundry and a powder manufactory; but not only had none of them thought of blowing up the place, but when the Commander-in-Chief entered the fort on the evening of the 3rd, from the ramparts of which fugitive rebels could still be seen crossing the river in boats, it was also discovered that the bridge of boats itself had not been cut adrift."[117]

On the 4th January Seaton joined the Commander-in-Chief after effecting a junction with Walpole at Bewar. The army had a long halt at Fatehgarh. The country around was the home of "Muhammadans of a peculiarly turbulent character", and a punitive expedition was sent out to restore order. With the force went the Commissioner, Mr. Power, whom his friends and admirers in the camp had christened "Hanging Power". "At each halting place Mr. Power held a court of summary jurisdiction, and condemned to death scores of the truculent traitors who had been concerned in the atrocities at Fatehgarh the previous June. Here, at Mau itself, nearly 100 of such mutineers and rebels, caught hiding in the town and in the surrounding villages during our halt there (3 days) till the morning of January 11, were summarily tried, and hanged upon the branches of a great pipul-tree in the square in the centre of the town."[118]

The Grand Trunk Road was now safe. Communication had once more been opened between Bengal and the Punjab, Calcutta and Lahore. But Oudh and Rohilkhand still remained in rebel hands. The fall of Fatehgarh had opened the road to Rohilkhand. Sir Colin felt that it would be advisable to follow up the victory by "advance into and occupation of Rohilcund—to root out the leaders of the large gatherings of insurgents which we know to exist there, to seize their guns, and re-establish authority, as is now, I hope, being effectually done in the Doab."[119] He would postpone the reduction of Oudh till the autumn of 1858 and concentrate his forces against Shaharanpur and Bareilly where the rebel forces were reported to have massed. When all the surrounding regions had been subjugated and all the rebel forces had been confined in Oudh it would be easier to wipe them out. The Commander-in-Chief and his advisers were of opinion that the reduction of Oudh should not be attempted with an army of less than 30,000 men. On the other hand the Governor-General held, and he was not alone in his opinion, that Oudh demanded

[117] Gordon-Alexander, *op. cit.*, p 210. Also see Jones, *op. cit.*, p 83
[118] Gordon-Alexander, *op. cit.*, p 214
[119] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, p 254

the first attention of the Indo-British army. Havelock had not approved of the abandonment of the Residency and he had the support, it is said, of Outram. The disappearance of the British flag from Lucknow would be construed as a triumph of rebel arms and its political repercussions might be unfavourable to the British cause. Politically Lucknow was as important as Delhi. "Every eye in India," wrote the Governor-General, "is upon Oudh, as it was upon Delhi. Oudh is not only the rallying-place of the sepoys,—the place to which they all look, and by the doing in which their own hopes and prospects rise or fall,—but it represents a dynasty: there is a King of Oudh seeking his own. Oudh, and our dealings with it, have been in every native's mind for the last two years. The attention of all native chiefs is drawn to see whether or not we can retain hold of what we have taken."[120] In the next campaign therefore Oudh was to have priority over Rohilkhand and Outram who had been present at Alambagh waiting to recover Oudh could not be permitted to withdraw. These political considerations prevailed over military judgment and the Commander-in-Chief yielded to the Governor-General.

The Kingdom of Oudh had already been invaded from the north. Jang Bahadur, the *de facto* ruler of Nepal, wanted to cement his amity with the British by proving himself a friend in need. When the Mutiny broke out and the British prestige was visibly on the wane, Jang Bahadur offered the services of the Nepal army to the British Government. Although his offer was not immediately accepted, Lord Canning did not deem it politic to repulse his friendly approaches; and in July a Gurkha force of 3,000 men entered the Gorakhpur district. Here a rebel government had been set up under Muhammad Hasan as the Nazim or governor. Muhammad Hasan was Nazim of Gorakhpur under the old regime but he lost his office after the annexation. He had given shelter to Colonel Lennox and other refugees from Faizabad at considerable personal risk, and even after he had indentified himself with the royal cause in Oudh he did not stoop to shedding of innocent blood.[121] When later the British Government offered him free pardon he unequivocally answered that he was fighting for his king and master and not for himself. It was against him that the Gurkhas were first engaged, and from

[120] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, pp 253-54

[121] George Yeoward, Eurasian Head clerk of Gonda would have been put to death but for Muhammad Hasan. See Yeoward, *An Episode of the Rebellion and Mutiny in Oudh of 1857 and 1858, pp 39-40*. Yeoward's account, however, is full of inaccuracies.

Gorakhpur they had moved on to Jaunpur and Azamgarh. Not content with supplying this small contingent, Jang Bahadur offered his personal services. This was an additional, though not the decisive, reason why Oudh was given precedence over other regions in the winter campaign of 1857-58. On the 21st December Jang Bahadur reached the frontier with an army of 10,000 men and there he was met by General G. H. Macgregor, who had been appointed the Governor-General's Agent with the Gurkha force.

When it was decided that the reduction of Oudh should be the objective of the next campaign the Commander-in-Chief moved from Fatehgarh to Kanpur. But the expedition did not start until the winter was almost over. General Franks was to enter Oudh from the east, and for political reasons Sir Colin had to wait for Jang Bahadur. Sir Colin was anxious to begin his operations about the 18th of February, but Jang Bahadur and General Franks could not be expected to be at Lucknow before the 27th. Lord Canning thought that it would be wise to wait for Jang Bahadur. "It would drive him wild to find himself jockeyed out of all share in the great campaign. . . . I am convinced that he would break with us and go back to his hills within a week. The loss of this help would be very inconvenient, but to find ourselves on bad terms with him would be much more so. I am therefore quite reconciled to a little delay".[122] So the Commander-in-Chief also had to bow to the necessity of humouring a powerful neighbour.

General Franks was already on the move. With him was associated Pahalvan Singh, a Gurkha officer. They fought an action against the Oudh troops under Banda Hasan and Mehndi Hasan at Chanda on the 19th February. Mehndi Hasan disputed their progress near Budhayan and was again defeated. Franks next marched to Sultanpur where a strong army under Ghafur Beg, a Lucknow general, awaited him. After winning a hard-fought battle he halted to rest his army. The next day he was joined by the 3rd Sikhs from Jalandhar. On the 4th March Franks was within eight miles of Lucknow. Jang Bahadur did not arrive at Lucknow until the 11th March.

Meanwhile Outram was having a hard time at Alambagh. His men were too few to hold so exposed a position with ease. It was too near Lucknow to escape rebel attention for long. The line of communication with Kanpur was too long to be maintained without difficulty. If Oudh was not to be immediately reduced,

[122] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, p 303

he would abandon Alambagh for another station nearer Kanpur. For Alambagh had no political importance by itself and any other place in Oudh would serve as well, as a token of British determination to keep a foothold in the province. But if Lucknow was to be the next objective he would hold Alambagh at any cost, and he did so with success though no less than six attacks were delivered against the place. The assaults were both well-timed and resolute. Once the attack was staged when part of the garrison was absent on convoy duty, once the rebel force was led by a man who had assumed the guise of the monkey god Mahavira, no doubt to inspire his following with courage and resolution. The Queen Regent herself once appeared on the battle-field to encourage her troops. Outram was never taken by surprise. His scouts always kept him well informed of all hostile designs.[123] The sepoys' plans of attack were at times excellent but there was no competent officer to implement them. As Forrest observes, "The sepoys proved by their heavy losses that it was not courage in which they were lacking, but as at Delhi, leadership. If they had been led by men who were acquainted with the operations of war, the English Commander would have found it impossible to hold his extended position and keep open the communication with Cawnpore." But, for three months Outram kept the rebel force at bay and held Alambagh against heavy odds, till Sir Colin Campbell had concluded all his preparations for his final assault on Lucknow. Kanpur no longer caused him any anxiety, for he had made adequate provision for its defence against any attack that the remnant of the Gwalior contingent might contemplate, before he set out for Oudh again. He sent Hope Grant to Fatehpur Chaurasi, about 25 miles from Kanpur, where Nana was reported to be in hiding. Hope Grant reached the place on the 17th February and blew up the miserable fort, the residence of the rebel leader Jasa Singh, but Nana was no longer there. On the 1st March, Hope Grant was directed to join his Chief at Bantera. Sir Colin had left Kanpur the previous day, and rode more than fifty miles to reach Alambagh and back to Bantera, his new headquarters. On the 2nd March early in the morning the operations against Lucknow began.

The defences of Lucknow had in the meantime been considerably strengthened. Earthworks had been thrown up and barricades raised in three separate lines in the city but no such thought

[123] "Ungud, Anjoor Tewaree, and others were marvellously accurate. We used to have the most complete and comfortable notice of all their projected attacks, many hours before they were actually delivered." Maude and Sherer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 447

had been given to the north bank of the Gomati, and the defenders suffered like the one-eyed animal of the fables. Sir Colin had nineteen thousand men with him and their number swelled above thirty thousand when he was joined by Franks and Jang Bahadur. The Commander-in-Chief proceeded slowly and methodically according to schedule, and did not feel over-pleased if any operation took place ahead of it. Outram went to the north bank of the river. It was his business to clear that side of hostile troops. He carried out his part of the programme and held the head of the iron bridge but he was not permitted to cross over, for Sir Colin was not prepared to risk any casualty and the operation was bound to involve some loss, however slight. The escape of the rebel force *en masse* was later attributed to this omission and slackness on Brigadier Campbell's part.[124] On the south side of the Gomati the main army occupied Dilkhusa. Martinière was next carried, and one by one, the fortified palaces, the walled gardens, mosques and mausoleums were seized till the rebels found their position untenable and evacuated the city. They had fought with desperate courage, and 860 of the defenders lay dead in the central court alone when Begam Kothi was stormed. The queen mother herself never lost heart and moved among her men with a spirit that deserved better success. But nothing availed, and on the 18th March all the strong points in the city were in British hands. A powerful rebel force, probably inspired by the Begam, held Musabag till the 19th. The Maulavi, more resolute than the rest, was not dislodged till the 22nd. Thus fell Lucknow, but Oudh still remained to be conquered. The captive ladies told Russell that their men would yet win.[125]

Lucknow did not escape the fate of other captured cities. The wanton destruction and pillage that followed the storming of Begam Kothi has been described by Russell thus: "The scene of plunder was indescribable. The soldiers had broken up several of the store-rooms, and pitched the contents into the court, which was lumbered with cases, with embroidered clothes, gold and silver brocade, silver vessels, arms, banners, drums, shawls, scarfs, musical instruments, mirrors, pictures, books, accounts, medicine bottles, gorgeous standards, shields, spears, and a heap of things, the enumeration of which would make this sheet of

[124] Gordon-Alexander opines, "The Commander-in-Chief himself was officially responsible for the escape of the 20,000 to Faizabad, but Brigadier Campbell was alone responsible for the Musabagh fiasco." Gordon-Alexander, *op. cit.*, p 277

[125] "These women say they are sure we shall be beaten in the long run," Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 338

paper like a catalogue of broker's sale. Through these moved the men, wild with excitement, 'drunk with plunder'. I had often heard the phrase, but never saw the thing itself before. They smashed to pieces the fowling-pieces and pistols to get at the gold mountings and the stones set in the stocks. They burned in a fire, which they made in the centre of the court, brocades and embroidered shawls for the sake of the gold and silver. China, glass, and jade they dashed to pieces in pure wantonness; pictures they ripped up, or tossed on the flames; furniture shared the same fate."[126] Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon-Alexander describes the wealth of one store the existence of which would never have been suspected if a spiteful old woman had not put him wise about it. "Within, I found a very dry storeroom about 14 feet square and rather lofty, fitted on three sides with shelves, at a distance of 3 feet apart, right up to the ceiling. These shelves were crowded with valuables, such as great cases containing the finest Kashmir shawls, silver-mounted and jewelled swords and other weapons, a solid gold casket, divided into compartments exactly like a British kitchen spice-box, which I carried myself, and handed over to the prize-agent, each compartment being quite full of gems, such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. . . . . Another curious find was that of numerous tiaras, equivalent to the coronets of our peers, studded with precious stones, including diamonds, but made of a flimsy sort of cardboard, covered with silk velvet of various colours."[127] Colonel Gordon-Alexander handed over his find to the Prize Agents but much of the loot was appropriated by the discoverers. Forbes-Mitchell humorously comments that while camp-followers and other plunderers were made to disgorge their plunder for the public good or the benefit of the army, "it was shrewdly suspected by the troops that certain small caskets in battered cases, which contained the redemption of mortgaged estates in Scotland, England, and Ireland, and snug fishing and shooting-boxes in every game-haunted and salmon-frequented angle of the world, found their way inside the uniform-cases of even the prize-agents. I could myself name one deeply-encumbered estate which was cleared of mortgage to the tune of £180,000 within two years of the plunder of Lucknow." In spite of such cases of misappropriation the plunder accumulated by the Prize Agents was enormous. "Before we left Lucknow," says Forbes-Mitchell, "the plunder accumulated by the prize-agents was estimated at over £600,000

[126] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 333
[127] Gordon-Alexander, *op. cit.*, p 283

(according to *The Times* of 31st of May, 1858) and within a week it had reached a million and a quarter sterling. What became of it all?"[128]

Even a tragedy is not always without its comic aspects. Sometimes the loot caused no little embarrassment to the greedy plunderer. Lieutenant Majendie's men went for everything. Fowls and pigeons were welcome addition to the larder and green parrots (more accurately paraqueets) were not unpleasant company. But among the captives was a big leopard found in a case by the roadside. It was promptly shot for the sake of the skin which, however, was claimed by the entire force. A few draught bullocks, captured with guns to which they were yoked proved very troublesome. "Never in this world did prisoners of war prove so refractory as these horned gentlemen, so deaf to reason or cajolery. Unanimously and strenuously they refused to have anything to do with drawing the guns after they had once fallen into our hands."[129]

The leaders of the revolt, the Maulavi and the Begam, had safely effected their escape. Firuz Shah ran away to fight once again. Kunwar Singh had already gone to Azamgarh to give fresh evidence of his indomitable courage and indefatigable industry. But all the members of the Oudh royal family were not so lucky. Russell visited some of the captive Begams and their female attendants. "We found them all in one large, low, dark and dirty room, without windows, on the ground floor," says he, "and Bruce's entrance was the signal for a shrill uplifting of voices, and passionate exclamations from the ladies, who were crouched down all round the walls."[130] The 'great leveller' had in one short night made beggar women of Begams. But women of less exalted ranks had laid down their lives in the defence of the city[131] and a few days after the fall of Lucknow was noticed 'a wrinkled hag with age grown double' lurking near the iron bridge and gathering up little bits of rags. She was later found *'quite dead'*, and "close to her hand lay a piece of cotton, like a candle-wick, and partially burnt, while, nearly hidden by the rubbish, appeared through the floor, close to where the dead woman's hand rested, a bamboo containing a slow match." The bamboo led to

[128] Forbes-Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p 228
[129] Majendie, *Up Among the Pandies*, pp 201-202
[130] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 357
[131] Gordon-Alexander noted that among the slain at Sikandar Bagh there were a few amazon negresses. "They fought like wild cats, and it was not till after they were killed that their sex was even suspected." Gordon-Alexander, *op. cit.*, p 104. Forbes-Mitchell mentions a woman who, perched on a large peepul tree in the court of Sikandar Bagh, shot a number of British soldiers, and was shot in her turn Forbes-Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp 57-58

an enormous mine'![132] What wrongs her feeble hands strove to avenge will never be known. What tragedy embittered her flickering life, history will never discover. The city was naturally deserted. Sir James Outram invited the citizens to return but, an official report says, fear and the rude treatment experienced at the hands of the soldiers kept the majority away. By degrees, however, they crept in and, as the military authorities exercised a strict control, people found themselves comparatively unmolested and gradually flocked back.[133]

On the 21st March an eloquent sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. McKay. The fall of Lucknow convinced him that the British empire was not destined to share the fate of 'the great empires of the world hitherto', for England was a Christian country.[134] But the military and civil officers found little consolation in that assurance. Sir James Outram had received a proclamation from the Governor-General before Lucknow had been captured, but its publication was to be postponed till the city fell to British arms, for the Governor-General apprehended that otherwise his leniency might be attributed to weakness and fear. But Outram found the proclamation too harsh and too uncompromising for it doomed the entire landed aristocracy of Oudh, with the exception of six specified zamindars and talukdars, to the loss of all their ancestral lands. The Governor-General reminded the people of Oudh that their capital now lay at the mercy of the British Government against which they had ranged themselves. "They have been guilty of a great crime, and have subjected themselves to a just retribution." "The first care of the Governor-General will be to reward those who have been steadfast in their allegiance." "The Governor-General further proclaims to the people of Oude that, with the above-mentioned exceptions, the proprietary right in the soil of the province is confiscated to the British Government, which will dispose of that right in such manner as to it may seem fitting." "To those Talookdars, chiefs, and landowners, with their followers, who shall make immediate submission to the Chief Commissioner of Oude, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders, the Right Honourable the Governor-General promises that their lives and honour shall be safe, provided that their hands are not stained with English blood murderously shed. But as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the condition in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves

[132] Majendie, *op. cit.*, pp 236-38
[133] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos 52-55, 25 June, 1858
[134] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p 356

upon the justice and mercy of the British Government."[135] "These words have no meaning in the ears of natives, and convey no idea to their minds," Russell bitterly commented, "but at best they are *telum imbelle,* for we cannot really enforce them. Time must elapse ere Oude be ours. It turns out unhappily that the fall of Lucknow has by no means secured the submission of Oude, as Lord Canning must have supposed it would when he hurled his bull from Allahabad."[136] Outram did his best to conciliate the people threatened with confiscation but they had as yet no reason to place their faith in British justice; and British mercy to them was a fiction. To lose their land was to live without honour and the talukdars determined to fight for their barony as their ancestors had done in the days of the Nawabs. "Hostilities at once broke out afresh and over a much wider area than before."

[135] Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny,* pp 339-40
[136] Russell, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p 355

## Chapter Six

# BIHAR

The agony of Lucknow was prolonged by troubles near Patna. At Patna in 1857 ruled William Tayler, a strong man who stood no nonsense and shirked no responsibility. He was one of those rare souls who never erred and who relied more on their instinct than on other people's judgment. He was for five years District Judge of Shahabad and he aspired to a seat on the Sadr Court, but when prompt action was called for his judicial training proved no handicap. The European planters found comfort in his strength, for they had large interests in Bihar and anarchy and disorder would mean loss of dividend, if not ruin of business. If repressive measures could ensure peace and avert mutiny, Tayler was the man that Bihar needed. He was convinced that Patna was seething with sedition, for Patna was a Wahabi centre and every Wahabi was a potential rebel. To him every Muslim was a probable mutineer, though his right-hand man "the faithful and zealous old officer", Mawla Baksh, was a Mahomedan and Shah Kabiruddin, "the yellow hammer", belonged to that community. Kazi Rumzan Ali saved the district of Chhapra for the British after the civilian officers had left, and Syed Vilayat Ali Khan was "more like an European than a native." But they were doubtless the exceptions that confirmed the rule.

Patna commanded the land and river route from Calcutta to Benares and formed the key to the North-Western Provinces. At the neighbouring cantonment town of Danapur were posted three sepoy regiments, the 7th, 8th, and the 40th N.I, a company of Native Artillery, with Her Majesty's 10th Foot and a company of European Artillery. After the Meerut outbreak the Indian troops were a source of anxiety to civilians and military officers alike. Major-General Lloyd who commanded the Danapur Division had served in the army for fifty-three years and had earned the good opinion of Lord Dalhousie by his handling of the Santal insurrection. The Danapur sepoys came mostly from the neighbouring district of Shahabad. On the 7th June they heard the story of Benares and troubles were consequently apprehended.

General Lloyd had seriously thought of disarming the native corps and actually landed 150 men of the Madras Fusiliers with that object but the men remained faithful. "As I was quite aware," he wrote, "the men might have decamped with their arms in spite of anything I could do, I was glad to be able to defer such a measure for the present, particularly as it was of great importance to push on European troops towards the north-west, as the only means of saving our officers and men still holding out in these parts."[1] The Government of India, the Government of Bengal, the Commissioner of Patna and the General commanding the Danapur Division all realised the importance of holding intact the life-line between Calcutta and Kanpur but their solutions for the problem were not the same. Lord Canning was not prepared to "govern in anger". Sir Frederick Halliday asked for information, General Lloyd could think of no effective way of preventing desertion if the sepoys were that way inclined ; but Tayler was anxious to anticipate the unknown enemy and strike the first blow.

The news of the outbreak at Meeerut had caused widespread disquiet in the outstations of Bihar. The report from Benares caused a panic and many Europeans left their posts in the countryside to seek shelter at Patna. Patna itself was alarmed by the rumour of a probable rising at Danapur on the 7th. Tayler rightly held himself responsible for the safety of the European population of the city and converted his own residence into a stronghold where they were offered asylum. He had, however, to depend upon native guards whose fidelity, according to his information, was not above suspicion. Therefore, he summoned Rattray's Sikhs[2] to Patna. It was reported that on their way they had been reviled by the rural people as apostates and the Sikh high priest had refused to admit them into his temple.

Nothing happened at Danapur in the month of June but Tayler felt frustrated as he had failed to persuade the Government that the sepoys should be disarmed at once. His argument left General Lloyd unconvinced but the reports of his spies added to his growing anxiety. The principal zamindars of the province were reported to be hostile. The Wahabis were said to be engaged in a general conspiracy against the Government. On the 12th June a Najib was found spreading sedition among Rattray's Sikhs. He was tried, found guilty, and hanged. Tayler

[1] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 412

[2] It should be noted that Rattray's men were not all Sikhs, there were a few non-Sikhs among them

felt that he could wait no longer. He could not bring the Wahabi leaders to court, for "the actual evidence of their direct complicity in any of the conspiracies that have lately taken place is not such, at present, as to warrant any legal proceedings against them";[3] and Tayler admitted that the incriminating letters produced by his informer were with one exception fabricated. Malleson writes, "Prominent amongst these Mulvis (Wahabi) were three men, Shah Mahomed Hussen, Ahmad Ulla, and Waiz-ul-Haqq. To seize these men openly would have provoked the outbreak which Mr. Tayler was careful to avoid. But it was necessary for the public peace that they should be secured. Mr. Tayler, therefore, requested their presence, and the presence of others, to consult on the state of affairs. When the conference was over he allowed the others to depart, but detained the three men I have named, informing them that in the then existing state of affairs it was necessary that they should remain under supervision." Malleson found nothing wrong in this proceeding. Tayler, he argues, "represented the governing power of the land; the Mulvis were the avowed subjects of that power; they were not Mr. Tayler's guests; they went to his house to hear the voice of the Government they served; and that voice ordered them to remain in honorary confinement so long as the crisis might last."[4] Tayler's own justification was, "I took possession of these leading men, therefore, more for the purpose of holding them as hostages for the good conduct of their whole brotherhood, than with the expectation of having sufficient evidence to punish them; and though it was a bold, and perhaps a dangerous stroke, and several of the more timid thought it might lead to resistance, I counted the cost, and am thankful to say that the result has more than answered my expectations."[5] It was no doubt a dangerous stroke, but bold it was not. It needed no courage to invite unsuspecting men to one's residence and put them under arrest when they were not in a position to resist. It is doubtful whether Tayler really counted the cost, the cost was the British reputation for straightforward dealing at a moment when the Government could hardly risk it. The apologists of Tayler including Malleson triumphantly point out that there was a Wahabi conspiracy eight years later and Maulavi Ahmadullah, one of the three Wahabi leaders arrested by Tayler on the 20th June, was convicted of treason on

[3] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 400
[4] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 52-53
[5] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 401. Edward Lockwood who was then at Patna justified the arrests on the ground of expediency. Lockwood, *The Early days of Marlborough College*, pp 155-78

that occasion. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc.* It is to be noted that Tayler's information in other cases proved to be unfounded. The Maharaja of Dumraon was a suspect at one time and so was the Rani of Tikari. The rich zamindars had as anxious a time as their British rulers and had to provide for the safety of their lives and property, but if they dug out rusty guns or recruited armed retainers they were suspected of treasonable designs.

The Wahabis, as a community, did not identify themselves with the revolt. Like many of their countrymen, individual Indian Wahabis might have participated in the revolt of 1857, but if the community as such had decided to cast in their lot with the sepoy leaders, Sir John Lawrence would have found it unsafe to denude the Punjab of European troops and recruit so many Punjabi Muslims to fight for the cause of Britain. Forjett who unravelled the sepoy conspiracy at Bombay testifies to the co-operation he received from Wahabis of high ranks. "I was sorry to find", he writes, "that Bombay was not free from Wahabee-phobia; but I am glad to say that I experienced no lack of assistance from Wahabees. The kajee,—the high priest in Bombay of Mahomedans,—was a rank Wahabee, but made his services available at any hour of the day or night; so was the soobedar, Mahomed Booden, of the Police, a Wahabee, by whom I was greatly assisted in bringing to light the plot hatched by the sepoys at Sonapoor."[6] It was not possible for the Wahabis at Bombay to lend their co-operation to the Commissioner of Police if their leaders in Bihar had decided otherwise. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal stated in his Minute of the 30th September 1858, "Nothing was at any time proved or even alleged against the Wahabis. In fact information given by one of the aged Wahabi leaders was disregarded."[7]

Nor was this Machiavellian move of the "cultured" Commissioner of Patna justified by its result, for early next month there was a riot at Patna, an event unique in the annals of the Mutiny, a popular outbreak without a military rising.

Tayler did not rest on his oars. The arrest of the Wahabi leaders was followed by a proclamation demanding the surrender of all arms owned by the citizens of Patna within twenty-four hours and forbidding them, without special permission, to leave their homes after nine o'clock at night. Neither of these two orders could be enforced, they were both unlawful and offered unnecessary provocation at a critical time. The Commissioner

[6] Forjett, *op. cit.*, p 131

[7] *Minute by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal on the Mutinies as they affected the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal,* p 5

did not deem it necessary to obtain previous approval of the Government and the Lieutenant-Governor felt that he was confronted with a *fait accompli* without sufficient information to judge its merits. The sentiments of the Lieutenant-Governor were communicated by the Assistant Secretary in unambiguous terms and would have put a less confident person than Tayler on his guard. "The Lieutenant-Governor would earnestly caution you against unnecessary harshness, and against all illegal proceedings. In the imperfect light you have thought fit to afford him, the Lieutenant-Governor can only partly and doubtfully perceive that you seem to have been acting in a very unusual and questionable manner. You may possibly have good reasons to give for it all, though you have not yet assigned them. The strong dissatisfaction of the Lieutenant-Governor at this mode of proceeding, on your part, has already been very distinctly expressed to you."[8] In reply Tayler requested the Lieutenant-Governor not to come to a decision with regard to the measures complained of "until it be ascertained how much they have conduced to the security and confidence of all around, to the entire submissiveness of the town, and to the feeling . . . that matters will be carried by us with a high hand, and that it behoves all the Company's subjects . . . to show, by a submissive and respectful demeanour, that they recognise and fear the constituted authorities". He claimed the right of the man on the spot to "judge of such matters from my local experience" and concluded that he would be unworthy of his office if at such a moment he shrank "from the responsibility of adopting bold and decisive measures".[9] In short Tayler pleaded that the end justified the means but unfortunately the end was not achieved and the policy of terror failed.

On the evening of the 3rd July a large body of Muslims paraded the streets with flags flying and drums beating. Dr. Lyell, assistant to the Opium Agent, ordered fifty Najibs and eight Sikhs to follow him. But before they could reach the scene he was shot down and beheaded. The rioters were then dispersed and one of them was killed and another severely wounded. Pir Ali, a local bookseller and a Wahabi, was arrested as their leader. The number brought to trial was forty-three. They were not sent to an ordinary court of law but produced before a commission, consisting of Tayler and Lowis, Magistrate of Patna. Tayler indirectly admits that the "niceties of cross examination" and "the

[8] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 405
[9] *Idem*, Vol. III, p 406

punctilios of judicial ceremony" were not permitted.[10] Nineteen of the forty-three accused were hanged, five transported for life, one was whipped and only three were acquitted. The sentence was signed by Tayler alone and the nineteen accused condemned to death were promptly executed. Samuells, Tayler's successor, suspected that the sentences were passed on insufficient evidence and the papers were referred to the Nizamat Adalat. The judges confined their enquiry to cases of imprisonment and flogging only, for obvious reasons, and their finding was against Tayler. "The Court have carefully gone through the records of these trials, and they think the evidence altogether insufficient to sustain the conviction of the prisoners Nos. 15-23, 25-28, 30, 31, 38, 39 and 40. As regards No. 24, Saadut Ally, he was named by Rodrigues[11] in his original statement made to the Darogah on the 5th July, and identified by him on the following day, but as the evidence of this witness on subsequent examination appears to us undeserving of credit, we think no dependence can be placed in his statements, when not supported by the other evidence, and would recommend that the sentence in the case of this prisoner also should be remitted."[12] Of the twenty-one surviving accused, condemned by Tayler, no less than nineteen were let off by the judges of the Nizamat Adalat. Lowis disavowed in writing his responsibiliy for most of the sentences. He wrote, "After the riot in which Dr. Lyell lost his life, certain persons said to have been concerned in it were brought up for trial before Mr. Tayler, the Commissioner and myself. Of the guilt of some of these men there certainly was no doubt,[13] and they were accordingly convicted

[10] Tayler's letter to the Government of Bengal, 25th May, 1859. "If at such a crisis Mr. Samuells would really have dealt with Dr. Lyell's murderers in the mode he has been pleased to lay down ; if he had gone through all the niceties of cross-examination, and cherished the punctilios of judicial ceremony, 'muffling up the heads' of the prisoners, so as if possible to bewilder the witnesses ; if he really would have thus acted, the Christians of Patna may return special thanks to Providence that their honour and their lives were not at that time in Mr. Samuells's keeping."

[11] An Indian convert whose Hindu name was Radhe Kishan. Mr. Samuells writes that Rodrigues named on the 5th at the thana eight men whom he claimed to have recognised. The next day he identified twenty-seven before Mawla Baksh, on the 9th four more, on the 5th August, yet another

[12] Parliamentary Papers, East India, 1858, No. 258, p 9

[13] Pir Ali was undoubtedly the leader of the riot. In a letter found at his house the following sentence occurred, "Some respectable persons in the city are in prison, and the subjects are all weary and disgusted with the tyranny and oppression exercised by Government, whom they all curse." Brought before the Commissioner, he was asked whether he had any information to give that might induce the Government to spare his life. "With dignified composure, such as our own people did not always maintain under exciting circumstances, he confronted his questioners, and replied: 'There are some cases in which it is good to save life—others in which it is better to lose it.' " He further denounced the oppression of the Commissioner and said, "You may hang me, or such as me,

and at once hanged. Of the participation of the remainder of the prisoners I had, however, strong doubts; and I held that on the evidence against them it was impossible for me to convict. I therefore proposed remanding them until further enquiry could be made. To this Mr. Tayler objected and endeavoured to prove that there being the same evidence against all, all must be equally guilty. He however failed to convince me and I still adhered to my former opinion. Mr. Tayler then proposed that the prisoners should be sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and that when the country became quiet the Government might, if it saw fit, inquire into the matter."[14] Mr. Samuells' comments are illuminating. He says that no deposition was taken from the approvers at the trial. At the Alipur jail they stated that they had been forced by Mawla Baksh to give false evidence. Mawla Baksh prepared the case and he had his office in Tayler's compound and it was his task to prepare (or tutor?) the witnesses. Samuells observes, "When the principal trial took place the various districts of the province were undisturbed." "The only effect of punishments, which are not believed by the people to be just, is to increase disaffection."[15] The Governor-General recorded in his minute of the 4th March 1859, "I believe that in the course of Mr. Tayler's proceedings men were condemned and executed upon insufficient evidence", but in view of Tayler's intended resignation he was unwilling to order a public enquiry, unless Tayler himself wanted it. It is significant that Tayler did not demand a public enquiry. Colonel Malleson refers to the riot which he magnifies into a rising, applauds Tayler as the saviour of Patna, condemns the superior authorities who failed to see eye to eye with the Commissioner, but has not a word to say about the strictures of the judges of the Nizamat Adalat and Lowis's account of the trial.

Tayler personally bargained with arrested persons and persuaded them to buy their release by implicating others. When a native police officer was brought before him on a charge of treasonable correspondence, Tayler told him, "I will make a bargain with you ; give me three lives, and I will give you yours."[16] Pir Ali was not a rich man. It was suspected that he had behind him a big financier. A man called Sheikh Ghasita, who was tried and executed along with Pir Ali, was in the employment of the

every day, but thousands will rise in my place, and your object will never be gained." Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, pp 85-86

[14] Lowis's letter dated 8th February 1858. Parliamentary Papers, East India. 1858, No. 226, p 8

[15] Parliamentary Papers, East India, 1858, No. 226, Appendix, pp 7-11

[16] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 408

richest banker of Patna, Syed Lutf Ali. He was therefore placed under custody because it was suspected that he was the unknown person who financed Pir Ali's organisation. The charge against him was harbouring one of the principal rebels. Luckily for Lutf Ali he was tried, not by Mr. Tayler, but by the senior judge of Patna and acquitted.[17] If no Indian felt safe at Patna, Mr. Tayler had the approbation of the mercantile community of Calcutta and he did not pause to think how his actions were affecting the sepoys at Danapur.

General Lloyd, in command of the Danapur Division, did not apprehend a mutiny unless some unforeseen circumstances caused excitement among the sepoys; and the Government of India left the difficult decision about disarming to his discretion. European troops were now passing through Patna on their way to Benares and General Lloyd was told, "If, when the regiment reaches Dinapore, you see reason to distrust the native troops, and you entertain an opinion that it is desirable to disarm them, you are at liberty to disembark the Fifth Fusiliers to assist you in this object; but it is imperatively necessary that the detention of the regiment should be limited to the shortest possible period."[18] Then followed a piece of advice which was at once futile and insensible. All the three regiments were to be disarmed, if that course was decided on, but it was to be carefully explained to them that it was done for their good, to save the well-disposed from the machinations of the evil-minded, a few of whom were to be found in every regiment. Ponsonby had offered this explanation at Benares but his men were not convinced. The sepoys

[17] Mr. Farquharson who tried and acquitted Lutf Ali later complained to the Government of Bengal that Tayler tried to influence his decision. "On the 23rd and the 24th of this month, I held a trial on Syed Lootf Ali Khan, committed by Mr. Commissioner Tayler, under Act XI of 1857, for knowingly harbouring the above-named Mohubbut, and acquitted him, there being no sufficient proof of the charge advanced. The Commissioner . . . at the last moment demanded fresh postponement, for the purpose of producing more witnesses, to prove the fact of harbouring a rebel, against the prisoner. This demand I refused compliance with, notwithstanding a warning from the Commissioner that I incurred great responsibility in so doing. Under these circumstances, . . . I have taken the liberty of sending down the entire case and correspondence on the subject, with reference to which I would beg to draw attention to the loose way in which the case was forwarded for trial, and the intermediate remarks by the Commissioner on the weight he considered due to the evidence for the prosecution. It is currently reported here that some of those punished for being concerned in the late outbreak in the city of Patna were convicted by the Commission presided over by Mr. Tayler, on evidence less reliable even than that I have rejected in Lootf Ali Khan's case" Farquharson added that the common opinion on the subject was very damaging not only to the Civil Service but to the European character at large. With the papers relating to Lutf Ali's case Mr. Farquharson enclosed several private letters addressed to him by the Commissioner with a view to influencing his mind against the prisoner. Enclosures 2, 199-222 in letter to the Court, Sept 1, 1857, Further Parliamentary Papers (No. 5) 1857, pp 17-18 ; Appendix B, pp 75-91

[18] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol III, p 414

were not children; some of them were very shrewd persons and they felt the humiliation of being deprived of their arms as keenly as the Europeans.

The indigo planters had a long nose and the instructions to General Lloyd were no secret to them. The letter to Lloyd was issued on the 15th July and on the 20th the planters waited on the Governor-General and urged him to disarm the Danapur sepoys. They knew that Lloyd had his doubts about the wisdom and efficacy of so drastic a measure and tried to force his hands, so that their purse might not be touched. A military secret was thus given wide publicity but it is not known whether or how soon it reached the sepoy lines at Danapur. The sepoys had their own way of getting intelligence and their method sometimes proved quicker and surer than the official one.

Lloyd had long hesitated to take a decisive step. He made up his mind on the 24th July. But lack of conviction led him to seek a *via media*. If the three native regiments had been paraded and ordered to surrender their arms under British guns, a few might have demurred but the majority would have obeyed. Any resistance might have been suppressed by *force majeure*. Or the sepoys could have been left to themselves, as they had so far not betrayed any signs of disquiet, despite the provocation Tayler's high-handed methods had given, and things might have continued as before unless a panic was caused by some unforeseen development. But Lloyd decided to take away their percussion caps, and thereby render their fire-arms harmless without subjecting them to any degradation or humiliation. The next morning the European troops were drawn up in the barrack square and two bullock carts were sent to collect the caps. They were detected on their return journey and the men of the 7th and 8th regiments raised an alarm and tried to stop the carts. But their officers succeeded in restoring order and the carts were allowed to pass. During this turmoil the 40th regiment ranged themselves on the side of order and discipline and were even prepared to oppose their brethren of the other two regiments.

Lloyd's work was only half done. Each man had still fifteen caps with him, but he hoped that these they would surrender on demand and the task might be safely entrusted to native officers. But the men refused to give up their caps and this time the expostulations of their European officers were of no avail. The officers were told to go and, it is said, they were fired upon. The guards at the European hospital saw the officers running and fired the signal guns. This brought Her Majesty's 10th, who had

doubtless been on the *qui vive*, on to the scene: The patients also went to the roof of the hospital and opened fire killing "about a dozen of the scoundrels". The 40th Native Infantry at first did not join, but being fired upon by men of the 10th from the roof of the European hospital, they went off and joined the mutineers.[19] Tayler saw his prophecy come true and Lloyd had doubtless bungled. He should not have left this important task to native officers and should have personally supervised the collection of caps. When the trouble broke out he was on the river in a steamer, and the military officers were deprived of his guidance when it was most needed. As Lloyd had anticipated, the mutineers' retreat could not be cut off. They hurried to Arrah, the headquarters of their home district Shahabad. Some of them left their wives and children behind; obviously the rising was not premeditated.

Lloyd tried to overtake the runaways by the river and his steamer ran down a few boat-loads of them. But except for drowning some boats he could effect nothing. Nor was he aware of their destination. They might have gone to Arrah, they might have taken a bolder step and threatened Patna, or they might have proceeded to Gaya. The protection of Patna was his immediate concern, and so a detachment with two guns were sent there, while more definite intelligence about the movements of the sepoys was awaited. On the 26th a steamer was sent up the Son with a detachment of rifle-men, but the steamer could not go far, as the channel was not deep enough. Another steamer was sent to Arrah to bring the civilians but it struck a sand-bank. A third steamer from Allahabad with passengers for Calcutta arrived in the evening. This boat was requisitioned but considerable delay was caused by the Captain who was reluctant to disturb sleeping passengers. It was not until the evening of the 29th that the steamer left with a small force under the command of Captain Dunbar.

The expedition ended in disaster. The sepoys, now led by Babu Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, ambushed the party. One of the first to fall was Captain Dunbar. "From the front of our column, from the right flank, from the left flank came through the darkness with fatal effect, the heavy shower of musket balls." The entire column was thrown into confusion. The next morning the retreat became a rout. "Of the four hundred men who had gone out on the day before, full of health and hope, one-half had been left behind to gorge the vultures and the jackals, and of

[19] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, pp 93-94

those who returned only about fifty were unwounded."[20] The shock of this disaster was so great that even a man of Tayler's confidence and optimism was completely unnerved and he ordered all district officers to come to Patna. Tayler was in consequence removed from the Commissionership at Patna and transferred to the distant district of Mymensingh in East Bengal as District Judge. He made a grievance of it and resigned when he found that there was little chance of redress. But he did not tamely give up the fight and began a pamphleteering campaign which won him many sympathisers.

Arrah was not taken by surprise. Tayler had warned the Magistrate Wake[21] that there was reason to apprehend a mutiny. A council was at once called, the women and children were sent to Danapur, and it was decided to put the Railway Engineer Mr. Boyle's house in a state of defence where the men could in the last resort seek refuge. A small store of provisions and ammunition was also laid in, but the non-official Europeans did not deem it safe to stay behind. They left with two exceptions for Danapur.[22] But all these preparations would have been of little avail, had not Tayler sent a body of fifty of Rattray's Sikhs to aid Wake. On the 26th July a sowar brought the news that the sepoys had crossed the Son. The news was soon confirmed and fifteen Europeans and Eurasians with fifty Sikhs threw themselves into the small building, fortified by Boyle. With them was a solitary Muslim, Syed Azimuddin Husein, the Deputy Collector.[23] On the 27th July the sepoys entered Arrah and placed themselves under Kunwar Singh's orders.

Kunwar Singh was long past the prime of his life; he was about seventy at the time. Nor was his health unimpaired. In November 1854, W. Dampier, Commissioner of Patna, hinted that he had only a few years more to live.[24] He had extensive landed estates, the total rental of which amounted to 300,000 rupees at least and he paid an annual revenue of Rs. 148,000. But he was illiterate and had not been trained to look after his estates which were heavily encumbered. Both Dampier and Tayler were convinced that he had been defrauded by his unscrupulous

[20] "250 out of 450 reached the steamer alive. Since then nearly 100 more, from wounds, exposure, etc., have died." McDonell's account quoted by Sieveking, *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*, pp 67-68

[21] Sieveking says that Magistrate Wake was a descendant of Hereward The Wake

[22] Halls, *Two Months in Arrah in 1857*, p 14. Of the non-official Europeans only one offered to remain and serve. Halls, *op. cit.*, p 13

[23] *Idem*, p 38

[24] W. Dampier, Commissioner to W. Grey, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 22 November 1854

agents. Dampier wrote that his own servants took advantage of his inexperience and took bonds for exaggerated sums at usurious rates. "I may say that he has only received thousands where he has bound himself for tens of thousands." Tayler wrote, "Baboo Koonwar Singh is a proprietor of extensive and valuable estates in Zillah Shahabad—a man of noble and ancient family—a generous and popular landlord much beloved by his tenantry and respected throughout the district both by natives and Europeans. But like most of the Rajpoot nobility the Baboo is altogether illiterate and thus has ever been an easy prey to the designing and a puppet in the hands of his interested agents, while a liberal disposition and habits of hereditary extravagance involved him in a profuse expenditure which was only sustained by borrowed funds."[25] His debts totalled 1,300,000 rupees and Kunwar Singh and some of his creditors petitioned the Government to take up the management of his estates and gradually liquidate his debts. Both Dampier and his successor Tayler were agreeable to this proposal, but it would have been really strange if all the parasites, so long fattening on his blood, had agreed to relinquish their hold upon him; and Tayler suspected that the unreasonable creditors were indirectly encouraged by Cunliffe, Magistrate of Shahabad.[26] The Board of Revenue suggested that Kunwar Singh should raise a loan of Rs. 10,00,000 and negotiations were opened with Narayan Rao and Madhava Rao, sons of Vinayak Rao, then residents of Kirwi, but the terms were found unsuitable and the negotiations broke down. Anxious to save Kunwar Singh, Tayler suggested that the most urgent demands should be met by raising small loans and Syed Azimuddin Husein Khan, Deputy Collector of Shahabad, should be appointed to look after the estate. He added that "the Board will perceive from the statement annexed to the report that nearly six lacs of rupees have already been discharged while fresh loans of 2,56,500 only have been taken." But Tayler's earnest solicitations could not save the poor nobleman from ruin. The Board turned down his proposal and in 1857 Kunwar Singh found himself on the brink of bankruptcy.[27] He was deeply attached to his ancestral acres, as Tayler testified,—"The real fact is that Koer Singh is a high spirited old chieftain of the old school who in former years, like a Cameron or a Macdonald, was somewhat too ready to resist the

[25] Tayler to the Secretary, Board of Revenue, 19 December 1856
[26] Tayler to the Secretary, Board of Revenue, 19 December 1856
[27] It is to be noted that Kunwar Singh, in spite of his heavy debt, had subscribed to Government loans, for his name occurs with those of Nana and other rebel leaders among the subscribers whose funds were confiscated

aggression to which his difficulties rendered him liable, and of which his passionate attachment to his ancestral acres made him tenderly sensitive". Probably the impending loss of his paternal estates impelled him to make one desperate effort to save it. Against Englishmen, as such, he bore no hatred; on the contrary, his dignified and courteous manners and love of sports had won him many friends among Englishmen and even his worst enemy could not accuse him of shedding innocent blood.[28]

Colonel Malleson says that he had been in secret league with the sepoys and his men had supplied the boats that brought the mutineers across the Son. Wake, the Magistrate of Shahabad, was definite that Kunwar Singh's rebellion was premeditated. "I know", he wrote, "there is an idea prevalent that Koer Singh's treason was not premeditated, but I am certain that for three months at least he was only bidding for his time."[29] Tayler was equally certain that he entertained no such design. On the 14th June 1857 he wrote to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, "Many people have sent me letters imputing disloyalty and disaffection to several of the Zemindars, especially Baboo Kooer Singh. My personal friendship for him and the attachment he has always shown me enabled me confidently to contradict the report. The same imputations have been cast on the Rajah of Doomraon and Hatwa. I disbelieve them entirely."[30] He might have added to the list other Rajas and nobles who were unjustly suspected of treason.

One of Kunwar Singh's intimate friends and companions deposed that he joined the sepoys under a threat of violence. Nishan Singh was arrested after Kunwar Singh's death. Therefore there was no need on his part to exculpate his leader by false testimony, though he was obviously anxious to save his own life, and the explanation he gives of his association with the rebel army is palpably unreliable. At his trial he stated, "I stayed at Arrah during the months of Jeth, Ashadh and Savan of the last year. Meanwhile the rebellious sepoys of Dinapore reached Arrah and looted the town. And they threatened the servants of Kunwar Singh to bring him there or they would loot Jugdishpore. This threat was not made in my presence and I state it according to what I have heard. Accordingly, Kunwar Singh came from Jagdishpore to Arrah on the very day the sepoys had arrived at

[28] "He had been a great sportsman, and was much liked by the Europeans generally." Halls, *op. cit.*, p 85

[29] H. C. Wake, Magistrate of Arrah to the Commissioner of Patna, 12 January 1858

[30] W. Tayler, Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 14 June 1857

Arrah i.e. 18th Savan."[31] The question arises, how could Kunwar Singh join the sepoys on so short a notice with so many of his retainers? Every zamindar was in those restless days, more or less, prepared for any emergency. Kunwar Singh had reasonable grounds for apprehending arrest. Wake had accused him of treasonable designs and he did not keep his suspicion to himself. Samuells attributed Kunwar Singh's rebellion to his financial difficulties but adds, "The Magistrate strongly suspected him and was at no pains to conceal his suspicions. . . . A Deputy Collector was sent to persuade him to come, but his guilty conscience took alarm, he sent a message round his villages to announce that the Authorities intended to hang him and called upon his people to preserve him from dying by the hands of a Dome."[32] Forrest says that when Tayler sent an agent "to bid him to repair to Patna" he pleaded age and ill health. There is no reason to suspect that his illness was feigned, for as early as 19th December 1856 Tayler wrote to the Board of Revenue, "I would mention in conclusion that the Baboo is very old, and now, I regret to say, so ill that it is not probable that he will live long."[33] The alarm was probably not due to a guilty conscience.

We do not know when exactly Kunwar Singh was summoned to Patna but there is reason to believe that it was about the second week of July for on the 19th Wake wrote to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, "I am narrowly watching his (Kunwar Singh's) conduct, and the Commissioner has sent for him to Patna to speak to him on the subject of the reports about him; he is said to be ill, and I dare say will object on that plea, but I have heard that he has stated that he will not go to Patna, and will resist if he is sent for."[34] The Wahabi leaders had met Mr. Tayler on the 20th June at his invitation and had been placed under arrest. The indiscriminate hanging of suspected rioters took place early in July. It is unlikely that Kunwar Singh was unaware of what was going on at Patna and it was not unnatural that he should have felt ill at ease when the summons from the Commissioner came, and should have feared that the Magistrate's effort to prejudice the Commissioner against him had, at last, succeeded. The Deputy Magistrate had been asked "to scrutinise

[31] Kali Kinkar Datta, Some Newly Discovered Records Relating to the Bihar Phase of the Indian Movement of 1857-59, *Patna University Journal*, Vol. VIII, 1954.

[32] Samuells to A. R. Young, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 1515, 25 September 1858, p 4

[33] Tayler's letter to the Secretary, Board of Revenue, 19 December 1856

[34] Enclosure 63 in No. 2 (Letter to Court, 1 September 1857) Appendix B to Further Parliamentary Papers, (No. 5), 1857, p 28

everything connected with and about Koer Singh and to submit a confidential report regarding it to the Commissioner". All that he could find was that Kunwar Singh's people would follow their feudal chieftain if he raised the standard of rebellion, "but beyond this nothing was ascertained".[35] Wake's open accusations and Tayler's invitation had put the old laird on his guard. He was apprehending violence and his loyal tenants made themselves ready to defend their chief. It was at this stage that the sepoys came to Arrah and, if what Nishan Singh heard was correct, demanded his co-operation. He was their natural leader, for many of them were of Rajput origin. Though he had no military training, "he had the conviction that if he had been bred a soldier he would have made an excellent commander".

Among the principal lieutenants of Kunwar Singh were his brother Amar Singh,[36] his nephew Ritbhanjan Singh, his Tahsildar Harkishan Singh and his friend Nishan Singh, then a man of sixty. Mention is also made of Delwar Khan and Sarnam Singh. The Rajputs of Shahabad were out to prove that Rajput valour was not a thing of the past.

The sepoys had plundered the treasury and let loose the convicts from the prison. Then began the siege. Kunwar Singh had two old guns but obviously no proper ammunition, and hammered iron balls and brass door handles were called into service instead. The Sikhs were the soul of the defence. Dr. Halls, one of the besieged says, "Had the Sikhs who were with us been treacherous, they might have eaten us up for a breakfast."[37] And there was no lack of temptation. Appeal was made first to their racial and religious sentiments and next to their greed. Each man was offered five hundred rupees as a price for desertion. Hukum Singh, their Jamadar, was a tower of strength to the besieged. When the water-supply failed the Sikhs dug a well eighteen feet deep. When there was shortage of animal food Hukum Singh and his men stealthily left the protection of their miniature fortress and brought in some sheep. When the sepoys began to mine, it was Hukum Singh, again, who discovered and countermined it. He was everywhere. "*Koochpurwa nahin* [*Kuch Parwa Nahi*] . . . was his laughing sarcastic ejaculation after every unsuccessful cannon shot." He even threw brickbats at the besiegers from the top of the roof.[38] On the 31st July the besieged were told of the rout of the relieving force but the Sikhs stood stoutly

[35] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 433
[36] He had two other brothers, Dayal Singh and Rajpati Singh
[37] Halls, *op. cit.*, p 39
[38] *Idem*, p 67

by them until Major Vincent Eyre came to their rescue and the siege was raised.

Vincent Eyre was on his way to Allahabad. He had distinguished himself in the Afghan War and was later posted with the Gwalior contingent. He was in Burma when the Mutiny broke out. He passed by Danapur on the day of the outbreak and noticed the flames arising above the cantonment. On the 28th he reached Buxar and there learnt of the approach of a body of rebels. He next proceeded to Ghazipur, then a rich emporium for opium trade. From Ghazipur he returned to Buxar with twenty-five Highlanders and joined Captain L'Estrange and his party of 160 fusiliers. From Buxar he marched to Arrah. On his way he heard of Dunbar's defeat. Like Dunbar, Eyre was also waylaid by the sepoys but their muskets were no match for Eyre's artillery and Enfield rifles. Kunwar Singh again contested his advance at Bibiganj and the fusiliers were steadily losing ground before his resolute attack. A bayonet charge, however, broke his right flank and the sepoys gave way. The action was fought on the night of the 2nd August and the next morning Arrah was relieved. "During the time the Europeans at Arrah were shut up, Koowar Singh had several Christian Eurasian families in his power, all the members of which were found uninjured at his departure, indeed we are not aware that he ever participated in the atrocities which were generally committed by the rebels."[39]

From Arrah Kunwar Singh retired to his ancestral castle at Jagdishpur where he was pursued by Eyre. A stiff resistance was offered but muskets had no chance against howitzers. No one was spared, the wounded sepoys were hanged in revenge, it is said, for similar treatment at Arrah. The new temple, built by Kunwar Singh at enormous expense, was demolished, "because it is known that the Brahmins have instigated him to rebellion."[40] The Jagdishpur palace and other buildings were also reduced to ruins.

[39] Halls, *op. cit.*, p 86. Wake also pays him a similar compliment. "There is one redeeming feature in the disturbances in this district. Except in the case of soldiers retreating from Arrah there has been no cold blooded assassination of Europeans." "Europeans, Eurasians, Hindus and Bengalees were allowed by the villagers to leave the district without interference on the very day of the mutiny after the Sepoys had crossed the Soane." "Mr. Samuells, a clerk in the Collectorate and a Eurasian in Arrah were imprisoned by Koer Singh. But they were uninjured and released on the flight of the rebels." H. C. Wake, Magistrate of Arrah to the Commissioner of Patna, 12 June, 1858

[40] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 456. Many were hanged at Arrah also after a drum head Court Martial. The condemned men showed no fear. "The request made in most instances simply was that they might be allowed to adjust the rope themselves; 'and all met death with dignity.'" Sieveking, *op. cit.*, p 106

To the credit of the Commander-in-Chief be it noted that he did not fail to record his disapproval "of the destruction of the Hindu temple at Jugdeespore by Major Eyre under a mistaken view of the duties of a Commander at the present crisis", while commending his judgment and the gallantry and perseverance of the officers and men under him to the Governor-General.

Kunwar Singh's army was defeated, his stronghold destroyed; but the old lion was not tamed. Dislodged from the jungles of Jagdishpur, he turned his steps to the hills of Rohtas. There his presence threatened the Grand Trunk Road, the land artery of the British communications. But he had wider views and bolder plans. He rightly perceived that the war would be won or lost not in the lower provinces but in Northern India. On the 20th August a letter from the Deputy Superintendent, Electric Telegraph, informed Beadon that Kunwar Singh "is at Akbarpur near Rohtas, Amar Singh in the hills flanking the Grand Trunk Road to Sasaram and his people threaten Government employees and peaceably disposed persons." But early in September Shah Kabiruddin heard that Kunwar Singh was in Rewa. He had marched through the jungles of Mirzapur district and penetrated into the Hindu state of Rewa, the Raja of which was believed to be related to him. His final destination was believed to be Delhi. But the Raja of Rewa was persuaded by the Political Agent, Willoughby Osborne, to offer a resolute front and Kunwar Singh had to leave his territories. If Shah Kabiruddin was correctly informed, the old chieftain was at this juncture deserted by the majority of the sepoys and had with him only five hundred followers. Throughout the month of September he was reported to be hovering in the Mirzapur-Rewa region, threatening both.[41] In October he was at Banda.[42]

By this time Delhi had fallen and Kunwar Singh had to adjust his plan to the changed circumstances. On the 25th October Sherer wrote to Muir, "Kooer Singh (of Arrah) is reported to be on his way from Banda to join the G.C. [Gwalior Contingent] at Calpee, but my Banda news is not good."[43] By the end of the month Sherer got more definite information, "Kooer Singh with 12 or

[41] Chester's letter, 10 September 1857. Tucker to Colvin, 1 September. Muir and Coldstream, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 539

[42] According to a letter of the officers of the 8th N.I. to the King of Delhi, dated Banda, 11 September 1857, Kunwar Singh went to Banda as early as August. They write, "On hearing of our success Baboo Koonwar Singh of Jagdispore applied to us for assistance, in consequence of which the native officers of the 40th Regiment, N.I. with 800 men entered his service." The whole of the 7th and 8th and 200 sepoys of the 40th Regiment together with 60 sepoys of the Provincial Battalion, marched from Arrah and arrived at Banda on the 28th August, 1857

[43] Muir and Coldstream, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 320

1500 of the Banda rebels and 3 or 400 of his own men has arrived at Calpee."[44] On the 2nd November Muir writes, "Koer Sing, with 'a wretched undisciplined rabble', had reached Calpee with the view of crossing over to Oudh. The Gwalior contingent is moving heavily and slowly towards Calpee."[45] Major Ellis heard in November that the Jagdishpur chief had suffered a defeat at the hands of some Banda zamindar on Panna border and had proceeded towards Gwalior. According to an earlier report, he had been invited by Nana to join him in an attack on Kanpur. Nishan Singh says that the Gwalior contingent were in correspondence with Kunwar Singh and had asked him not to cross the Jumna before their arrival. It may be safely assumed that from Sasaram-Rohtas region Kunwar Singh marched towards Mirzapur and threatened Rewa, Mirzapur, and a part of Allahabad from a position of vantage. His followers were gradually dropping off and he was not in a position to fight the Raja of Rewa. He, therefore, moved to Banda where the Nawab had already identified himself with the rebel cause. From Banda he went to Kalpi, at the invitation of Nana or the Gwalior contingent or both, to participate in the projected assault on Kanpur. If Nishan Singh is correct, Kunwar Singh was present at the battle of Kanpur. After the defeat of Tatya he did not accompany the Maratha chiefs to Kalpi but went to the most important seat of war, Lucknow. There he was warmly welcomed by the boy Wali and invested with a robe of honour. He was further granted a *farman* for Azamgarh.

In February 1858 Kunwar Singh was somewhere between Lucknow and Dariabad.[46] March found him more active than ever. The Gurkhas had been clearing the Azamgarh area of the rebels, but when they went to Lucknow to co-operate with Sir Colin Campbell, the district was denuded of its defenders. This did not escape the eagle eye of the old Rajput and he pounced upon Atrauli, a village twenty miles from the town of Azamgarh. Colonel Milman who commanded the station marched against him but he was outmanoeuvred and put to flight. Kunwar Singh next occupied Azamgarh. Colonel Dames, who had hurried from Ghazipur to Milman's rescue, was repulsed when he attacked the city.[47] The fall of Azamgarh and two

[44] Muir and Coldstream, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 322
[45] *Idem*, Vol. II, p 212
[46] Brigadier-General Macgregor to the Secretary, Government of India, Foreign Department, 10 February 1858 ; Foreign Political Consultations, No. 1386, 30 Dec., 1859
[47] The reward for Kunwar Singh's apprehension was after this raised from 10,000 rupees to 25,000

successive defeats of British troops were bad news indeed, though the capture of Lucknow had raised British prestige once again. Lord Mark Kerr was immediately sent from Allahabad to relieve Azamgarh. Kerr recaptured the city and Sir Edward Lugard also reached the troubled area soon afterwards. Kunwar Singh had no chance against so formidable a combination and decided to return to Bihar, his home province. He fought a series of brilliant rear-guard actions. One of such actions is thus described by Malleson: "He kept Douglas at bay till he had secured two lines of retreat for his main columns, which he had divided. He then fell back leisurely, and though many of his men were cut up, they maintained to the end of the day their determined attitude. As soon as Douglas's pursuit—continued for four or five miles—relaxed, the two divided columns reunited, and took up a position for the night."[48] It was in this manner that he reached Shiupur Ghat where he had collected a number of boats. He caused a report to be spread that, being short of boats, he proposed to cross the river on elephants. All his men, except a small party of two hundred, reached the other bank before General Douglas reached the place.

Kunwar Singh was now on his way to his ruined home at Jagdishpur. The old lion went to his lair only to die. While crossing the Ganges, he had one of his hands shattered by a cannon-ball, and the story runs that with one stroke of his sharp sword the old man severed the injured limb and threw it into the sacred stream as his last offering.[49] But his last journey was not to be unopposed. He had hardly two thousand men, war-worn, ill-armed, and without guns. Captain Le Grand of Arrah wanted to repeat Eyre's exploits in the self-same jungle but the dying lion could still strike, and strike with effect. Of Le Grand's troops only the Sikhs maintained some order. But the Europeans were completely demoralised and lost heavily. Of the 150 men of the 35th Regiment full one hundred perished. Le Grand and two other officers died. The gunners were all killed at their guns.[50] Le Grand's troops were defeated on the 23rd April. On the 24th Kunwar Singh expired,[51] a victor at last.

[48] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp 473-74

[49] All sorts of legends have grown around Kunwar Singh's person. This may be one of them. During the First Great War, I was told by an Arrah peasant that Babu Kunwar Singh was still alive and would come back in his own time to fight the English

[50] "Of about 300 Europeans and Sikhs who left Arrah on the evening of the 22nd inst only about half the number have returned alive." Broadhurst, officiating Magistrate of Arrah to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna, 24 April, 1858

[51] This is the date given by Colonel Corfield in his letter to Colonel Birch, 2 May, 1858

On Kunwar Singh's death the command of his troops devolved on his brother Amar Singh. He was no military genius but he had inherited the courage and resolution of his Rajput ancestors. Secure in the fidelity of his tenants, which rose above the temptation of high rewards, Amar Singh ran a parallel government in the district of Shahabad. He appointed his own magistrates and judges and even had his prison. Just as the British Government had set a price on his head, he also set a price on the heads of the high British officials. He sold estates for non-payment of revenue and administered justice. Samuells observes that "the movement in Shahabad had all the dignity of a national revolt and was supported by many of the minor zemindars and more or less openly by all the Rajput population of the District." "The general aspect of the Rajpoot villages on Koër Singh's estate (after he left) was that of sullen acquiescence." "They did not oppose the re-establishment of Police stations, Europeans travelled alone safely through the district but they not only did not give any assistance to the Police but would drive them out of the village if they came to arrest rebels. They believed that their relatives were fighting for their caste at the call of their hereditary leaders."[52]

Amar Singh was pitted against heavy odds. Three British armies now converged on Arrah. Douglas crossed the Son from Danapur. Sir Edward Lugard came from Azamgarh and Colonel Corfield marched from Sasaram region. Corfield reported on the 2nd May that "Amar Singh is alarmed and reluctant to fight but the Sepoys insist on it. The Sepoys under him are from 2000 to 2500 with 300 or 400 good cavalry. There is a host of Budmashes and Rajput Zemindars at Jagdishpur."[53] In an open fight the Rajput chief had no chance against his British enemies. He, therefore, refused to be lured from his jungle refuge and adopted the guerilla tactics of harassing the enemies' movement and cutting off their supplies. Jagdishpur was lost but Amar Singh took shelter in Latawarpur. Lugard tried to cut broad roads through the jungle and get at the rebels but they divided themselves into ever diminishing bands and eluded his grasp. Lugard could not stand the strain of this jungle warfare and relinquished his command on the ground of failing health. Meanwhile, the rebels raided the countryside and punished the loyal zamindars. In June Amar Singh appeared near Ghurmar on the right bank of the Ganges. It was reported that he wanted to cross into Oudh. The Magistrate of Ghazipur feared that his station was

[52] Samuells to Young, No. 1515, 25 September, 1858
[53] Colonel Corfield to Colonel Birch, 2 May, 1858

the objective of the Rajput chief. Gubbins feared that Amar Singh might attack Benares.[54] In July 1858 they raided Arrah and burnt Mr. Victor's (Assistant in the Railway Department) bungalow in the outskirts of the town. The rebels, when pursued, retired to Amar Singh's village.[55] The next month they again threatened Arrah. Colonel Walter, commanding troops at Arrah, left on the report that the rebels were at a place, twelve miles west of the town. They came within the sight of the rebels who disappeared under cover of night. But the station was saved. Walter received a letter from the Assistant Magistrate, the next morning, that the rebels were near the town. Before the troops could return the rebels had looted a few shops, released prisoners, and plundered twenty to twenty-five houses. On their way back they burnt the house of a loyal zamindar, Chaudhuri Partap Narayan Singh at Jumerah. The next day a small body of fifty sowars again threatened Arrah.[56] A party raided Gaya, broke open the jail, and released the prisoners. Douglas in his desperation attempted to encircle the jungle and squeeze out the rebels. Seven columns simultaneously entered the forest but one of them was held by an unexpected inundation and the whole move failed. The British infantry were obviously unable to move as quickly as the rebels in their own home forest. The younger Havelock advised Douglas to use mounted Infantry. The mounted columns were more successful in the pursuit of Amar Singh's men and on the 20th October Havelock came up with them in a swampy village. The rebel army was destroyed but their leader escaped to find a secure shelter in Kaimur hills. In November 1858 Douglas attacked him there and the Western Bihar campaign came to an end. But Amar Singh was still at large. Nishan Singh had been arrested and hanged, Harkishan Singh had been executed, Amar Singh's troops had been annihilated, but nothing could make him own defeat. In October 1859 Colonel Ramsay heard from Jang Bahadur that Amar Singh of Jagdishpur had lately joined the rebel camp in the Terai and was likely to assume command of Bala and Nana Rao's troops.[57]

The landed aristocracy of Bihar consistently stood by the British Government. At one time the loyalty of the Maharajas

[54] Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 188, 25 June, 1858, and Nos. 148-56, 27 Aug., 1858

[55] Broadhurst to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna, 8 July, 1858

[56] Broadhurst to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna, 5 Aug., 1858

[57] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 160, 4 Nov., 1859. Mahabir Singh, a sepoy who had taken shelter in Nepal, deposed on 8 November, 1859, that "Oomur Singh, nephew of Koer Singh, joined Lakun (or Lakun Singh) with the Bojepoorias two months ago." Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 525-30, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp)

of Darbhanga, Dumraon and Hatwa was suspected but they and their fellow landlords helped the Government with men and money. There were troubles indeed in Gaya and Champaran, in Chotanagpur and Deoghar, but they never assumed the dimensions of those of Shahabad.

CHAPTER SEVEN

# JHANSI

JHANSI was a small Maratha principality in the heart of Bundelkhand. In the days of the Peshwa it was a Subadar's or governor's province. The East India Company's Government raised it to the status of a kingdom. Chhatrasal, the great Bundela king, had bequeathed one-third of his territories to his ally Peshwa Baji Rao I in consideration of his timely aid against Muslim aggression. The Peshwa in his turn divided his share of Bundelkhand into three provinces. The first of these was placed under Govindpant Kher with Sagar as his headquarters. The second consisting of Banda and Kalpi was assigned to the Peshwa's natural son Samsher Bahadur. The governorship of the third, Jhansi, became hereditary in the family of Raghunath Hari Nevalkar. He abdicated in favour of his brother Shivram Bhau with whom the British Government entered into an agreement in 1804.[1] In 1817 a treaty was concluded with Shivram Bhau's successor and grandson Ramchandra Rao, which guaranteed the principality to him, his heirs and successors.[2] In 1835 Ramchandra Rao who had been invested with the title of Maharajadhiraj Fidvi Badshah Jamjah Inglistan, 'Devoted Servant of the Glorious King of England', died without a child and his widow adopted, after his death, Krishna Rao, a son of her sister. As the adoption of a boy of another family was invalid according to local custom, the succession was contested, and the Government of India decided in favour of Raghunath Rao, the deceased ruler's uncle and a son of Shivram Bhau. Raghunath Rao was a man of dissolute character without any administrative ability and his misrule brought the state to the brink of ruin. The British Government intervened and assumed the government of the state. Raghunath Rao died without any legitimate issue, and the succession was disputed by his natural sons, Krishna Rao, the so-called adopted son of Ramchandra Rao, and Gangadhar Rao,

[1] Aitchison, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp 164-66

[2] *Idem*, Vol. III, pp 168-71. By Article 2 of this Treaty, the British Government consents "to acknowledge and hereby constitutes Row Ramchund, his heirs and successors, hereditary rulers of the territory enjoyed by the late Row Sheo Bhow . . . . excepting the Pergunnah of Mote."

the surviving brother of the last Maharaja. The British Government gave their verdict in favour of Gangadhar Rao but he was not invested with ruling powers until 1843.[3] He built up an excellent library of Sanskrit manuscripts and improved the town of Jhansi.

In November 1853 Gangadhar Rao died without an heir of his body, but the day before his death he adopted a boy from another branch of the Nevalkar family in the presence of the principal nobles of his court and Major Ellis, Political Agent of Jhansi and Captain Martin, officer commanding Jhansi contingents. He handed over to Major Ellis, in person, a *kharita* in which he commended his widow and the child to the care of the Government. "In consideration of my loyalty", he prayed, "the Government should treat this child with kindness. The administration of the state should be vested in my widow during her lifetime as the sovereign of this principality and mother of the child adopted."[4] In a memorandum subsequently submitted to the Governor-General the widowed Rani cited the precedents of the Bundela states of Datia and Orchha where an adopted son's claims had been recognised. Major Ellis also supported her plea, but Major Malcolm, the Governor-General's Agent, was of a different opinion. Lord Dalhousie was away from Calcutta at the time of Gangadhar Rao's death and no immediate decision about the future of the state was possible. Lord Dalhousie, however, argued that the case of Jhansi was not on a par with those of Datia and Orchha, for unlike these, Jhansi had never been an independent sovereign state. It was originally under the Peshwa's government and later subordinate to the British. He also held that the British administration would be to the advantage of the people of the state. In March 1854 Jhansi was therefore incorporated in the British Indian dominion and the Rani was promised a liberal pension. A life pension of sixty thousand rupees was settled on her and she was permitted to live in the city palace.[5] She was exempted from the jurisdiction of the British courts and during her lifetime her personal retinue was also to enjoy the same privilege. The adoption was not negatived. Damodar Rao was recognised as the heir to the family treasures and the personal property of his adoptive father. It was found that there was a

[3] Aitchison, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p 172

[4] Parasnis, *Jhansi Sansthanchya Maharani Lakshmibai Saheb Hyanchen Charita*, pp 43-44

[5] Forrest comments that "Six thousand pounds per annum can be hardly regarded as a mere pittance. Eight thousand was the sum granted to the Peshwa." Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 4. The Peshwa's pension was eighty thousand, not eight thousand, pounds.

cash balance of six lakhs of rupees in the treasury at the time of Gangadhar Rao's death. This sum was held in trust by the Government of India for the minor prince. But, as usual, the Government gave unnecessary offence to popular feelings by their indifference to Indian sentiments. They resumed the villages assigned to the temple of Mahalakshmi, the family deity of the Nevalkars. The Rani had at first refused to accept the pension, but when she ultimately reconciled herself to her lot she found that the pension was subject to many deductions including that on account of Gangadhar Rao's debts, which she thought was the liability of the state. What must have offended her in particular and the Hindus in general, was the introduction of cow-killing which had so long been interdicted in the town of Jhansi under Brahman rule.[6] When the Rani applied for a sum of one lakh of rupees out of the six, held in the interest of Damodar Rao, to meet the expenses of his sacred thread ceremony, the Government declined to pay unless she could find four sureties for the repayment of the sum, in case the boy should demand it on his coming of age. The Rani, however, still hoped that justice would be done to her and the child if their case was properly represented to the Court of Directors and, like other dispossessed princes, she sent her agents to London. The mission cost the Rani sixty thousand rupees but the Directors found no reason to revise the decision of the Governor-General-in-Council.

The Rani, says Major Malcolm, bears "a high character," and is "much respected by every one at Jhansi."[7] It was also admitted that the Rani had not in the least "overestimated the fidelity and loyalty all along evinced by the State of Jhansi towards our Government, under circumstances of considerable temptation before our power had arrived at the commanding position which it has since attained." The justice of the annexation of Jhansi, therefore, appeared specially doubtful to the people concerned.

Rani Lakshmi Bai was a lady of humble parentage. Her father Moropant Tambe belonged to the personal retinue of Chimnaji Appa and lived at Benares with him. Here, it is said, a daughter was born to him and his first wife Bhagirathi Bai. The parents named her Manikarnika but she came to fame under the name that her husband's people gave at the time of her wedding. About her childhood we know next to nothing. We do not know even the date of her birth. Parasnis says, on what evidence we do not know, that she was born on the 19th

[6] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 182-83
[7] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I,, p 91

November, 1835.[8] At the same time he informs us that Moropant Tambe, like other dependents of Chimnaji, had attached himself to the Court of Baji Rao II at Bithur. Moropant, therefore, could not be at Benares in 1835, for Chimnaji died in 1832. On the other hand, Manikarnika, her name in her childhood, lends some support to the story of her birth at Benares. The story that makes her a playmate of Nana Saheb and Tatya Tope must be apocryphal, for Nana Saheb and Tatya could not possibly be of her age. After the Mutiny a mass of legends grew about her person and a few of the earlier stories probably came into circulation after her marriage with the ruler of Jhansi. She was considerably younger than her husband, having been married to him after the death of his first Rani. John Lang, the eminent lawyer whom she consulted after the annexation of her state, has left the following pen picture of the Rani—"She was a woman of about the middle size—rather stout but not too stout. Her face must have been very handsome when she was younger, and even now it had many charms—though, according to my idea of beauty, it was too round. The expression also was very good, and very intelligent. The eyes were particularly fine, and the nose very delicately shaped. She was not very fair, though she was far from black. She had no ornaments, strange to say, upon her person, except a pair of gold ear-rings. Her dress was a plain white muslin, so fine in texture, and drawn about her in such a way, and so tightly, that the outline of her figure was plainly discernible—and a remarkably fine figure she had. What spoilt her was her voice."[9] When Major Ellis communicated to her the Government's decision to annex Jhansi she is reported to have declared in a clear and ringing voice *Mera Jhansi nehi denge,* I shall not surrender my Jhansi. Whether this was a protest against an unexpected wrong, or the momentary ebullition of an impulsive heart, no resistance was offered to the annexation. Lakshmi Bai quietly left her husband's residence in the fort, removed to the palace assigned to her in the city, and resigned herself to the routine of a Hindu widow's life. Her troops were dismissed and the 12th N.I. of the Bengal Army garrisoned the fort. Everything went on peacefully and the new rulers saw no cause of anxiety. Captain Alexander Skene was appointed the political officer in charge of the state and Captain Dunlop commanded the garrison.

[8] Parasnis, *op. cit.*, p 27. He further says that when Moropant went to Bithur, his daughter was about four years of age. If she was four in 1832 she must have been in the neighbourhood of thirty in 1857

[9] Lang, *op. cit.*, pp 93-94

The greased cartridge must have been a common subject of discussion at Jhansi as elsewhere. In May, the news of Meerut and Delhi arrived but Captain Dunlop and his colleagues perceived no sign of disquiet among their men. In June, according to the deposition of Aman Khan, a sepoy condemned to death whom Sir Robert Hamilton considered trustworthy, "a servant or a relation of some one in my Regiment (12th N.I.) brought a *chit* from Delhi stating that the whole army of the Bengal Presidency had mutinied and as the Regiment stationed at Jhansee had not done so—men composing it were outcasts or had lost their faith".[10] The taunt went home and on 5th June trouble broke out. Luckily, we have authentic information about the first day's occurrence. On the 6th June Captain Gordon, Deputy Superintendent of Jhansi, wrote to Majors Erskine and Western, "At Skene's request I send you a few lines to tell you that the Wing of the 12th or rather a portion of it have broken out into open mutiny in Cantonment, seized the Star Fort which contains the Magazine and all the Treasure amounting to about 4½ lakhs of Rupees. They have been joined by the Artillery and the only two Guns we have here. The following was the way in which they did it. At about 3 P.M. yesterday a lot of the sepoys having raised a clamour that the Magazine was being attacked by Dacoits, made a rush for the place. A number of men not implicated directly got in with the mutineers, and at once loaded the Guns and put them in position. The good or rather the lukewarm men got out again in the evening, but the Magazine is still held by about 50 men and the two Guns. We are in this fix, that none of the men of the Wing, nor I believe the Cavalry can be trusted. I would dislodge the mutineers in the Fort with Thakoors, but the first shot would throw all the rest into open mutiny." We are also told that the Bundela Thakurs had been profuse in their offer of service and a good number had been entertained. "Expresses have been sent to Gwalior and Cawnpore to ask for assistance". "I have applied to Sumthur and Orcha for assistance. None can be expected from Duttiah where the Rajah has just died and a state of anarchy prevails."[11] Skene and Gordon had at once thrown themselves into the fort with the European and Christian families of the station, and they knew that they could not expect help from any quarter and would have to depend on their own resources. It is significant that Gordon makes no reference to provisions. From the evidence of the servants it appears that on the first day they had free access to their masters and

[10] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 283, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)
[11] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 281, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)

mistresses in the fort and their meals were served from outside.

Captain Dunlop and other military officers still hoped to keep the rest of the troops steady and they slept in their lines. On the 6th, however, Bakshish Ali, the Jail Darogah joined the Mutiny with his guards and the sepoys not only shot Captain Dunlop, Lieutenant Turnbull, and Ensign Taylor but also two Havildars and a sepoy who had tried to protect the last named officer. Lieutenant Campbell of the 14th Cavalry was wounded but according to one account he managed to keep his seat and reached the fort. The fort was henceforth blockaded and it was only a question of time how soon the fugitives would yield to hunger. Three persons left the fort in disguise, only to be caught and put to death. On the 8th, Captain Gordon was shot through the head or committed suicide in despair.[12] Lieutenant Powys was killed by a native servant inside the fort. In the afternoon Skene decided to come out either on the assurance of a safe conduct or without any terms, and the whole party, men, women, and children were put to the sword. The dead bodies remained exposed in the Jokhan Bagh, where the massacre took place, for three days; then they were buried in a common pit. Bakshish Ali, the Jail Darogah, took the leading part in the indiscriminate slaughter. Only one woman with two children escaped from the fort in safety. The dusky complexion of Mrs. Mutlow attracted no notice when she left in the native garb.

Sir Robert Hamilton, who conducted an enquiry into these sad incidents a year later, observes, "It nowhere is stated that before death any sort of indignity was offered to any single one of the unfortunate sufferers and not only is there no evidence, but on the contrary it may be safely asserted that not one of the bodies was afterwards mutilated or ill-treated, unquestionably they were left on the spot where they fell exposed, their clothes were doubtless stolen and carried away and the corpses of some (not of all) stript, but nothing more. The exaggerated statements that have appeared in the public prints may confidently be contradicted, what actually occurred was most painful to the relations and friends of the deceased and to humanity without their feelings being harrowed by monstrous details as contrary to fact as their invention is repugnant to every Christian feeling."[13]

[12] See the evidence of Bhagvan Brahman, Foreign Political Consultations, No. 284, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.). This is corroborated by Shankar Shah, Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 345, 25 Sept., 1857. Enclosure to a letter of A.G.G. Central India dated 7 August 1857

[13] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 280, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)

The Mutiny and the massacre had both been attributed to the machinations of the Rani of Jhansi. She had been accused of employing 'the dark engines of fanaticism', but she pleaded that she was a helpless victim of untoward circumstances. She had a genuine grievance against the British Government and her hands were perceived by suspicious minds behind the killings at Jokhan Bagh. But the testimony produced to bolster up this charge was based mostly on hearsay and the witnesses contradicted themselves even in matters of personal knowledge. Sahabuddin, Khansama of Major Skene; Shaikh Hingan, Hookam-bardar of Captain Gordon; Madar Baksh, Jamadar of orderlies, all claimed personal knowledge about the flight of their masters, Skene and Gordon, to the fort on the evening of the 5th June. Sahabuddin deposed that "Major Skene came to his house from his cutchery; and placing his wife and children and Miss Brown in the carriage of Captain Burgess, who had come to see him, sent them all to the fort with Captain Burgess. In the meantime he ordered his carriage, which being brought to him, he drove to the Jokun Bagh, where Mr. Gordon met him."[14] Sheikh Hingan says that Captain Gordon was writing in his bungalow when the alarm was given and the firing was heard. "Captain Skene's Empty Buggy was brought to his, Captain Gordon's, house by the Syce." Captain Gordon enquired from him what was the matter and the Syce reported how Dunlop and Taylor had been shot and Skene fired on while working in his own Kachari. "Captain Skene then went home and sent for the Buggy, but as the Buggy was long getting ready, Captain Skene took his wife and children and walked with them to the Fort and sent the Buggy for you (Captain Gordon). Captain Gordon then got into the Buggy and went to the Fort. I went with him. When we reached the Saier gate of town we met Captain Skene and his family who all got into the Buggy."[15] Madar Baksh also claimed to have accompanied Gordon. His version is, "At 3 P.M. Messrs. Scott, and two Purcells ran from Zilla Cutcherry to Captain Gordon's Bungalow, and said there was a fight in the lines—Captain Gordon looked up, and sent for his gun, and went to Captain Skene's. I went with him. He went to the fort, where he met Captain Skene at the City gate, and they both went into fort together."[16] Madar Baksh further says that Captain Gordon sent him to Sundar Lal, the Datia Vakil, for two guns, and Nathu Singh to Orchha Vakil for help. Captain Gordon in his letter to Erskine informed him

[14] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion,* p 520
[15] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 286, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)
[16] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 287, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)

that he had sent for help from Sampthar and Orchha but he did not expect any help from Datia. Sahabuddin's story has all the flavour of fiction. He claims that he fell into the hands of the rebels twice, twice was he condemned to death, but every time some lucky accident enabled him to effect his escape and return to his master. Forrest has quoted copiously from the statement of a Bengalee attached to the Customs Collector's office. But he says that on the 8th June "a general search was made for Bengalees, and myself and two others of the Customs establishment fell into the hands of the ruffians and were hauled up in presence of the ressaldar who ordered us to be kept in confinement until the fort should surrender."[17] He could not possibly have any personal knowledge of what took place during his confinement and even prior to that he could be hardly expected to know what happened in the Rani's palace. He simply stated what he had heard, and if he heard that the Rani had said that she would *not* have anything to do with the British swine, he also heard that "the Ranee was threatened with instant assassination, provided she refused to side with the rebels. She accordingly consented and supplied them with a reinforcement of 1,000 men and two heavy guns which she had ordered to be dug out of the earth." The evidence of this nameless gentleman, however, has been contradicted at least on one count by an eye-witness. The Bengalee states, "Campbell was first attacked, but though wounded, he kept his seat on his fleet charger which enabled him by overleaping a gate to escape into the fort without further injury."[18] Francis Tegue Reilly definitely states that five or six shots were fired at Lieutenant Campbell and his mare was wounded. A man then rode out of the ranks and fired at him. "At this time Lieutenant Campbell was crying out to me, and waving his hand, telling me to get away. I saw Lieutenant Campbell fall, and I then galloped off."[19] All that the man in the Customs Collector's office heard were not facts. Of the witnesses cited by Sir Robert Hamilton, Sahabuddin accuses the Rani's father Moro Balavant Tambe, alias Mama Saheb, of active association with the sepoys. The Rani's men had no reason to sympathise with the English in their difficulties and it may be assumed that Mama Saheb had definitely identified himself with their enemies. He further says that the Rani's men and guns were engaged against the fort and this was not denied. In the narrative of the Mutiny that the Rani sent to Erskine she says that her men

[17] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, p 518
[18] *Idem*, p 517
[19] *Idem*, pp 524-25

joined the mutineers on the 8th. The worst charge brought against her by this witness is that she went to the Risaladar in the Paltan with Bakshish Ali after the massacre. This is not corroborated by anybody and though Sahabuddin was at the Paltan he was, on his own admission, under confinement there. Bhagvan Din, Brahman had nothing to say against the Rani. He says that Lal Bahadur, Subadar, and Bakshish Ali, Jail Darogah, "pledging their words brought the officers out of the Fort." Sheikh Hingan said that Gordon wrote to the Rani when he heard that her men were among the assailants and the Rani sent the following answer—"What can I do, sepoys have surrounded me, and say I have concealed the gentlemen, and that I must get the fort evacuated, and assist them, to save myself I have sent guns and my followers, if you wish to save yourself, abandon the fort, no one will injure you." Sheikh Hingan claims to have read this letter. He adds that Gordon sent a second message which brought no reply. According to him the safeguard was promised by the mutineers, Hindus and Muslims, and the besieged came out of their shelter. Madar Baksh on the other hand claimed to have taken Gordon's letter to the Rani and he was also the bearer of the reply but he says that he did not know what the reply was. Mrs. Mutlow spent many days among the tombs of Jokhan Bagh and the city of Jhansi without detection. She asserts that "Mr. A. Skene and Mr. Gordon went to the Ranee, and got about fifty or sixty guns, and some powder and shots and balls, and she sent about fifty of her own sepoys in the fort to assist us".[20] This statement remains uncorroborated by any other witness. The Rani might have sent her men to help the Europeans in the fort, but it is extremely unlikely that Skene and Gordon should have personally called on her. Gordon does not refer to any such visit in his letter to Erskine and Western which was obviously written before the siege began. After the siege the only attempt at personal interview was made by Andrews, Purcell, and Scott and they were caught by the rebels and put to death. Mrs. Mutlow goes on to say that when the Rani heard of the general rising on the 6th, "she got all her sepoys down from the fort. The Ranee and her sepoys joined with the regiment, so we changed our clothes that night and wanted to get out of the fort, but was not able; the sowars were around the fort, so we kept there Friday night, Saturday and Sunday. Monday, about eight o'clock in the morning, Mr. Gordon was shot, that regi-

[20] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, p 529. Godse gives a fantastic story which we do not find anywhere else. He says that Gordon and Skene saw the Rani, the day before the outbreak and requested her to take charge of Jhansi

ment Subadar wrote to Captain Skene to come out of the fort, saying, 'we will not kill any of you—we will send you all to your own country'; so Captain Skene wrote to the Ranee to tell the sepoys to take their oath and to sign her name on the letter, all the Hindus took their oath:—'if any of us touch your people, just as we eat beef'; and those Mussulmans took their oath, 'if any of us touch you just as we eat pork'—and the Ranee signed her name on the top of the letter, and it was given to Captain Skene." According to Mrs. Mutlow, the note was read and everybody agreed to leave. Some of the besieged were in Indian dress and as soon as they came out the sepoys placed their guard around the party. Mrs. Mutlow and her ayah were not noticed and they found themselves outside the group. The ayah refused to take her mistress to her own house but took her to Jokhan Bagh where she lived for about a month. The story presents several difficulties. It was not customary in those days for Indian grandees to sign their letters and write in the first person. The Rani was no exception; in all her official correspondence she used her seal. A woman of Mrs. Mutlow's position was not likely to be aware of this practice but it would have been strange on the part of Skene to ask for the Rani's signature. He was doubtless more familiar with the seal than with the signature. Mrs. Mutlow's husband and brother-in-law had gone into the fort at the first alarm and Mr. Skene later arranged to bring her in. Was it likely that she kept away from her own people when the fort was evacuated and stood aside with her ayah? Jokhan Bagh that evening was the most dangerous place in Jhansi. It was there that the Europeans were led and murdered; therefore, it was a place to be avoided by all peace-loving people. Why did Mrs. Mutlow and her ayah consider it a safe place for a lonely woman in disguise with two children? Mrs. Mutlow alleges that the Rani "was looking out for me and Doulut Ram" (her native protector). Was it so difficult for the Rani's people to trace a woman with two children in an open place like the Hindu cemetery?[21]

[21] Mrs. Mutlow could not possibly have any knowledge of what happened outside the fort after she had gone there. She mentions Daulat Ram and Ganeshi Lal in her statement. Daulat Ram came from Sagar to Jhansi and was obviously a British spy. He also used to go to Datia. Among the intelligence papers in the National Archives of India there is a letter from Ganeshi Lal, dated Datia, 22nd February, 1858 (Foreign Secret Consultation, No 136, 30 April, 1858) in which both Mrs Mutlow and Daulat Ram are mentioned. Parasnis says that Ganeshi Lal was Dewan of Datia. Pinkney apparently did not find any evidence in support of Mrs. Mutlow's statement that Skene left the fort on the Rani's assurance that the lives of the besieged would be spared. He says, "Captain Skene having made a sign that the garrison wished to treat, the rebels and muti-

Sir Robert Hamilton did not expressly accuse the Rani of complicity with the rebels. He refers to a sepoy of the 12th N.I., already mentioned before, who was under sentence of death when he made his statement. "His assertions," says Hamilton, "are corroborated by and corroborate those made by others, and as far as they go, I should say, entitled to credit." Aman Khan, the sepoy in question, was definite that "the insurgents previous to the mutiny did not consult the Ranee". He also states, "The mutineer sepoys placing their guns in position threatened all the rest with immediate death if they refused to join them. The Sowars and Sepoys were thus prevailed upon. Then all went to the palace of the Ranee with loaded guns and demanded assistance and supplies. She was obliged to yield and to furnish guns, ammunition and supplies."

We may compare these statemets with the Rani's account of the Mutiny as conveyed by her letters to Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner and Agent, Lieutenant-Governor, Sagar Division. The rebels left Jhansi for Delhi on the 12th June after extorting a large sum of money from the Rani. That very day a Harkara was despatched with a letter to Erskine. Two days later another Harkara left with a second letter and a narrative of events at Jhansi. The papers were concealed in their walking sticks, and the messengers travelled at the risk of their lives through wild country that intervened between Jhansi and Sagar. They were robbed on their way, for anarchy reigned all over the area, and the weak were completely at the mercy of the strong. The Rani wrote, "The Govt. forces, stationed at Jhansie, thro' their faithlessness, cruelty and violence, killed all the European Civil and Military officers, the clerks and all their families and the Ranee not being able to assist them for want of Guns, and soldiers as she had only 100 or 50 people engaged in guarding her house she could render them no aid, which she very much regrets. That they, the mutineers, afterwards behaved with much violence against herself and servants, and extorted a great deal of money from her, and said that as the Ranee was entitled to succeed to the Reasut (Riyasat), she should undertake the management since the sepoys were proceeding to Delhi to the King. That her dependence was entirely on the British authorities who met with such a misfortune the Sepoys knowing her to be quite helpless sent her messages thro' the Tehseeldar of Jhansie, the Revenue

neers collected near the gate, and promised, by the most sacred oaths, through the medium of Saleh Mahomed, Native Doctor, that the Europeans and Anglo-Indians should be allowed to depart in safety, on the condition of vacating the fort, and laying down their arms." The massacre, according to Pinkney was ordered by the Risaldar, p 6, para 35 of Pinkney's Report

and Judicial Seristadars of the Deputy Commissioner's and Superintendent's Courts to the effect that if she, at all hesitated to comply with their requests, they would blow up her palace with guns. Taking into consideration her position she was obliged to consent to all the requests made and put up with a great deal of annoyance, and had to pay large sums in property, as well as in cash to save her life and honor. Knowing that no British officers had been spared in the whole District, she was, in consideration of the welfare and protection of the people, and the District, induced to address Perwannahs to all the Govt. subordinate Agency in the shape of Police etc. to remain at their posts and perform their duties as usual, she is in continual dread of her own life and that of the inhabitants. It was proper that the report of all this should have been made immediately, but the disaffected allowed her no opportunity for so doing. As they have this day proceeded towards Delhi, she loses no time in writing." In the letter, dated the 14th June, she reports that anarchy prevailed all over the district. The turbulent chiefs had taken possession of the strongholds in the countryside and were plundering their neighbourhood. "That it is quite beyond her power to make any arrangement for the safety of the District as the measure would require funds, which she does not possess, nor will the Mahajuns in times like these lend her money. Up to the present time after selling her own personal property and suffering much inconvenience she has managed to save the town from being plundered and has kept up the form of the late Govt. she has entertained many people for the protection of the Town and Mofussil outposts, but without a competent Govt. Force and funds she sees the impossibility of holding on any further, she has therefore written out some remarks on the state of the district which is also sent herewith and trusts she may early be favoured with orders which she will see carried out."[22]

There is nothing clandestine in this straightforward communication. The Rani frankly admits that she had to subscribe to the rebel military chest but she did so under a threat of violence, that she took up the responsibility of administration but she did so in the interest of the people, and she invited the Government to send troops for the maintenance of law and order. Had she been in league with the sepoys the best course for her would have been to persuade the sepoys to stay with her, for their departure left her helpless not only against British vengeance but against the aggression of her neighbours and the machinations of her relatives.

[22] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 354, 31 July, 1857

Erskine did not suspect her sincerity and in his forwarding letter to Beadon he adds that the Rani's account "agrees with what I hear from other sources." Erskine told the Rani "to collect the Revenue, to raise Police and to do everything in her power to restore order and that accounts will be settled with her when Officers reach Jhansee when she will be liberally dealt with, and I have also sent her a proclamation to issue (a translation of which I enclose) calling on all inhabitants of the Districts to obey the Ranee agreeably to the custom of the British Govt. who will for a time make proper arrangements."[23] The measure was by no means exceptional. The Raja of Panna was placed in charge of the district of Damoh. At this crisis such temporary transfer of power also took place in other parts of India.

The Governor-General only accorded a conditional approval to Erskine's action. "In respect to the Ranee", G. F. Edmondstone, Secretary to the Government of India informed Erskine, "I am to state that though his Lordship in Council does not blame you for accepting in the circumstances in which you were placed her account of her own proceedings, and sentiments, and entrusting to her the management of the Jhansee Territory on behalf of the British Government yet this circumstance will not protect her if her account should turn out to be false. From the account supplied to Government by Major Ellis it appears that the Ranee did lend assistance to the mutineers and rebels, and that she gave guns and men."[24] This was quite in agreement with the message transmitted by Major Ellis for it affirmed that the mutineers had forced the Rani to assist them with guns and elephants.[25] In any case the Rani assumed the administration of her husband's principality at the direction of the constituted authorities with the knowledge of the Governor-General-in-Council. But in July 1857 the Government of India could not ignore the massacre of Jhansi in which about sixty men, women, and children lost their lives. They, therefore, held their sentence in suspense for they were not in a position to do anything else at the moment. Jhansi called for vengeance and the victim had to be a person of sufficient importance. But confirmation of the Rani's innocence came years later from an unexpected quarter when in 1889 an Englishman called Martin came to defend the memory of Rani Lakshmi Bai. He wrote from Agra on the 20th August to the Rani's adopted son, Damodar Rao, "your poor mother was very unjustly and cruelly dealt with—and no one knows her true case as I do. The

[23] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 353, 31 July, 1857
[24] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 355, 31 July, 1857
[25] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 179, 31 July, 1857

poor thing took no part whatever in the massacre of the European residents of Jhansi in June 1857. On the contrary she supplied them with food for 2 days after they had gone into the Fort—got 100 match-lock men from Kurrura, and sent them to assist us, but after being kept a day in the Fort, they were sent away in the evening. She then advised Major Skene and Captain Gordon to fly at once to Dattia and place themselves under the Raja's protection, but this even they would not do; and finally they were all massacred by our own troops—the Police, Jail & Cas: Este."[26] The match-lock men were doubtless the Thakurs referred to in Gordon's letter and Sheikh Hingan's evidence, and when they were sent away the outsiders thought that they had been called back by the Rani.

The Rani, however, did not abate her exertions to maintain friendly relations with the British. Sir Robert Hamilton had been long associated with Central India and he was more conversant with the politics of that region than any other officer. When he returned to Indore after leave at home, the Rani addressed an earnest appeal to him. In this letter she says that she had in her distress written to the Commissioner of Jabbalpur, officiating Agent of the Governor-General for Central India, Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, Deputy Commissioner of Jalaun, Political Agent, Gwalior, and Major Ellis but she feared that some of these letters might not have reached their destination. She was not sure about the fate of her letter to Agra, for her messenger, unable to enter the fort, had handed it over to a Bhisti.[27] Martin, however, says that the letter to Agra did not miscarry. He writes, "She sent Khareetas to Col. Erskine at Jubbulpore, to Col. Fraser, Chief Commissioner of Agra, which I handed to him with my own hand, to hear her explanation, but No !—Jhansi had been a byword and was condemned unheard !"

Meanwhile her enemies were not idle. After Gangadhar Rao's death the succession was claimed by one Sadashiv Rao of Parola, a nephew many times removed. He thought that with the overthrow of the British authority and the departure of the sepoys his chance had come at last. He enlisted some troops and seized the fortress of Karera, about thirty miles from Jhansi, and drove away the police and revenue officers of the British Government. From there he continued to disturb the neighbouring villages and assumed the title of Maharaja of Jhansi. The Rani's men drove him from his stronghold of Karera but the self-styled Maharaja

[26]Parasnis, *op. cit.*, p 125. Damodar Rao's son lives at Imli Bazar, Indore. Martin's letter cannot be traced but Parasnis claims to have seen it

[27] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 266, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp )

found a safe retreat at Narwar in Sindhia's territories. There he again collected an army and resumed his lawless activities. This time he was taken prisoner and lodged in the fort of Jhansi.[28]

But the Rani's troubles were not over. She had now to face more formidable adversaries. The Bundelas are a warlike race. During the Moghul days they paid but reluctant homage to the central authority and never missed an opportunity of exploiting its weakness. During the Pindari War the Bundela peasant did not see eye to eye with the Government of the day and he was always prepared to feather his nest at other people's expense. The Bundelas regarded the Marathas as interlopers in their region and they would fain recover Jhansi, Jalaun, and other districts that once belonged to them. When the Mutiny broke out they were at first lukewarm in their attitude towards the British. We have seen how Gordon had appealed to the Bundela states of Sampthar and Orchha for help. Reilly tells us that "About mid-day of Saturday, the 6th June, a refusal arrived from the Rajahs of Orchha and Dutteea, stating that they could not render us any assistance."[29] The Dewan of Orchha's reception of some British fugitives was definitely cold.[30] If he had failed or refused to render timely aid to the British residents of Jhansi, he saw no harm in measuring his strength with the Brahman widow.

Parasnis says that before invading Jhansi Nathe Khan, the Dewan of Orchha, had offered the Rani the same pension as she used to receive from the British Government provided she surrendered the principality to him. We do not know whether this has any authentic basis or is founded on one of the numerous ballads in which the village poets celebrate the prowess of the Rani. When exactly the Orchha army invaded Jhansi we do not know but the war caught the Rani at a disadvantage. She had but few troops and her military stores were very poor. In her distress she appealed to the loyalty of her barons and the feudal ties proved stronger than bonds of blood. The Bundela Thakurs rallied round the ruler of Jhansi and even the son-in-law of the Rani of Orchha did not hold back, but in its earlier stages the war went against Jhansi and Nathe Khan advanced below the walls of the fort. It was probably at this crisis that the Rani appeared among her troops for the first time. The Orchha troops were

[28] He was executed after the re-establishment of British authority

[29] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, p 523

[30] Captain A.C. Gordon suspected that "there was a treacherous plan, previously arranged, between the Tehree (Orchha) and Banpoor authorities, for the destruction of the party, which was frustrated by the good faith" of Mohamed Ali (Banpur Raja's Mookhtar) and Prem Narain (Tehree Raja's tutor). Pinkney's Report, p 11, para 61

repulsed. We read of troubles caused by Datia as well and at one time it was suggested that Orchha and Datia would divide the principality between them. To surrender her state to the British, when they returned, would involve no humiliation or dishonour, but to yield to her old family rivals would be a disgrace indeed, though they were pretending to fight on behalf of the suzerain power. In her letter to Sir Robert Hamilton, dated 1st January 1858, the Rani complained, "Taking advantage of the disturbed state of the Country, the Chiefs of Dutya and Oorcha first took possession of the district of Jhansee Illaka that lay on the borders of their respective states, both to the East and West. On the 3rd September (both these Chiefs acting in concert) the Forces of Oorcha composed of the Thakoors and relations of the State, and amounting to 40,000 men with 28 Guns, invaded Jhansee itself and made other Chiefs support them. Altho' the two letters received by me from the Commissioner were sent to Nuthey Khan for his perusal, yet he took no notice of them.[31] On this, I again wrote to the Commissioner who told me in reply (by letter dated 19th October) that British forces were assembling at Jubbulpore—That he will come to Jhansee and examine the conduct of all either high or low and deal with them accordingly. In the meantime I tried my best by selling my property, taking money on Interest—collected a party of men and took steps to protect the City, and to meet the invading force." She concludes, "Under these circumstances I can never expect to get rid of these enemies and to clear myself of the heavy debts without the Assistance of the British Government. The Commissioner seems not prepared to move for my help as he states in his letter dated 9th November, that the services of the British troops for the present are required at his quarter. As these short sighted individuals seem unmindful of the British supremacy and do their best to ruin myself and the whole country, I beg you will give me your support in the best way you can, and thus save myself and the people who are reduced to the last extremity and are not able to cope with the enemy." Sir Robert Hamilton does not appear to have acknowledged this letter. He had made up his mind.

The Commissioner of Jabbalpur division had asked the Rani to hold the state on their behalf until the British officers could resume charge of it. She had taken upon herself this onerous duty but she soon found her districts invaded from the east and the

[31] Parasnis says that the Union Jack was displayed on this occasion on the Jhansi fort. This is not impossible, for a Union Jack, presented by the British Government to a former ruler of Jhansi, was discovered in the fort by Sir Hugh Rose's men

west and her fort invested, not by rebels, but by Bundela chiefs professing allegiance to the British Government. Her appeals for protection went unheeded. A high-spirited woman, she was not going to be chastised by Orchha and Datia. She enlisted troops, she began to cast cannon and manufacture munitions of war, she sought allies[32] and her new troops defeated her enemies at Mauranipur and Barwa Sagar. Nathe Khan was disgraced but the Rani also got involved with the rebels. Among her new recruits were many mutineers, and among her allies were the rebel Rajas of Banpur and Shahgarh. Her own barons, having tasted the sweets of victory, were now spoiling for a fight. But, from the British intelligence of the months of January and February, 1858, it appears that she was still prepared to restore the territories, formally entrusted to her, should the British treat her with honour and kindness.

A report, dated 8th January, runs as follows: "It is reported that Bukhshish Alli, the Duroga of the Jhansee Jail asking the Ranee whether she would fight, or not, with the English Forces, was informed by the Ranee that she would not; but will return all the districts under her to the British officers when they come to Jhansee. On getting this information the Duroga did not take service with the Ranee."[33] The news on the 26th January was that the Rani had sent troops to Mauranipur to fight the Orchha force. She had sent a Vakil to the Commissioner. If the Vakil was treated kindly she would not fight the English but return all the districts, while on the contrary if the British officers showed displeasure, she would fight to the last. Gun powder and guns were being manufactured.[34] In February also we are told that the Rani was unwilling to fight though her warlike preparations went on unabated.[35] In March there was a split in her council. The intelligence of the 15th March informs us, "A council of consultation was held by the functionaries of the Ranee, Kasheenath Haree and Lallo Buxee proposed to make terms with the English. Mama Saheb and Gangadhur were of opinion that it was not proper to give up the state which was recovered after much difficulty without fighting. The Buxee and Kasheenath opposed stating that the state was made over to the English by the late Chief himself".[36] It is to be noted that these reports are not always to be relied on. One report alleges that Shahzada Firuz Shah was at Jhansi, which

[32] The Raja of Banpur sent provisions when Jhansi was besieged by the Orchha troops

[33] Foreign Political Consultations, No 265, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)

[34] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 33, 26 March, 1858

[35] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 42, 26 March, 1858

[36] Foreign Secret Consultations, No 147, 30 April 1858

is not confirmed by other evidence but it was not inherently impossible, but another report says that Tatya Tope advised the Rani to come to terms with the English, which is unlikely. But the Rani had sent an agent to Sagar and her letter to Sir Robert Hamilton is quite in consonance with these reports. In January she had become exasperated with British indifference, in February she was preparing herself to shape her course according to the trend of circumstances and in March some of her advisers were advocating an aggressive policy. She had re-enlisted the old troops who were disbanded after annexation. They were strongly for war. To them peace spelt loss of occupation and ruin. Some of the Bundela chiefs had tasted their old power and were reluctant to see British authority restored. In any case the Rani had no alternative. She had been carefully watching British movement. In January she had still some hope. In March there was none. Sir Hugh Rose was already on his way to Jhansi and his intention did not appear friendly. To submit was to court dishonour, to fight was to save honour though everything else might be lost.

Sir Hugh Rose's experience was not limited to the army alone. He had made his mark in diplomacy as well. His promotion in the army was remarkably rapid. He began his military career as an ensign in 1820 and rose in twenty years to the rank of a Lieutenant-Colonel. He distinguished himself in Syria during the Turco-Egyptian War and was later appointed Consul General there. In 1851 he became Secretary to the British embassy at Constantinople and was attached to the Headquarters of the French army as Queen's Commissioner during the Crimean War. In September 1857 Sir Hugh came to Bombay to assume the command of the Poona division. In December he was appointed Commander of the Central India Field Force which was to operate in Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajputana and Central India in co-operation with the Rajputana Field Force and Sagar and Narmada Field Force, while the Commander-in-Chief was engaged in Oudh and North-Western Provinces. Shortly after he had arrived at Mhow, disquieting news reached Sir Hugh from Sagar. The mud fort of Sagar which sheltered one hundred and seventy European women and children had a very small garrison of sixty-eight European gunners. The 31st N.I. in the cantonment were loyal, they had indeed fought against their rebel brothers of the 47th but the inmates of the fort did not fully trust them. The rebels controlled the country around. The 52nd N.I. had mutinied at Jabbalpur. They had intimated their officers that they would rebel if European troops came. European troops did not come

but the execution of a dispossessed Gond Raja[37] and his son drove them to rebellion. Sagar was not blockaded in the strict sense of the term, but the Brigadier felt insecure as the neighbouring stronghold of Garahkota was in rebel hands and the Bundela chiefs disturbed the neighbouring districts. It was feared that the loyalty of the 31st N.I. might not withstand the contagion long. According to the previous programme, the relief of Sagar had been assigned to the Madras troops, but they were not expected before two months. Sir Hugh Rose, therefore, decided to march to Sagar before he began his main campaign. The first rebel stronghold he came against was Rahatgarh. While cannonading its outer ramparts, the British troops were attacked by the Raja of Banpur.

Mardan Singh, the Bundela Raja of Banpur, had no love for the rebel cause. He fought for his ancestral territories. His forefathers had once held the fortress of Chanderi and the districts dependent on it. His father had been obliged to cede two-thirds of his former state to the Sindhia.[38] If the British suzerains of the Sindhia agreed to restore Chanderi to its rightful owner, Mardan Singh was prepared to fight on their side. In fact he had extended his hospitality to British refugees and fought the insurgents of Lalitpur.[39] But when he found that his co-operation was not likely to bring the coveted reward, he unhesitatingly cast in his lot with the rebels and recovered the historical fort with the help of the local Thakurs. Well-planned as his attack was, the Raja failed to raise the siege of Rahatgarh and the fort was reduced. The rebels made their next stand at Barodia on the Bina. The little fort was defended by a resolute band of Afghans and Pathans, but their leader was killed and the Raja of Banpur was wounded and the place was evacuated. On February 3, Sir Hugh reached Sagar and a large number of local people came out to see the British troops march in, for a British regiment had not been at Sagar before. But the welcome was not unmixed. Lowe observes, "In some of the streets there were a good many sullen, diabolical looking fellows, who seemed to wish us anywhere else."[40] After reducing Garahkota Sir Hugh felt free to turn to Jhansi but his advance was postponed for a few days on account of shortage of

[37] Shankar Shah. Malleson, *op cit.*, Vol. III, p 103

[38] Pinkney's Report, p 3, para 18

[39] On the 14th June Mardan Singh forced Captain Gordon to sign a paper to the following effect, "Owing to dacoities, blood-shed, etc., and the mutiny of the sepoys, I was unable to manage the district, and consequently I handed over charge to the Rajah of Banpoor. I affirm, agreeably to my religion, that I have written this of my own free will. Any British troops arriving in the district are to assist the Rajah." Pinkney's Report, p 11, para 59

[40] Lowe, *op. cit.*, pp 186-87

supply and transport. On the last day of February, he wrote to the Governor of Bombay, "I am unfortunately detained by want of supplies and carriage, to the great disadvantage of the public service: I have lost nine precious days, doubly precious not only on account of the time at a season when every hot day endangers the health and lives of the European soldiers, but because every day has allowed the rebels to recover the *morale* they had lost by my operations".[41] So, Sir Hugh devoted himself to the improvement of every branch of the army under his command before he made the next move. His aim was swift action and crushing blows.

Sir Hugh Rose had the option of leaving Jhansi behind and march to Kalpi via Charkhari, the Raja of which was a staunch friend of the British. The fort of Jhansi was considered too strong for his troops but he thought it unwise to leave such a strong rebel force in his rear, and decided to capture Jhansi first and make an example of the city. Sir Robert Hamilton, who accompanied the army, held the same opinion and argued that policy demanded that Jhansi should be reduced before Tatya's headquarters at Kalpi was attacked. It was necessary to maintain the line of communication with Sagar, and therefore, Lieutenant Pendergast was left at Barodia with a body of semi-barbarous Khonds. The pass of Narut was strongly held by the Raja of Banpur. Sir Hugh, therefore, decided to advance by the less difficult pass of Madanpur guarded by the Raja of Shahgarh. But he made a feint against Narut with a small body while the main army carried the other pass. Shahgarh lay completely at his mercy and the state was annexed by the British. The Raja of Banpur now adopted a policy of scorched earth and his capital was found completely deserted. The palace was plundered and demolished and fire was set to what remained of it. Talbehut was next cleared of the rebels. On the 21st March the British army arrived before Jhansi. Here Sir Hugh Rose was rejoined by Brigadier Stuart who had in the meantime cleared the Guna region and captured the strong fort of Chanderi.

While a few miles from Jhansi, Sir Hugh was called upon to make an important decision. The defeat of Kanpur had not dispirited Tatya Tope. He had suddenly appeared before Charkhari, the capital of a small Bundela state of the same name and the Raja in his distress sent an urgent appeal to his British friends for succour. Sir Hugh Rose was, therefore, directed to hurry to his rescue, for it was considered essential to extend protec-

[41] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 169

tion to the loyal Rajas of Bundelkhand. The fall of Charkhari, it was feared, might lead to aggression against other friendly states in that area and lower British prestige in Bundelkhand. But Sir Hugh argued that the fort of Charkhari might fall before he could reach the place while a move against Jhansi might mean quicker relief to the Raja, as Tatya might leave Charkhari alone and come to reinforce Jhansi. Sir Hugh Rose, therefore, decided to direct his efforts to the reduction of Jhansi and Sir Robert Hamilton agreed with him.

The siege began on the 22nd March. On the 25th the right batteries opened fire. On the 26th the left batteries were completed and began to cannonade the ramparts. The defenders also returned the fire with resolution and women were noticed working at the repairs. In the evening the Rani herself went round the defences to inspire her men with zeal and enthusiasm. The fort was strong, her men were devoted to her person and she expected reinforcements from outside. They were not long in arriving. On the 31st, 20,000 men under Tatya Tope came to relieve Jhansi. Sir Hugh had to decide whether he should withdraw his troops from the investment to meet the hostile army outside, or confront it with only a part of his force while the siege continued uninterrupted. He chose the latter course and dispersed Tatya's force after a hard-fought battle.

With Tatya repulsed, Sir Hugh could now devote all his attention to the conclusion of his operations before Jhansi. The Rani had prudently laid waste the countryside. But Sir Hugh had no anxiety in regard to provisions, the Sindhia and the Rani of Orchha had sent him sufficient supplies. The besieged could not be long unaware of Tatya's retreat, but if their morale had been affected there was no sign of it and when the assault was made on the 3rd of April they opened a devastating fire on their enemies. They hurled at the stormers all sorts of missiles, earthen pots filled with powder, logs of wood, whatever came handy. At last the postern gate was blown into pieces and the British soldiers made a rush, but the opening was blocked by huge pieces of rock, and the main assault from the right was beaten back with heavy loss. But another party had been more lucky and had effected an entrance through a small breach. The column from the left found a lodgement on the ramparts and reached the street leading to the palace. The battle now raged furiously from street to street, from house to house, and from room to room and the defenders fought like tigers. No quarter was asked or given. "When even the courtyard of the palace was reached, it became apparent that the resistance had only begun. Every room was savagely con-

tested. Fruitlessly, however. From chamber to chamber the enemy were driven at the point of the bayonet. At length the palace itself was gained. The opposition, however, had not even then entirely ceased. Two hours later it was discovered that fifty men of the Rani's bodyguard still held the stables attached to the building."[42] "A party of them remained in a room off the stables which was on fire till they were half burnt; their clothes in flames, they rushed out hacking at their assailants and guarding their heads with their shields."[43] The street fight continued till the next day and the city was ruthlessly sacked. Every black face was an enemy and the non-combatants suffered as heavily as the combatants. "Those who could not escape threw their women and babes down wells, and then jumped down themselves."[44]

The British soldiers were thirsting for vengeance. They believed that the Rani was the person responsible for the massacre of their countrymen and women. Their feelings have been faithfully reflected in Dr. Lowe's account. "No maudlin clemency was to mark the fall of this city. The Jezebel of India was there—the young, energetic, proud, unbending, uncompromising Ranee, and upon her head rested the blood of the slain, and a punishment as awful awaited her."[45] But the Rani was not to die the death of a felon. She left the fort under the cover of night in the garb of a man with her adopted son. She had with her an escort of faithful Afghans. The party passed unnoticed through the Orchha guards; but confronted by another picquet before long, they scattered and could not reunite. The Rani and her remaining

[42] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p 170

[43] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 215

[44] Lowe, *op. cit.*, p 259

The famous library of Sanskrit manuscripts was totally destroyed and the city was ruthlessly plundered. "So soon as the fighting had ceased, officers and men began to look about them with that spirit of curiosity which pervades one when visiting the shops of Wardour street, Leicester Square: they dived into every house and searched its dark corners, they pulled down walls, or parts of walls, which looked of recent build, all in this self-same spirit of curiosity—not to *loot*, of course, because that was forbidden under the strictest punishment. One class of articles, however, seemed to me to be looked on as fair loot by even the most scrupulous—these were the gods found in the temples. They were collected in great numbers, and were strangely sought after by every officer and soldier. There were Gunputties and Vishnoos innumerable, and of every metal. Some wore really pretty ornaments, silver, with gold bangles on their grotesque limbs, and small enough to be worn on the watch chain ; others were of brass and stone, of rare workmanship". Sylvester, *Recollections of the Campaign in Malwa and Central India*, pp 107-108. But the soldiers were not content with picking up miniature images only. Lowe says that in the first moments of excitement they smashed and destroyed everything they found. "A good many of the jewels had found their way into their pockets," says Lowe, "but," he apologises, "considering the temptation, one must say that they were more than obedient to the order to keep their hands from picking and stealing under the trying and exciting circumstances". Lowe, *op. cit.*, p 264

[45] Lowe, *op. cit.*, p 236

troopers rode along the Kalpi road but Mama Saheb, her father, lost his way and the morning found him at the gates of Datia, faint with bleeding and exhausted by hard riding. He was forthwith arrested and sent to Jhansi where he was hanged at Jokhan Bagh. The Rani rode on and covered twenty-one miles in a night but her escape became known in the British camp in the morning. A pursuit was immediately ordered. Captain Forbes and Lieutenant Dowker pushed on with the 3rd Light Cavalry and 14th Light Dragoon. Forty of the Rani's faithful troopers turned back and gave them a fight and were slain to a man. They once came in sight of their quarry, but the Rani was an excellent rider. A bullet put the foremost pursuer *hors de combat* and pursuit was given up.

Jhansi fell but Kalpi, the headquarters of the Peshwa's force, still remained to be taken. It had become the meeting-place of all the rebel leaders. Rao Saheb, the most energetic member of the Peshwa family, was there. The Nawab of Banda, united to the Peshwa by family ties, was later to join him at Kalpi.[46] And now they had with them the Rani of Jhansi. Tatya had lost many of his guns at the battle of the Betwa but with characteristic resourcefulness made up for his loss. The rebel army did not wait at Kalpi, but advanced to the strategic town of Koonch on the Jhansi road. The wood, gardens, and the temples that skirted the city afforded them good cover but they could not hold the place and had to fall back on Kalpi. On the 23rd May they were compelled to evacuate their last stronghold after a series of hard-fought actions. The next day, the victorious general received a message of congratulations from the Governor-General: "Your capture of Calpee has crowned a series of brilliant and uninterrupted successes. I thank you and your brave soldiers with all my heart."

After the fall of Kalpi, the rebel leaders held a council where the representatives of the sepoys were also present.[47] Their last stronghold to the south of the Jumna was gone and they had to seek a fresh field of operation. The sepoys wanted to go to Oudh, the Rani preferred Karera in Jhansi or some other place in Bundelkhand, but Tatya argued that the Bundelas were hostile and supplies would be hard to get in their home land. Rao Saheb suggested the Deccan. The Peshwas ruled over the Deccan in their palmy days and in the heart of Maharashtra the Peshwa's was still a name to conjure with. Many of the chiefs would yet

[46] The Nawab was a descendant of Baji Rao I in the illegitimate line. He kindly treated all English refugees but was ultimately forced to join the rebellion by the troops

[47] The account of Gwalior affair is based on Macpherson's report. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 4283, 31 Dec., 1858

respond to his call and it was expected that the countryside would spontaneously rise once the Peshwa's army appeared to give them the lead, but the army was without funds and supplies. He would, therefore, first go to Gwalior and try to enlist the support of the Sindhia. The Peshwa was once the Sindhia's suzerain.[48] His ancestors served the forefathers of Nana Saheb, and if old memories could be revived and Sindhia won over, his example might influence other princes of the north.

The Sindhia was loyal to his British friends not so much out of natural sympathy as of necessity. Thirteen years back his men had tried their strength against the British and were badly beaten. A visit to Calcutta early in 1857 had impressed him with the magnitude of British power. Major Charters Macpherson, the Political Agent, had further pointed out that he was divided from the majority of his subjects by racial differences. As soon as the British control disappeared the Jat, the Bundela, and the Rajput would with one accord rise against the Maratha. Self-interest, therefore, demanded that he should unreservedly identify himself with the British cause. A detachment of the Maharaja's bodyguard was promptly sent to Agra. The Sindhia had no confidence in the Gwalior contingent. He feared that they would not fight against their fellow sepoys though they might not actually mutiny. The only troops whom he expected to remain staunch were the Maratha guards recently recruited. They, it was fondly hoped, would stand by the Maratha ruler against Purbiah aggression.

On the other hand, though the Gwalior contingent was raised, trained, and officered by the British, apparently in the interest of the Sindhia and financed by him, it was not under his control. The contingent consisted of exactly the same elements as the Bengal Army and were liable to be inspired by the same feelings as the sepoys in the British employment. They shared their fears and suspicions and were as much moved by the story of the greased cartridge and adulterated food as other people in Oudh and North-Western Provinces. In June 1857 when the Mutiny broke out in many other stations the sepoys of the Gwalior contingent also rose. They had ample reason to think that they were no longer trusted. Major Macpherson had moved from the cantonment to the Residency and the Residency was guarded by the Sindhia's troops. The ladies were sent to one of the Sindhia's palaces but at the instance of Brigadier Ramsay, the commander of the station, they subsequently returned to the cantonment. On

[48] It is said that Ranoji Sindhia, the founder of the Gwalior family, was the slipper bearer of Baji Rao I

the 7th June a wing of the 4th contingent infantry was sent under Captain Murray to quell the Mutiny at Jhansi. But they had to return with the news that every Christian there had been put to the sword and the treasury had been looted. The European residents had been under constant fear of a mutiny, their suspense came to an end on the night of the 14th June when it started. The sepoys were not indiscriminate in their slaughter of Christians. Women were allowed to go unharmed but men were not spared as a rule. There were exceptions. Lieutenant Pearson was saved by his men.[49] But he was not the only Englishman to escape the massacre of that night. The Political Agent and a few others with some of the ladies found an asylum in the Phulbagh palace and were later escorted to Agra.

What was the Sindhia to do with the insurgents? He was prepared to pay for their withdrawal, but Major Macpherson advised otherwise. It would be to the British interest to keep the rebels at Gwalior as long as possible. Sindhia, therefore, pretended to take them into his service. He continued to pay their salary punctually and never declined in clear terms to lead them against the British. By various devices he kept them quiescent till September, 1857, when Tatya's personal pleadings at last persuaded them to shake off their lethargy and march to Kalpi. Sindhia had rendered a great service to his friends. A formidable body of well-trained and well-armed rebels, whose intervention could at different times decide the fate of Agra, Delhi, and Kanpur, sat idle in their lines at Morar, when the British were slowly restoring their authority over North India. But if the Chief of Gwalior had definitely cast in his lot with the foreigners, many of his officers and nobles, including men of his own race and caste, had a lurking sympathy with their countrymen who were fighting for their religion. Many of them sincerely believed that the English were out to convert the people of India. Tatya had, therefore, potential supporters in the city of Gwalior, and friends on whom he could confidently rely. The Naib Kotwal of Gwalior was a man from Bithur, though neither the Sindhia nor his Dewan was aware of it, and Tatya's son-in-law was a resident of the city.

It is reported that after the defeat at Koonch Tatya secretly visited Gwalior for a second time. The Sindhia's troops had some grievances against their master. The majority of them were not of Maratha extraction and, after the rebels left, the Maharaja began to eliminate the Purbiah elements from his force. The men and the officers, therefore, thought that their elimination was a

[49] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, pp 48-51

question of time only, while the much trusted Maratha could not resist the appeal to his religious and racial sentiments. Within living memory their people had dominated Northern India and the Emperor of Delhi, whose nominal authority they never questioned, was a prisoner in their hands. In their eyes the Sindhia was playing a doubtful role, for he owed his principality to the favour of the Peshwa, and it was his duty to rally round Nana's banner instead of supporting the East India Company. In the few days that Tatya spent at Gwalior he found that the instruments of a *coup d'état* were ready there. He knew that to appear before the town was to capture it. But he also knew that to win over the Sindhia to his master's cause, if that was possible, would be a much greater achievement. The Sindhia and his Dewan Dinkar Rao were, in the rebel estimation, nothing but Christians, but if the most powerful prince in that region ranged himself on the side of the Peshwa, it would be a serious blow to British prestige, and other princes of India were not likely to remain unaffected by his example.

Gwalior fell to Rao Saheb without a blow. The Sindhia's officers on the frontier had indeed threatened opposition when the rebels crossed it but no resistance was offered. Sindhia's policy was to gain time by procrastination. He knew that the British army would not be long in coming after their enemies, and if he could humour the rebels till then, he would have nothing to worry about. Dinkar Rao was also against any precipitate action. Rao Saheb apparently did not want to interfere with the Sindhia's administration. He wanted money and provisions and an unopposed passage through Gwalior territories on his way to the land of promise. But the Sindhia had been told by a trusted officer that the rebel army was in the last stage of destitution and one volley would suffice to disperse them. Against Dinkar Rao's advice, the Sindhia went to fight the rebels but he had not inherited the genius of his warlike ancestors and his followers had no sympathy for the cause he represented. The insurgents raised a loud cry of Din and the opposing troops responded in the same manner and fraternised with them without the least hesitation and Gwalior fell. The Maharaja did not wait to look after the safety of his seraglio but rode to Dholpur on his way to Agra. His minister overtook him on the way. Other nobles followed them one by one. The Ranis led by Baiza Bai took shelter in the fortress of Narwar. The rebels refrained from all acts of violence. The city was not looted. All the principal civil and military officers who had chosen to stay behind were confirmed in their former posts. The administration was not disturbed in the least

but the hoarded treasures of the Sindhia were appropriated for the payment of the troops. Major Macpherson reports, "The Rao confiscated and gave to plunder only the houses of the Dewan, of Mohunghur and of Bulwunt Rao. He gave to Scindia's troops the 3 months' pay due to them and 2 months' pay as gratuity, amounting in all to 9 lacs. He gave to his own troops about 7½ lacs. The Ranee of Jhansi received 20,000 Rupees. The Nawab of Banda 60,000 Rupees. The Rao took to himself 15,000 Gold Mohurs. And the whole sum taken and accounted for was under 19 lacs, while about one and a half lacs were taken and not accounted for." Rao Saheb did not relax in his efforts to conciliate the representatives of the ruling house. The Sindhia had unfortunately left his station. But Baiza Bai, who had once been the *de facto* ruler of the state, was still within its bounds. To her he addressed two letters. The first letter ran as follows: "We have arrived here to-day. On arrival we sought Jyajee Rao and yourself. You had departed before we came. You did not do well. What was to be has been. Now do you come hither bringing with you the Chimna Raja." The letter remained unacknowledged and was followed by another equally conciliating. "All is well here. Your going from hence was not, to my thinking, right. I have already written to you, but have received no answer. This should not be. I send this letter by Ramjee Chowthey Jamdar. Do come and take charge of your seat of Government. It is not my intention to take Gwalior, only to have a meeting and go on. This is my purpose. Therefore it is necessary that you should come, making no denial."[50] Baiza Bai, however, was too old a hand to be trapped so easily and she sent in due course both the letters to Sir Robert Hamilton.

This bold move on the part of the rebels took the British authorities by surprise. At first Sir Robert Hamilton could not believe that they were on their way to Gwalior. "The idea", observes Holmes, was "as original and as daring as that which prompted the memorable seizure of Arcot." But who planned this brilliant *coup*? Malleson attributes it entirely to the Rani, Holmes does not rule out Tatya, who did not lack either daring or originality. But if Macpherson was right, and he was supported by Sir Robert Hamilton, Tatya anticipated the evacuation of Kalpi by a visit to Gwalior. It was he who contacted the Sindhia's troops and their officers and convinced Rao Saheb that Gwalior would fall an easy prey to them. Why did Rao wait there if the Deccan was really

[50] The letters have beeen quoted in full in Macpherson's Report. The second letter has been printed in Forrest's *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, pp 265-66

his destination cannot be explained. With the willing co-operation of Amar Chand Bhatia, the Sindhia's treasurer, he had got all the money that the Gwalior treasury could yield, he had provided for the administration of the state. He could not expect to reconcile the Sindhia or Baiza Bai even if he waited there for months, but delay could only bring him face to face with Sir Hugh Rose once again. If he left immediately there was a sporting chance of his reaching the Deccan before Sir Hugh could intervene and the minor risings in the Maratha country indicated that a daring leader might still attract a large following in that region.

But Sir Hugh Rose did not lose a moment in the pursuit. Gwalior had fallen to the rebels on the 1st of June. He left Kalpi on the 6th and by forced marches arrived in the neighbourhood of Morar on the 16th. He immediately fought the rebels and cleared the Agra-Gwalior road. On the 19th the battle of Gwalior was won, on the 20th the fort was captured, and the Maharaja was escorted back to his palace.

The fall of Gwalior was followed by an act of desperate courage and defiance of death which reminds us of the best days of medieval chivalry. "Thirteen men, four of them contingent sepoys and nine Vilayuttees, with two women and a child, after proceeding some miles from the vacated Fort towards Agra, resolved deliberately to return and die in it. They fired from the guns on the ramparts 4 and 5 shots at the troops drawn out to receive Scindia, and, as he and the agent advanced with their cortege one shot struck immediately in front of them. . . . . Lieut. Rose with a company of the 25th Bombay N.I. went with the aid of the City Kotwall and 20 Pathan Police to destroy these desperate men. They had flung over the walls, into the city, all their gold and silver coin, and other property, and taken post upon a bastion, a gun of which commanded the line of approach. That gun burst at the third discharge. Rose advanced. The fanatics slew their women and the child. Rose's party then killed seven of them; but one shot him mortally before the rest could be killed."

On the 17th June, when Brigadier Smith advanced from Kotaki-Serai against Gwalior, died the Rani of Jhansi. There are two different accounts of her death. Macpherson writes, "Near the Phoolbagh batteries, I may observe, fell the Ranee of Jhansi. She was seated, says her servant, drinking sherbet, 400 of the 5th Irregulars near her, when the alarm was given that the Hussars approached. Forty or fifty of them came up, and the rebels fled, save about fifteen. The Ranee's horse refused to leap

the Canal, when she received a shot in the side, and then a sabre cut on the head but rode off. She soon after fell dead, and was burnt in a garden close by." Sir Robert Hamilton, who made an enquiry on the spot, gives a somewhat different account. He writes, "There is a matter connected with the manner in which the Jhansi Baee was killed which is not in accordance with the result of my enquiries at the time and on the spot. The fact that the Ranee had been killed was not known in Brigadier Smith's camp until he heard of it by a note from me. It occurred from all I could ascertain whilst the Ranee with a group in which were the Rao Sahib and Tantia were looking at the advance on the heights early in the day. The Ranee was on horseback, and close to her was the female (a Mahomaden long in the family) who seems never to have left her side on any occasion, these two were struck by bullets and fell, the Ranee survived about 20 minutes, she was carried towards Pool Baugh, the Rao Sahib attending her, this event quite upset the Chiefs, and caused the greatest consternation, arrangements were instantly made for burning the body which was conveyed in a Palkee to the bank of the river between the Pool Baugh and the Fort, and from hence it not being practicable to get the Palankeen over the enclosure of a garden near a temple the body was lifted out and carried by the attendants over the enclosure to a spot under some fine large trees where it was burnt, hardly had the ceremony been performed when the charge of the 8th Hussars came almost up to the garden and Temple. Six or seven of the persons who had fled from which were said to have been cut down. It was evident that the ceremony had been interrupted, for when I went to the spot Dr Christison picked up fragments of bones which proved that the usual custom of sifting the ashes had not been performed."[51]

In any case the Rani died in the battlefield a soldier's death. Next to Nana, she was probably the person most hated by her enemies. She has been held responsible for the Mutiny at Jhansi because she had a genuine grievance against the British. But before the Mutiny she was trusted by men in authority there and her version of the outbreak was accepted by Major Erskine. It would be idle to dismiss all those responsible officers as over-credulous and credit the hearsay evidence of a nameless Bengalee and the impossible story of a half-caste woman. But even the evidence of these favoured witnesses had not been accepted in toto. The evidence of the Bengalee does not support the charge of previous collusion with the mutineers and is, therefore, ignored

[51] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 4293, 31 Dec., 1858

to that extent. Mrs. Mutlow says that the Rani had in the early stage of the siege succoured the inmates of the fort. The shortage of food in the fort could not be a secret to anybody, for on the first day the servants were free to go in and come out. It was not difficult for an intelligent person like the Rani, and she is credited with intelligence, to conclude that hunger would force the besieged to surrender sooner or later and further inducement to bring them out was quite unnecessary. But the massacre of Jhansi had to be avenged and a scapegoat had to be found. In spite of her best efforts to keep on friendly terms with the British she was driven by their tortuous diplomacy to the other camp. Kaye dismissed evil things said against her as a myth,[52] but long after her death Forrest, an Irishman, deemed it fit to blacken her fame without any justification.[53] If the reverence of her own people is any compensation for vilification by her enemies the Rani of Jhansi stands more than vindicated. Thousands of unsophisticated villagers still sing of the valour and virtues of the woman who held her own against her Bundela enemies to fall under a British bullet.

The victors celebrated their triumph in a fitting manner by firing a royal salute at every principal station in India, but the vanquished had no respite. They were pursued by General Napier and routed after an artillery action followed by a cavalry charge on the 28th June at Jawra Alipur. On the 29th Sir Hugh Rose relinquished his command to General Napier for reasons of health. Tatya and Rao Saheb crossed the Chambal and fled to Rajputana. They had lost their guns, they had but a small following, but they did not own defeat. Their spirit was yet unbroken.

[52] "Evil things were said of her; for it is a custom among us *odisse quem laeseris*—to take a Native ruler's kingdom and then to revile the deposed ruler or his would-be successor. It was alleged that the Ranee was a mere child under the influence of others, and that she was much given to intemperance. That she was not a mere child was demonstrated by her conversation; and her intemperance seems to be a myth." Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, pp 361-62

[53] "The Ranee of Jhansi was an ardent, daring, licentious woman," says Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 282. The adjectives have been borrowed from Macpherson's Report but Macpherson suffered from the passions and prejudices of his times. His report was written in 1858 and it was meant only for official eyes. Forrest wrote more than half a century after the Rani's death and should have noted that according to Major Malcolm, she bore a very high character and, was much respected by every one at Jhansi. Forrest should not have been carried away by a stray sentence in Macpherson's Report. Dr. Lowe also uses terms of vituperation while writing about the Rani. But he was carried away by the conviction that the Rani was responsible for the massacre at Jhansi

# APPENDIX

Foreign Secret Consultations, No 353, 31 July, 1857
No. A of 1857

From
Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner, Saugor Division

To
C. Beadon Esquire, Secretary to the Govt. of India,
Home Department, Fort William
Jubbulpore, 2nd July 1857

Home Deptt.

Sir,

Last night two Hurkarahs brought me letters from the Ranee of Jhansee concealed in their walking sticks.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ranee's letter dt. 12th June | A |
| ,, ,, ,, 14th ,, | B |
| Narrative of events | C |
| Reports from outposts | D |

2nd. I enclose free translations of the papers noted in the margin sent by the Ranee and of my reply to her.

3rd. From these it will be seen that by the *Ranee's own account* she in no way lent assistance to the mutineers and rebels; on the contrary that she herself was plundered and forced to take charge of the District and this agrees with what I hear from other sources.

4th. The Ranee expresses her inability from want of funds and troops to maintain any order and begs for assistance.

5th. Having no means whatever of sending Civil Officers and Troops to restore order at present, and to put down the sad state of anarchy which exists I have told the Ranee to collect the Revenue, to raise Police and to do everything in her power to restore order and that accounts will be settled with her when Officers reach Jhansee when she will be liberally dealt with, and I have also sent her a proclamation to issue (a translation of which I enclose) calling on all inhabitants of the Districts to obey the Ranee agreeably to the custom of the British Govt. who will for a time make proper arrangements.

6th. I am distressed to find from the paper marked D that the Ranee has heard there has also been massacre and plunder

at the station of Orai in the Jalaun district but no particulars are given.

7th. When the Govt. have troops to spare the Jalaun and Jhansee districts should be reoccupied from Cawnpore and European Troops must be sent here and to Saugor via Mirzapore.

8th. Regarding matters in Jalaun I shall probably be able to report in a few days.

9th. The Hurkaras who brought the Ranee's letters came at the risk of their lives, through a wild part of the country between Jhansee and Saugor, which they describe to be in a state of anarchy, every man's hand against that of his neighbour. They were robbed of their clothes and little property, and I have given them a present of 30 Rupees each the greater part of it in a Hoondee on Jhansee and promised them 20 Rs. more if they safely deliver my letter to the Ranee.

10th. At Nagode on the afternoon of the 28th ultimo a party of about 60 Prisoners rushed out of the Jail, ran towards the Officers' Bungalows and attempted to set fire to them, calculating, it is supposed, on the Sipahees of the 50th assisting them, but in this they were mistaken, the sipahees and Police turned out and shot down 14 of the Prisoners and seized nearly all the others—only 8 escaped and of these only one was a Prisoner of consequence. Enquiry is being made as to how the Prisoners got out of Jail.

11th. I have ordered rewards amounting in the aggregate to 500 Rs. to be paid to the most deserving of those who captured or shot the convicts.

12th. I have no further intelligence about the Lullutpoor Officers.

I have the honour to be &c.
Sd/- W. C. Erskine
*Commissioner*

Jubbulpore
2nd July 1857

Cons. No. 354

A

Translation of a Khureetah of the Ranee of Jhansee to the address of the Commr. and Agent Lieutenant Governor, Saugor Division dated (supposed) 12th June 1857

After compliments. States that the Govt. forces, stationed at Jhansie, thro' their faithlessness, cruelty and violence, killed all the European Civil and Military Officers, the clerks and all their families and the Ranee not being able to assist them for

want of Guns, and soldiers as she had only 100 or 50 people engaged in guarding her house she could render them no aid, which she very much regrets. That they the mutineers afterwards behaved with much violence against herself and servants, and extorted a great deal of money from her, and said that as the Ranee was entitled to succeed to the Reasut, she should undertake the management since the Sepoys were proceeding to Delhi to the King.

That her dependence was entirely on the British authorities who met with such a misfortune the Sepoys knowing her to be quite helpless sent her messages thro' the Tehseeldar of Jhansie, the Revenue and Judicial Seristadars of the Deputy Commissioner's and Superintendent's Courts to the effect that if she, at all hesitated to comply with their requests, they would blow up her palace with guns. Taking into consideration her position she was obliged to consent to all the requests made and put up with a great deal of annoyance, and had to pay large sums in property, as well as in cash to save her life and honour.

Knowing that no British Officers had been spared in the whole District, she was, in consideration of the welfare and protection of the people, and the District, induced to address Perwannahs to all the Govt. subordinate Agency in the shape of Police &c. to remain at their posts and perform their duties as usual, she is in continual dread of her own life and that of the inhabitants.

It was proper that the report of all this should have been made immediately, but the disaffected allowed her no opportunity for so doing. As they have this day proceeded towards Delhi, she loses no time in writing.

## B

Translation of a Khureeta from the Ranee of Jhansee to the address of the Commissioner and Agent Lieutenant Governor, Saugor Division dated the 14th June 1857.

After Compliments. States that on the 12th June she addressed the Commissioner on the subject of the awful events which have transpired in Jhansee and sent the Khut by Gungadhur Daugee and Bhowanee Hurkara. That she still continues to regret the fate of the Europeans of Jhansee and is convinced that greater cruelties could not have been enacted in any other place—a detailed narrative of them is annexed to the Khureeta.

The further news since is that in all the Elaquas subordinate to Jhansie the Chiefs have taken possession of the Gurhees,

while others are plundering the Country. That it is quite beyond her power to make any arrangement for the safety of the District as the measure would require funds, which she does not possess, nor will the Mahajuns in times like these lend her money. Up to the present time after selling her own personal property and suffering much inconvenience she has managed to save the town from being plundered and has kept up the form of the late Govt. she has entertained many people for the protection of the Town and Mofussil outposts, but without a competent Govt. Force and funds she sees the impossibility of holding on any further, she has therefore written out some remarks on the state of the district which is also sent herewith and trusts she may early be favoured with orders which she will see carried out.

C

Translation of Narrative of Events *which have transpired in Jhansee* on the 5th June 1857 about 1 P.M. all of a sudden about 50 or 60 Sepoys rose and took possession of the Magazine and Govt. Treasure and commenced firing their muskets towards Captain Skene's Bungalow. On finding this to be the case, Captain Skene, his wife and children, in company with Captain Gordon proceeded to the Town and made arrangements for guarding it and then proceeded to the Fort. A short time after this other Gentlemen also went to the Fort which they guarded with small force and the Ranee sent a few of her own Guards to the Fort for their aid.

On the 6th June everything remained as on the previous day up to noon viz., only such of the sepoys as *had* become disaffected remained so, the rest and sowars continuing quiet after 12 O' clock all became disaffected and joined together and killed all their Officers, and burnt their Bungalows as well as all the Public Offices with their Records which were all destroyed and plundered. Then they proceeded to the Jail and released all the prisoners. The Jail Darogah joined the Mutineers and they then proceeded towards the Town and surrounded the Fort, but since the Gentlemen had closed the gates of the Fort and were firing with great bravery from the Fort walls, the Mutineers could not manage to open the Gates.

On the 7th June the mutineers commenced firing Guns against the Fort walls and this very much frightened the Town's people, specially when 4 or 5 balls came and fell in the Town but every thing remained quiet.

On the 8th June the Mutineers planned an assault on the Fort and compelled 150 men of the Ranee's to join them who then all continued the attack till 3 O' clock P.M., during all this time the Gentlemen who were so few, continued with their usual vigour to defend the Fort and managed to kill and wound many of the Mutineers with their Guns. After this Captain Gordon received a musket shot which killed him. Then Captain Skene, with his wife and children and other Gentlemen came down from the Fort and intended to escape out of the Town, but the cruel Mutineers did not allow them to effect their purpose. After murdering them all in such a cruel manner that the Almighty is sure to punish them for it, they plundered some people in the Town and otherwise did as they pleased. The Ranee with the utmost difficulty managed to save her life, but her money and property were plundered. She was not able to report this before to the Commissioner or Agent since the disaffected had stopped all Dawk communication and had guarded all the roads round Jhansee which prevented every one from going out.

On the night of the 11th June they left the place and it is hoped will go to hell for their deeds.

## D

Translation of a Khureeta from the Commissioner Saugor Division to the Ranee of Jhansee dated 2nd July 1857.

After Compliments—I have received your letters of the 12th and 14th of June sent by your Hurkaras Bhuwanee and Gungadhur, and have understood the contents.

I hope very soon to be able to send Officers and Troops to restore order in Jhansee, and European Troops are being rapidly sent up the Country to the disturbed districts but until a new superintendent arrives at Jhansee, I beg you will manage the District for the British Government collecting the Revenue, raising such Police as may be necessary and making other proper arrangements such as you know the Government will approve, and when the Superintendent takes charge from you, he will not only give you no trouble, but will repay you for all your losses and expenses, and deal liberally with you.

I send you a Proclamation with my seal and signature, both in Persian and Hindee, announcing that you will until further orders rule the District in the name of the British Government and calling on all to pay you the Revenue and obey your orders.

You may depend on my word that order in all parts of India will soon be restored now that the Mutineers and Rebels, who

collected at Delhi have nearly all been killed in battle, or plundered and murdered by villagers or hung by the Government Officers in different places.

I enclose you a copy of the Proclamation I issued on hearing of the taking of Delhi.

The Kings and other great men who caused these disturbances did so in the hopes of benefiting themselves and not to benefit you or the people of the Country but they are now in confinement and the wicked who are permitted to live a short time longer bitterly repent their foolish and wicked conduct.

I also send you a copy of a letter I wrote to you on the 23rd ultimo, which you may not have received.

## PROCLAMATION FOR JHANSEE

Be it known to all people belonging to, or residing in the Government District of Jhansee, that owing to the bad conduct of the Soldiers some valuable lives have been lost, and property destroyed, but the strong and powerful British Government is sending thousands of European Soldiers to places which have been disturbed, and early arrangements will be made to restore order in Jhansee.

Until Officers and Troops reach Jhansee, the Ranee will rule in the name of the British Government and according to the Customs of the British Government and I hereby call on all great and small, to obey the Ranee, and to pay the Government Revenue to her, for which they will receive credit.

The British Army has retaken the city of Delhi and has killed thousands of the rebels, and will hang or shoot all the rebels wherever they may be found.

Cons. No. 355

No. 3032 of 1857

From

G. F. Edmondstone Esquire, Secy. to the Govt. of India

To

Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner, Saugor & Nerbudda Territories

For. Deptt. D/- Fort William the 23rd July 1857

Sir,

In reply to your letter dated the 2nd Instant No. A, forwarding translations of two letters from the Ranee of Jhansie, I am

directed to acquaint you that the Governor General in Council approves and sanctions the rewards amounting to Rs. 500, which you have authorized to be paid, to the most deserving of those who captured or shot the convicts who attempted to escape from the Nagode Jail.

2. In respect to the Ranee I am to state that though His Lordship in Council does not blame you for accepting in the circumstances in which you were placed her account of her own proceedings, and sentiments, and entrusting to her the management of the Jhansee Territory on behalf of the British Government yet this circumstance will not protect her if her account should turn out to be false. From the account supplied to Government by Major Ellis it appears that the Ranee did lend assistance to the mutineers and rebels, and that she gave guns and men.

I have the honor to be &c.
Fort William Sd/- G. F. Edmondstone
The 23rd July 1857 *Secretary to the Government of India*

Cons. no. 179

No. 317.

Copy of Service Message received by Electric Telegraph

From Major R. R. W. Ellis, Pol. Asstt. for Bundlecund & Rewah
Nagode June 26 via Mirzapore June 29, Monday 8/25 P.M.

To
Secretary to Govt. of India,
Calcutta
(Words 649 S.R.)

Accounts of the Jhansee massacre from the evidence of a Sowar Mahomedan and of two Khalassies Bugwandoss Native Surveying Estabt. and of one Khalassie of Mahomed Ismail Native Surveying Estabt. who were all four shut up in a fort with the Gentlemen and who on their release thence on the 10th Instant, came to me at Mhoaba and related the occurrence. I sent the men to Mr. Caine the Collector who also examined them. For some time since the Gentlemen had been in the habit of passing the night in the Fort, and spending the days at their Bungalows. Captain Burgess and his Estabt. had their tents

pitched within the Fort and every thing was being put in readiness to retreat into the Fort so soon as there should be occasion to do so which occurred on the evening of the 4th, some few effected their escape from the place altogether, one Gentleman name unknown reached Burwa Saugor, where meeting with a Native Surveyor of the Canal Estabt. Sahib Raee, he gave his watch and horse, and procuring a Hindoostanee dress escaped on foot; he was scarcely out of sight when two Sowars who were hotly pursuing him arrived there and recognized the horse; took Sahib Raee and the Thanadar prisoners bound back to Jhansie, where they were still when last heard of. Lieutt. Turnbull was not so fortunate, as not having been able to join the Fort he climbed a large tree he had however been seen and was shot on the tree. From the evening of the 4th until the morning of the 8th the Gentlemen in the Fort kept good their position. The Ladies assisting them in cooking for them, sending them refreshments, casting bullets. There were 55 in number altogether, inclusive of the Ladies and children and they began to get very straitened from want of provision &c., behind all the gates they had piled high heaps of stones to strengthen them & kept up defending that, one of the Cannon which had been brought too near the gates was abandoned and it was only by fixing ropes to it in the night time that the mutineers were able to regain possession of it. Lieutt. Powys was the first person killed in the Fort; the way he met his death was this: Two men, brothers, in Captain Burgess' employ one was his Jemadar declared that they would go out; they were told they would be shot down if they attempted it, but they said that they might as well be shot as stay there to be starved and accordingly commenced undoing the fastenings; one was shot immediately, the other turned on Lieutt. Powys who happened to be near him, and cut him down with his Tulwar; this one also was directly shot by Captain Burgess; the only other person Killed inside the Fort was Captain Burgess himself, who received a Bullet in the head after having, I am told, killed no less than 25; all the Natives spoke of his great skill as a marksman. The Mutineers at last having forced the Ranee to assist them with Guns and Elephants succeeded in effecting an entrance at two of the gates; they promised the Gentlemen that, if they laid down their Arms and gave themselves up quietly, their lives should be saved. The Gentlemen unfortunately trusted to their word and came out; they were tied to a long line between some trees, and after a short consultation had their heads struck off. Such Ladies as had children had to see them cut in halves before their eyes: the Sowars, it appears,

bore the principal part in all these atrocities. This took place in the afternoon of the 8th.

Sd/-. D. Kerchoff, Sergeant
*Asst Overseer*
Bundlecund Irrigation Works

Calcutta
Electric Tele. Office
The 3th June, 1857
Despatched 3/50 P.M.

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Cons. No. 266

Foreign Political Consultations, No. 266, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)

Translation of a Khareetah from the Ranee of Jhansee to the Agent Governor General for Central India dated 14th Jamadee-oolawul A. H. 1274. corresponding to 1st January 1858.

After compliments. To narrate all the strange and unexpected occurrences that took place during your absence from India is a painful task. I cannot describe the troubles and hardships I have suffered during this period. Your return to India gives me a new life. I take this opportunity to give you a brief statement of my history. At the time when the British forces mutinied at this place and plundered me of my property, and when the Chiefs of Dutya and Oorcha commenced their career of coercion and rapine, I lost no time in writing to the British Officers as per margin, and gave them detailed information as to the state of the country, some of the bearers of these letters are missing, others being plundered before reaching their destination came back to Jhansee, those that were sent to Agra returning, stated that they succeeded in sending the letters within the Fort of Agra through a Bhiestee, that their life being not safe they did not wait for a reply. Major Ellis informed me that my letters were referred to the Officer that was acting for Captain Skene. I got a letter from the Commissioner through the Chief of Goorsaray dated 23rd June, stating that I should take charge of the District. Another communication from the same Officer dated 10th July in reply to my three letters was also received, it referred me to his former communications in which a proclamation putting me in charge of the District was said to have been enclosed. On the

Commissioner of Jubbulpore
Offg. Agent G. G. for C.I.
Governor Genl. of India
Lieut. Governor of Agra
Deputy Commissioner of Jalone
Political Agent Gwalior
Major Ellis

29th July, I wrote back in reply stating that I had not received the proclamation.

2. Taking advantage of the disturbed state of the Country, the Chiefs of Dutya and Oorcha first took possession of the district of Jhansee Illaka that lay on the borders of their respective states, both to the East and West.

3. On the 3rd September (both these Chiefs acting in concert) the Forces of Oorcha composed of the Thakoors and relations of the State, and amounting to 40,000 men with 28 Guns, invaded Jhansee itself and made other Chiefs support them. Altho' the two letters received by me from the Commissioner were sent to Nuthey Khan for his perusal, yet he took no notice of them. On this, I again wrote to the Commissioner who told me in reply (by letter dated 19th October) that British forces were assembling at Jubbulpore—That he will come to Jhansee and examine the conduct of all either high or low and deal with them accordingly. In the meantime I tried my best by selling my property, taking money on Interest—collected a party of men and took steps to protect the City, and to meet the invading force. The enemy by firing guns, matchlocks and rockets (Ban) did much mischief, and killed thousands of precious Souls, my resources failing, I wrote on the 20th September and 19th October for reinforcements. After two months the besieging force retired to a village Koma situated about 3 miles from Oorcha, all the districts that were formerly occupied by the Chief of Oorcha are still in his possession. In the same manner the Ranee of Dutya still holds all the districts that fell into her hands. The authorities at Oorcha and Dutya do not give up these places, the troops sent to reoccupy them meet with opposition.

4. As was the case in former days the Pawars and Mawasas are excited to ruin by rapine and plunder the remaining districts.

5. Under these circumstances I can never expect to get rid of these enemies and to clear myself of the heavy debts without the Assistance of the British Government.

6. The Commissioner seems not prepared to move for my help as he states in his letter dated 9th November, that the services of the British troops for the present are required at his quarter. As these short sighted individuals seem unmindful of the British supremacy and do their best to ruin myself and the whole country, I beg you will give me your support in the best way you can, and thus save myself and the people who are reduced to the last extremity and are not able to cope with the enemy.

## Chapter Eight

# RAJPUTANA AND CENTRAL INDIA

Rajputana was nominally the charge of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, for the Governor-General's Agent was the officer responsible for the peace and tranquillity of this region. The area under direct British administration was very small indeed, but it included three important military stations, Ajmer, Nasirabad, and Nimach. Ajmer was regarded as the key to Rajputana even in the days of Muslim suzerainty and the fort commanding the city was garrisoned by Imperial troops. In the British days Ajmer was a red dot in the map in the vast yellow expanse of the Indian states. The states were, with one exception, all ruled by Hindu princes who traced their genealogy from the sun and the moon. The first in rank, though not in power, was Maharana Sarup Singh of Mewar, the head of the Sisodia clan. The ancestors of Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur had vastly added to their territories during the Moghul days and he was the acknowledged head of the Kachhwa Rajputs. A younger branch of the family had established itself in Alwar and Banni Singh was the reigning prince. Maharaja Takht Singh of Jodhpur[1] was the head of the Rathor clan. He had the inconvenient legacy of traditional insubordination, for his predecessor Man Singh had earned the admiration of his warlike subjects by extending his hospitality to Jaswant Rao Holkar and the Raja of Nagpur, besides chiefs of lesser note, who had the hardihood of hurling defiance at the British. A younger branch of the Jodhpur family ruled at Bikaner. The Hada Rajputs had their seats of power at Bundi and Kota,[2] the small principality of Tonk was ruled by a Muslim chieftain, the descendant of the Pindari leader Amir Khan who once terrorised the whole of Rajputana in conjunction with the Holkar. Rajputana was the stronghold of feudal chivalry and Hindu patriotism, and every

[1] Takht Singh was Chief of Idar in Gujarat before he came to the throne of Jodhpur. To the nobles of Marwar he was not a good enough Marwari. Another cause of his unpopularity was his confidence in his old associates in preference to his new subjects

[2] The Maha Rao of Kota belonged to a younger branch of the royal house of Bundi

baron had his family bard to remind him of the heroic deeds of his valiant ancestors. Bred to arms from early childhood, the Rajput was expected to resist all encroachments on his traditional rights and defend his honour at the cost of his life. If the Rajput princes had responded to the call of religion, British authority would have vanished from the desert area stretching from Delhi to Gujarat.

Sir Henry Lawrence had once been Governor-General's Agent in Rajputana. When he was summoned to pacify Oudh his elder brother, George St. Patrick Lawrence, was called upon to step into the gap. George Lawrence had seen service as a cavalry officer in Afghanistan and the Punjab. He was not new to Rajputana, for before his promotion to his brother's vacancy he was Political Agent of Mewar. He was succeeded in that office by Major Showers, an enterprising and energetic officer. Two other diplomatic officers of experience and ability were posted in Rajputana, Eden at Jaipur and Monck Mason at Jodhpur. Even in normal times they had no easy job, for there was chronic trouble between the feudal chiefs and the heads of their respective states and the barons could always count upon the unquestioning obedience of their tenants in their fight with the Maharaja. As the Maharaja had generally the support of the suzerain power, the feudal chiefs often identified the one with the other and resistance to the Maharaja was sometimes confused with revolt against the British Government. In 1857 Kesri Singh, the Chief of Salumbar in Mewar, nursed some grievances, real or supposed, against his sovereign—the Maharana of Udaipur[3] and Kusal Singh, Thakur of Awah was in arms against his liege-lord, the Maharaja of Jodhpur.[4]

When the Mutiny broke out George Lawrence was at his summer retreat in Abu. The security of Ajmer naturally became

[3] Kesri Singh's grievances were based on a point of traditional etiquette. Custom demanded that the Crown Prince of Udaipur should be present at the installation of the Chief of Salumbar. Maharana Sarup Singh had no son and Kesri Singh expected that the Maharana himself should, under the circumstances, come to Salumbar to celebrate his installation. The Maharana refused to humour him. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Chief of Salumbar represented the senior and the Maharana the junior branch of the royal house of Mewar

[4] The cause of Awah Thakur's rebellion was what he considered interference with his feudal rights. No artisan or serf could leave the Thakur's territory, but this practice was not approved by the British Government. When two "money-changers or money-lenders" left the Thakur's jurisdiction without his leave the Raja did not support the claim that they should be compelled to return. Hence the trouble. The Thakur of Awah was supported by the Thakurs of Asop and Gular. Prichard, *op. cit.*, pp 227-29. B. N Reu, *Marwad Ka Itihas*, Vol. II, pp 448-50. Nixon says that the Thakur belonged to one of the most turbulent clans of Jodhpur. He had displeased the Maharaja by interfering arbitrarily in the succession case of Beethora.

his first concern, for Ajmer was the arsenal of Rajputana and it was guarded by two companies of the 15th N.I. and no European troops were available nearer than Deesa. After the outbreak at Meerut every native regiment was more or less suspected and Lawrence felt that the treasury and arsenal could not be safely left to the keeping of the native troops. He, therefore, wrote to Deesa for necessary relief. But before the men of Her Majesty's 83rd could arrive, Colonel Dixon, Commissioner of Ajmer, had requisitioned from Mewar a Mair regiment to replace the 15th N.I. at his station. The Mairs were a primitive people with few inhibitions about food; they did not share the high caste Hindu's prejudice against the grease and had, therefore, no grievance against the Government. Lieutenant Carnell made a forced march of 39 miles with the Mair Battalion and took charge of the arsenal. The sepoys of the 15th N.I. were sent back to Nasirabad where the rest of the regiment was posted.

Nasirabad was not far off from Ajmer. Besides the 15th N.I., the 30th N.I., a battery of native Artillery, and the first Bombay Lancers were cantoned there. In May 1857 the story of flour adulterated with bone-dust found its way to the market place and the sepoys were naturally agitated. Then followed their removal from Ajmer, where they had so long been at guard, and the sepoys realised that they were no longer trusted. They noticed that the cantonment was now patrolled by the Bombay Lancers and the guns were kept limbered up and loaded. On the 27th May a man of the 15th N.I. went to Lieutenant Prichard and asked him if it was true that a European force was on its way to Nasirabad. A requisition had, in fact, been sent sometime back for European soldiers and some guns; the authorities had kept it a strict secret but the news got round and secrecy gave the movement a sinister character.[5] The Mutiny broke out at Nasirabad on the 28th "as soon as they heard of the approach of the force from Deesa."

The bulk of the two infantry regiments at first remained passive. A few men of the Light company of the 15th and the Grenadier company of the 30th, the total not exceeding twenty-seven, rushed at the guns and seized them. The Bombay Lancers, whose fidelity was not suspected, were led against the mutineers. They made a few feints of charging but did not fight.[6] After sunset

[5] Prichard, *op. cit.*, pp 35-36. Prichard thinks that it was a mistake to give the Court Martial proceedings such wide publicity. pp 24-25

[6] Prichard suspected that the lancers were in the know and had a secret understanding with the infantry regiments.

many of the 15th N.I. joined the Mutiny and many of the 30th followed suit at night. A greater number of men from the latter regiment remained true to their officers but they could not be persuaded to act against the rebels. The officers had now no alternative but to leave the station. They were followed by 120 men of the 30th N.I., but they had to give up their arms and were ordered to return to Nasirabad. Half the number deserted on their way back.[7] Gambhir Singh, a loyal native officer, had accompanied his European commanders in their flight to Beawar but he died of broken heart when he was publicly disarmed at the parade ground under the order of the Commander-in-Chief.[8]

Nimach is about one hundred and twenty miles to the south of Nasirabad near the boundary of the Rajput state of Mewar. There the troops (72nd N.I., 7th Regiment of the Gwalior contingent and a wing of the 1st Bengal Cavalry) were not long in learning what had happened at Nasirabad. On the 2nd June Colonel Abbott administered to them an oath of allegiance. The soldiers swore on the Koran and the Ganges water that they trusted each other and would remain true to their salt. Colonel Abbott, in his turn, had to swear on the Bible about his confidence in the faithful intentions of the sepoys and then they calmed down.[9] On the evening of the 3rd a rumour was heard about the approach of troops and the rumour was not unfounded. The sepoys rose in arms and the officers fled to Udaipur. The insurgents then made off for Delhi and Nimach was soon afterwards occupied by contingents from Mewar, Kota, and Bundi. On the 12th June the force from Deesa, consisting of four hundred men of Her Majesty's 83rd, the 12th Bombay Infantry, and a troop of European Horse Artillery, arrived at Nasirabad. Like the Nimach sepoys the Nasirabad rebels had also evacuated their station shortly after the outbreak and it was reoccupied without any fighting.

Nimach, however, was threatened next by a royal adventurer of remarkable ability. Shahzada Firuz Shah was the son of Nizam

[7] Prichard, *op. cit.*, p 80

[8] *Idem*, pp 23-24

[9] *Idem*, pp 122-23. Letter of Capt. Lloyd to Colonel G. St. P. Lawrence, dated June 16, 1857. Showers' account is slightly different. Colonel Abbott administered the oath to the native officers and reminded them of the oath they had taken at the time of their enlistment. "Hereupon a trooper of the Cavalry, by name Mahomed Ali Beg, stepped forth from the ranks and insolently addressing the officer Commanding, said, 'What are our officer's oaths to us? Or even our own? Why should we keep our oaths to you who have broken your own? Have you not taken Oude?' " Showers, *A Missing Chapter of the Indian Mutiny*, p 27

Bakht, a direct descendant of the first Bahadur Shah.[10] He left Delhi in 1855 and visited Mecca among other places before he landed at Bombay in May 1857. He was still in his twenties ; a century earlier a young man of his personality and resourcefulness might have carved out a kingdom, a century later he might have risen to eminence as a popular leader, but he came an age too late and an age too early, and his adventures ended in failure and in a self-imposed exile. He is said to have proceeded to Delhi from Bombay but the report seems to be without any basis. In June he appeared near Sitamau. We next find him near Mandisore where he unfurled the green banner of the faith and declared a Jehad or religious war against the British. The Governor of Mandisore expelled him from the town and he betook himself to an obscure mosque. A prince in a Fakir's garb is a political force more potent than a prince at the head of an army, and Firuz Shah soon attracted a considerable following, the majority of whom were Afghan and Mekrani Muslims. They seized the town and took the Governor and the Police prefect (Kotwal) prisoners.[11] Firuz Shah was formally installed as King and a man called Mirzaji whose ancestors were the izaradars of Mandisore was appointed his chief minister. He next addressed circular letters to the neighbouring princes of Pratabgarh, Jawra, Sitamau, Ratlam and the Chief of Salumbar, calling upon them to acknowledge the new power[12] but none responded except Abdul Sattar Khan, a scion of the ruling house of Jawra.[13] By September his followers numbered seventeen to eighteen thousand. In November the Shahzada felt strong enough to extend his jurisdiction and sent his troops against Nimach. They defeated a contingent force at Jiran and laid siege to the fort and would have reduced the place but for the timely appearance of Sir Henry Durand.

Henry Marion Durand was then officiating as Governor-General's Agent in Central India with headquarters at Indore. The permanent incumbent, Sir Robert Hamilton, had gone home on leave. Durand came to India with a commission in the Bengal Engineers and was attached to the Department of Public works. Like many of the mutiny heroes, he distinguished himself in the First Afghan War. In 1842 Lord Ellenborough appointed Durand his Private Secretary and he was present at the battle of Maha-

[10] There were seven other Mirza Firuz in the royal family of Delhi. Letter No. 24 from Commissioner and Superintendent of Delhi District to the Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, dated 28 February, 1860

[11] The Kotwal was forcibly made a Muslim. Showers, *op. cit.*, p 90

[12] *Idem*, pp 89-93

[13] *Idem*, p 96

rajpur. He next held the office of Commissioner of Tenasserim where he offended the European mercantile interests to such an extent that he was removed from his post. His services in the Second Sikh War were rewarded with a political appointment at Gwalior. He was Political Agent at Bhopal before he was appointed to officiate for Sir Robert Hamilton at Indore.

The Central Indian Agency had under its supervision six Indian states: Gwalior, Indore, Dhar, and Dewas were ruled by Maratha princes and once formed parts of the empire over which the Peshwa held his sway. Dhar and Dewas were small principalities and never enjoyed the political importance shared by their powerful neighbours of Gwalior and Indore. Bhopal and Jawra were Muslim states, the first of which acknowledged Maratha hegemony before British overlordship was established and the second was a Maratha fief granted to a Muslim adventurer.

Tukoji Rao II was a young man of twenty-one when the Mutiny broke out at Indore. The Gwalior contingent mutinied in the second week of June but there was no disturbance at Indore till the 1st July. While there was complete understanding between Macpherson and Jayaji Rao Sindhia, the relations between Durand and Tukoji Rao were rather strained. Sir Robert Hamilton, to whom the young Holkar was indebted for his throne, not only tolerated but encouraged frank expression of opinion. Sir Henry Durand had different views about court etiquette, and candid criticism of the suzerain Government in an open Darbar by the ruler or his advisers was treated by him not merely as bad manners but intolerable impertinence.[14] There was, therefore, a lamentable lack of that sympathy and understanding between the Governor-General's Agent and the Indian ruler of Indore which the crisis demanded. The British troops were posted at Mhow about thirteen miles from Indore. The native elements vastly predominated in the garrison but there was a European company of artillery which could hold the Indian troops in check. The Holkar had an army of 7,500 of all arms but it was not concentrated at his capital and in its efficiency or allegiance he had no confidence. Durand, on the other hand, was not prepared to do anything which might cause panic in the city and the cantonment. At the same time he could not rely completely on

[14] Kaye observes that Durand "seems never to have had any feeling of personal kindness towards the young Maharajah. There was an antipathy which, perhaps, was reciprocated." Forrest retorts, "A British Resident of less imperious temper than Durand would not tolerate a native ruler ventilating his grievance against the Government of which he was the representative, in the presence of his chief people." Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 85

the fidelity of the Indian regiments at Mhow. He knew that a column under Colonel Woodburn was on its way to Central India. But the Indian troops had learnt to look upon the Europeans with fear and suspicion. Unlike many of his colleagues, Durand was not blind to the psychological aspects of his problem. "The 23rd Native Infantry is," he wrote on the 13th of June, "I think, more disposed to remain quiet than the wing of the 1st Cavalry. The troopers of the latter are said to be taunting and urging the infantry to rise. Both, however, are in fear of the European battery, and also of the guns and troops here. They are in fear, too, of the column from Bombay, which they suspect to have a punitive mission for themselves. The officers are endeavouring to assure them that they have nothing to dread provided they remain orderly and quiet. If the Mhow troops rise, it will probably be as much owing to the apprehensions so insidiously spread amongst them, of stern measures being in store for suspected corps, as to anything else. We sadly want the capture of Delhi to act as a sedative on chiefs and people and the smouldering spirit of revolt."[15] But Delhi did not fall and Woodburn did not come. He was detained at Aurangabad in the Nizam's dominions.

On the 1st of July the Residency was attacked, not by the suspected troops of Mhow but by the Holkar's force. Sadat Khan, an officer of the Holkar's cavalry,[16] galloped to the gunners detailed for the protection of the Residency and announced that it was the Maharaja's order that the Sahebs should be killed. They at once opened fire on the Residency. Durand had requisitioned about three hundred men of the Malwa Bhil contingent and two companies of troopers of the Bhopal contingent. The Bhopal contingent turned their muskets against their officers. The Bhils had no racial or religious ties with the high caste sepoys and were expected to stand staunchly by their masters as the Mairs had done, but at this crisis they were found wanting. The Mehidpur contingent also held sullenly aloof. A message had indeed been sent to Mhow for the European artillery but Holkar's cavalry were now coming to the support of the gunners. A quick decision was demanded. The Residency was abandoned. Captain Hungerford had left Mhow with his artillery as soon as practicable, but while half way to Indore he learnt of the evacuation of the Residency and turned back. Durand could not expect him before midday and he could hold on till then but he had to think of the

[15] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 92
[16] His father also had served in the Indore army

women and children. "Although he could have held the Residency for a few hours longer," Travers pointed out, "we should have been unable to withdraw the poor helpless women and children."[17] Durand might have gone to Mhow and returned with Hungerford, but he suspected the fidelity of the Holkar as his troops had attacked the Residency apparently under his orders. The first part of the journey was fraught with danger, and it was considered unwise to take the risk. The Sikhs and the Bhopal soldiers suggested Sihor as a refuge. So to Sihor, outside Holkar's jurisdiction, Durand retired.

The Holkar, however, was not to blame. He had plainly warned Durand that his own troops were not more reliable than the contingent sepoys. He was not the only prince who had no control over his army and he was as helpless against the armed forces of his state as the Governor-General's Agent.[18] The Maratha rulers of Malwa were in reality outsiders who ruled by the right of conquest and they could not always count upon the loyalty of the local people. The Holkar was suspected, because Sadat Khan had gone straight to the Darbar in his blood-stained clothes after the attack on the Residency and had openly vaunted about his share in the morning's business. But the Holkar could not arrest him without imperilling his own person and he had also to think of the ladies in the palace. He was guilty of temporising, but was not the Sindhia also playing for time when he took the rebel contingent into his pay? But, in the one case the prince and the political officer were working together, in the other the political officer did not trust the prince. In both, English blood had been murderously shed by the insurgents.

Trouble at Indore was within a few hours followed by an outbreak at Mhow. In the morning both the infantry and the cavalry regiments obeyed their officers and took up their posts on the Indore road in anticipation of any attack from that direction. They had captured two of Holkar's guns, then on their way to the city, after killing a few of the gunners. This was apparently made the excuse for the Mutiny at Mhow. Colonel Platts, the commanding officer, tried to argue with his men and was shot down. Two other officers shared his fate. But Captain Hungerford held the fort with his artillery. Next day the mutineers left Mhow for Indore and were soon afterwards on their way to Gwalior. From Gwalior they went to Dholpur. If Sadat Khan is to be believed, he was relieved of his command at Gwalior by

[17] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 98

[18] It should be noted that the troops of Tonk, Kota, Gwalior, Bhopal, and Bharatpur had rebelled though the rulers remained staunch

Shahzada Firuz Shah who had come there from Dholpur.[19] The Indore rebels failed in persuading the Gwalior contingent to join them in their expedition against Agra. They crossed the Chambal by crude conveyances, built on overturned earthen jars; and halted at Dholpur for quite a long time. When they arrived at Agra they found themselves forestalled by Greathed's column from Delhi.

Meanwhile, Hungerford found himself in a position of responsibility far above his office. The Governor-General's Agent was gone. The Holkar's loyalty was suspected. He assumed political authority and opened correspondence with the Holkar on the one hand and the Government of Bombay on the other. He wanted to ascertain the attitude of the Holkar so that he might take such measures as the situation demanded. The Bombay Government could lend legal sanction to the authority he had assumed without reference to the Central authorities. To the Holkar he addressed a straightforward enquiry. He had heard that His Highness had helped the insurgents with arms, ammunition, and provision. "These reports", he wrote, "are probably very much exaggerated: I do not believe them. You owe so much to the British, and can be so utterly ruined by showing enmity towards them, that I do not believe you can be so blind to your own interests as to afford aid and show friendship to the enemies of the British Government. Let me understand, therefore, from yourself what your wishes are."[20] The Holkar sent his Prime Minister and Treasurer with his reply, and his account of the insurrection at Indore is well worth perusing. "No one in the world regrets more than I do the most heartrending catastrophe which befell at Indore and at Mhow. My troops, probably under the influence of the Mhow mutineers, mutinied openly on the morning of the 1st instant; and the very companies and guns that were sent to protect the Residency picked up a general quarrel with some one and began at once to fire upon the Residency house. The mischief done was great; many lives were lost. No companies of the Contingent, &c, assisted the British officers; but it is cheering to hear that Colonel Durand, Mr. Shakespear and family, and others went away quite safe. The rascals then plundered the whole Residency. The next morning the Mhow troops, after committing similar brutalities, arrived here; the whole town was in a panic. A greater part of my troops were

[19] See Proceedings of the trial of Sadat Khan, Indore Residency Nos. 177-233, 10 Sept., 1874

[20] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*. Vol. III, p 109

in open mutiny, and what remained could not be trusted. The Mahomedans raised a standard of 'Deen,' and the disorder was complete. Under these sad circumstances the mutineers exacted their own terms. They not only demanded the heads of a few Europeans whom I had concealed in my own palace, but also of a few officers of the court who were supposed to be in the British interest. They prepared to plunder and destroy all if I myself did not come out. I had no alternative left but to offer them my own person, but I would not allow the poor Europeans to be touched before being killed myself. After plundering the British treasury, and the carriage from the town, and taking with them all the guns which had gone over to them in a state of mutiny, all the mutineers of this place and Mhow have marched off last night in a body towards Dewass. The tale is a painful one, and will be described to you in detail by Rao Ramchunder and Bukshee Khooman Sing, who are bearers of this to you. I have not, even in a dream, ever deviated from the path of friendship and allegiance to the British Government. I know their sense of justice and honour will make them pause before they suspect, even for a moment, a friendly chief, who is so sensible of the obligations he owes to them, and is ready to do any thing for them; but there are catastrophes in this world which cannot be controlled, and the one that has happened is one of the kind."[21]

Hungerford was satisfied that the Holkar was anxious to prove his fidelity and reported to the Government, "The country is perfectly quiet, the Maharajah of Indore most anxious for opportunities to prove his friendship and fidelity to the Government. . . . The Maharajah's tributaries, having discovered the mistake they first fell into of thinking Holkar inimical to the British, have suppressed all disorders in their own districts, and are willing to assist in maintaining order. Some of the Maharajah's troops alone show a bad spirit, and are still mutinous and disaffected ; but they will, I think, be restrained from any further excess, and on the arival of European troops the Maharajah will at once disarm and punish them."[22] Hungerford's unauthorised assumption of political responsibility did not meet with Durand's approval, but he had the support of Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, who was convinced that Hungerford was justified in not wasting time over formalities prescribed for normal times.

The rumour that the Holkar had joined the mutineers led to

[21] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, pp 110-11
[22] *Idem*, Vol. III, pp 115-16

disorder outside Indore. The Raja of Amjhera attacked the small town of Bhopawar. The few Englishmen at the station had to rely upon a small Bhil corps, but as at Indore, the Bhils were not in a mood to fight and all but twenty had slunk away under cover of night. The fugitives found asylum with the minor Raja of Jhabua but his Arab troops demanded their death. The Raja, however, took the precaution of guarding them with his faithful Rajput retainers. From this insecure position the party was at last rescued by horsemen sent by the Holkar.

Meanwhile Durand was chafing for action. He urged upon Woodburn to march to Malwa at once. He explained to the Government of India the urgent need of holding the Narmada line as a cordon sanitaire to prevent the contagion from spreading to the south. Against the express orders of the Commissioner of Nagpur to the contrary, he authorised the military officers to hang on to their respective posts. General Woodburn at last resigned on account of ill health and the Bombay column under Brigadier Stuart left for Mhow via Asirgarh. The march commenced on the 12th July and on the 22nd the column encamped near Asirgarh where Durand joined Brigadier Stuart. Mhow was relieved on the 2nd August. Durand had to suspend further operations during the rainy season. With the Holkar he was not willing to resume normal relations until his innocence was satisfactorily proved.

As soon as the season permitted Durand led the column against Dhar, a city of great antiquity and capital of a small Maratha state of the same name. The Raja was a minor, and the Arab and Afghan mercenaries in his service rose against the British as soon as they heard of the attack on the Indore Residency. In Malwa the foreign mercenaries took the principal part in the Mutiny and Lowe says that an Armenian was found among the rebels in Bundelkhand by Sir Robert Hamilton, the next year.[23] The mother and uncle of the young Raja of Dhar were suspected to have instigated the revolt.[24] Dhar is only thirty-two miles from Indore and Durand appeared before the fort on the 22nd October. The garrison refused to surrender and the place

[23] Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 229. Lowe says, "he was a good-looking, fair-complexioned young man, and was dressed in very gaudy apparel."

[24] From a reply which the garrison gave to Brigadier Stuart's demand of unconditional surrender, it does not appear that they were fighting in the Raja's interest. "This evening the Brigadier received a letter from the fort requesting to know upon what terms a surrender would be granted. An unconditional one was the reply, to which they said, 'Very good, we don't care ; you are only destroying the Rajah of Dhar's property, not ours ; we have only lost a few men, but our cattle are being killed by the shells.' So we went on with the siege." *Idem*, p 77

was besieged. Before it could be stormed the defenders left unnoticed and safely effected their escape. The young Raja came out to welcome the Governor-General's Agent. The fort was razed to the ground and the state was confiscated but later restored to the minor prince.

From Dhar the column marched to Mandisore, the headquarters of Firuz Shah. On the way Durand was warmly welcomed by the Nawab of Jawra, who had lately faced serious troubles in his own state. Firuz Shah's troops had to raise the siege of Nimach to meet their adversaries and they were defeated at Garoria. The capture of Garoria made their position at Mandisore untenable. The prince had left earlier to assume command of the Indore rebels at Gwalior. On the 15th of December Durand returned to Indore; the next day he made over his charge to Sir Robert Hamilton, while Sir Hugh Rose assumed the command of the force now styled as the Central India Field Force.

In the meantime, Rajputana was not quiet. The rulers steadily stood by their overlords but the troops were excited over the question of religion. In August there was a minor outbreak in the Ajmer jail which was easily suppressed. Then followed a slight *emeute* among the lancers of the Bombay Army at Nasirabad. The Bombay troops were considered to be more dependable than the Bengal sepoys, and insubordination in their ranks was not generally apprehended. The troubles were started by a single trooper, but when he was pursued, he found an asylum in the lines of the 12th Bombay Infantry. In the third week of the month a few men of the Jodhpur legion at Andara crept to Mount Abu early one morning under cover of a dense fog and started shooting through the windows of the sleeping Europeans. Their fire caused no casualty except one. General Lawrence's son was wounded in the thigh while hurrying to the bungalow of Captain Hall, but he soon recovered. The mutineers, foiled in their attack on Abu, now turned to Airánpura where the main body of the legion was cantoned. The only Europeans at the station were Lieutenant Conolly, two sergeants and their families. Conolly tried to pacify the troopers but failed; he tried to rally the Bhils against the Hindus and Muslims, but the Bhils, though loyal, would not or could not fight against such heavy odds. Conolly and the other Europeans would have doubtless been murdered but for the brave intervention of Risaldar Abbas Ali. Abbas Ali, in fact, offered to desert the rebels with a large number of the legionaries, if they were assured of pardon and continued employment. But Monck Mason felt that he had no

authority to come to terms with rebels in arms.[25] Abbas Ali had, therefore, no alternative but to cast in his lot with the rest of the legion. They next pushed on towards Ajmer through Jodhpur territories. The Thakur of Awah was waging a private war with his liege-lord, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, and the Maharaja had sent a small force under a trusted officer Anad Singh. The Thakur offered to submit, if the Political Agent, Monck Mason accepted his terms. It is admitted that the terms offered were more of sentimental than political significance, and their acceptance would have caused no serious embarrassment. But Monck Mason again demurred. The Thakur's quarrel was with the Maharaja and not with the British Government. The Maharaja was not prepared to forgive the Thakur without a frank and unqualified confession of errors on his part; and the Political Agent, therefore, deemed it unwise to intervene. The Thakur of Awah opened negotiations with the rebel legion which had reached his neighbourhood and admitted them into his fort. On September 8 they fell on the Jodhpur camp at Pali and routed the Maharaja's troops. Anad Singh was killed, his guns and military stores fell into the hands of the rebels. General Lawrence now felt that the Thakur and his new allies could not be left alone without serious loss of prestige, as the British were closely identified with the Jodhpur cause. But he could not muster sufficient troops to reduce a fort of the strength and size of Awah. All that he could attempt was a demonstration before the fort. By a feigned retreat he tried to lure the garrison out in the open but they refused to be tempted. He had, therefore, no alternative but to retreat, and a retreat was popularly interpreted as a defeat. Lawrence's expedition against Awah caused the loss of one valuable life. Monck Mason had come from Jodhpur with a view to joining the Governor-General's Agent. He had actually arrived within a few yards of the camp when, misled by the sound of a bugle, he strayed into the rebel lines and was promptly put to death. The Thakur of Awah gave the body a decent burial when it was discovered the next morning.[26] But the alliance between Awah and the legion proved short-lived. The legion left the Thakur to fight a lone hand and went on its way to Delhi and was completely defeated by Gerard at Narnul in November. The Thakur of Awah had to evacuate his stronghold in January 1858.

[25] This was not probably the only cause. Prichard argues that it might not be prudent to trust a strong armed party. Prichard, *op. cit.*, p 226

[26] It was alleged at the time that the body was beheaded and the head exhibited at the gates of Awah. But at the trial this allegation was not substantiated.

He took refuge with his friends in Mewar[27] and later surrendered to the British authorities. He was tried by a Commission, presided over by Major Taylor, on two charges: (1) of giving asylum to the murderers of Captain Monck Mason, and (2) of acting as a leader of the rebels against the British Government from August 1857 to January 1858; but he was acquitted as the evidence produced did not warrant conviction.

A Rajput chief of a much higher rank than that of Thakur Kusal Singh of Awah was accused of a more serious offence. Monck Mason was not the only victim of the insurrection in Rajputana. Major Burton, Political Agent of Kota, also lost his life on the 15th October at the hands of the insurgents there. With him were killed two of his sons and the Maha Rao was suspected of complicity with the rebels.[28] Major Burton had proceeded to relieve Nimach with the Kota contingent in June and General Lawrence did not consider it safe to permit him to return to his post. So he stayed at Nimach with his family. After Monck Mason's death and Lawrence's retreat from Awah, he wanted to return to Kota as he thought that his presence might be a source of strength to the Maha Rao. But Nand Kisore, the Maha Rao's agent, did not think the time opportune as he had heard of anti-European feelings amongst the troops. Burton, however, postponed his journey but did not abandon his idea of returning to Kota. Later Nand Kisore brought more favourable reports. The Maha Rao had tried to remove some of the more rebellious spirits to the interior and had also received a solemn assurance from the leader of his troops that the Political Agent might come back without any fear of harm. Major Burton left Nimach with two of his sons, one twenty-one, and the other sixteen, years of age. After crossing the Chambal Nand Kisore again felt nervous and advised Burton to wait there for a few days. Burton's son made light of his objections and the Major said that he would go to Bundi if he was not wanted at Kota. Nand Kisore seems to have funked when he found that Burton had made up his mind and offered no further objection. On his arrival Burton noticed nothing to be worried about. The Maha Rao paid him a formal visit and he returned it. During his interview Burton urged upon the Maha Rao the necessity of punishing a few disloyal persons. Malleson alleges that the Maha Rao betrayed this secret and that caused the tragedy.[29] The city

[27] The chief of Kotharia was his host.

[28] My account is based on the proceedings of the enquiry. Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 324-27, 5 Aug., 1859

[29] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 569. This, however, could not be proved.

people had no warning of the impending rising and a merchant actually went to the Residency with his wares shortly before the attack. The rebels led by Mehrab Khan and Lala Jai Lal murdered Messrs. Salder and Saviell and then attacked the Residency. The Maha Rao was prevented from leaving his palace by the Adjutant on guard and sent a man called Devi Lal to persuade the troops not to molest the Political Agent. Devi Lal's mission was unsuccessful and he was executed by the angry insurgents. Burton and his two sons, with none else to defend them, fought as long as they could but were ultimately killed. Jai Lal immediately usurped all authority at Kota and compelled the Maha Rao to sign a paper accepting the blame for everything that had happened. Lawrence was helpless at the time and could not go against Kota until March 1858 when reinforcements arrived from Bombay under Major General H. G. Roberts. The Maha Rao had, in the meantime, succeeded in clearing the environs of his palace and a part of his capital of the rebels with the help of the loyal remnant of his army and a force sent by the Raja of Karauli. The rest of the town remained in rebel hands till the capture of the fort on the 30th of March. The British troops did not return to Nimach until the Maha Rao's authority was fully restored.

Nimach reminds us of the rising of the 3rd June. The insurgents did not wait long after their officers had left. Delhi called them but on the way to the metropolis they decided to pay a brief visit to Agra. Agra was the headquarters of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. The Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Colvin, was a civil servant of long experience. As the trusted adviser of Lord Auckland, he had been held responsible by many critics for the Afghan war and the disaster associated with it. The news of Meerut came to him as a surprise but he at once called a council of war. The Lieutenant-Governor himself proposed to send the Christian population to the fort, but opinion was very much divided at Agra; and it soon became evident that the Lieutenant-Governor no longer possessed the resolution and vigour to control his colleagues who had widely divergent views. His first decision was influenced by Mr. Drummond who was of opinion that law and order could be maintained by the police force. Accordingly, the police was strengthened with new recruits but others had no confidence in their loyalty. The Mutiny was regarded as a purely Muslim movement and Colvin decided to exploit the Hindu-Muslim differences by employing the troops of the Maratha state of Gwalior and the Jat state of Bharatpur, the traditional enemies of the Muslim

house of Delhi. Both the Rajas readily responded to the Lieutenant-Governor's requisition but the troops of Bharatpur were an ill-armed and ill-disciplined rabble,[30] while the loyalty of Sindhia's men according to that Chief himself was not above suspicion. The Lieutenant-Governor next held a grand parade of the European and Indian troops. Strangely enough, he made a reference to the murder of Miss Jennings at Delhi while advising the Europeans not to distrust the Indian troops.[31] He assured the sepoys in a Hindustani speech that he had the fullest confidence in their fidelity, but when he asked anybody who had any complaint or who wanted to leave the colours to come forward, they raised a shout but nobody came forward. For a few days nothing unusual or abnormal happened. The courts were thronged with litigants, the schools had their normal attendance and routine work went on as usual.

The first note of alarm came from nearby Aligarh. The story how the Sappers and Miners had been attacked at Meerut reached that city, but the sepoys betrayed no sign of disquiet. A Brahman made treasonable proposals to two sepoys. He was arrested and sentenced to death by a Court Martial but his execution expedited the open outburst of the dormant disaffection. "Behold a martyr to our faith", shouted a sepoy to his comrades and the mine exploded. Not a Christian life was taken but British authority collapsed immediately. Men, women, and children sought their safety in flight and among the fugitives who reached Agra was Lady Outram. The rising at Aligarh was followed by outbreaks at Mainpuri and Etawah. Tej Singh,[32] the Raja of Mainpuri, had suffered badly at the hands of the settlement officers but a rival claimant to his estates, Rao Bhavani Singh, his uncle, identified himself with the British cause.

The news of these risings caused a panic at Agra and confusion was worse confounded by the divided counsels. At this crisis Colonel Troup of Bareilly addressed a strong appeal to Colvin, urging upon him the necessity of allaying the fear which according to him "is the principal cause of all that is going on at present among the men of the Native Army." He unhesitatingly gave it

[30] Mark Thornhill says of the Bharatpur troops left at Mathura, "I found it a mere herd of timid villagers ; none of the men had uniforms, only a portion had firearms, and their firearms were the commonest kind of matchlock ; their powder was damp and would not explode, and their bullets were old battered musket balls, dug out of our targets." Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p 81

[31] He said, "the rascals at Delhi have killed a clergyman's daughter, and if you have to meet them in the field, you will not forget this" ! Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 150

[32] He was the head of the Chauhan Rajputs. His family lost nearly three-fourths of the estates by the settlement of 1840.

as his unqualified opinion that "in all that is said or done to the Native soldier during the present state of excitement no allusion should be made to the retribution or punishment awaiting those who have disgraced the name of soldiers". He added, "Unless this comes direct from yourself or the Government (for the word of any intermediate authority would be of no avail), it will be of little use." On May 25, Colvin issued a proclamation as suggested by Troup: "Soldiers engaged in the late disturbances, who are desirous of going to their own homes, and who give up their arms at the nearest Government civil or military post, and retire quietly, shall be permitted to do so unmolested. Many faithful soldiers have been driven into resistance to Government only because they were in the ranks and could not escape from them, and because they really thought their feelings of religion and honour injured by the measures of Government. This feeling was wholly a mistake, but it acted on men's minds. A proclamation of the Governor-General now issued is perfectly explicit, and will remove all doubts on these points. Every evil-minded instigator in the disturbance, and those guilty of heinous crimes against private persons, shall be punished. All those who appear in arms against the Government after this notification is known shall be treated as open enemies."[33] The proclamation evoked loud protest and bitter criticism and was repudiated by the Governor-General himself. A new proclamation was issued instead, which made it clear that "unconditional pardon cannot be extended to those regiments which have killed or wounded their officers or other persons, or which have been concerned in the commission of cruel outrages."[34] Fresh news of risings at Mathura and Hodul arrived. He found his advisers strongly divided and Colvin's health broke under the strain. On the 31st of May the two native regiments at Agra were disarmed and most of the men went home on leave.

When the Lieutenant-Governor, then a physical wreck, was further distracted by the news of fresh disasters in Rohilkhand, Malwa, and Bundelkhand, and his official responsibilities had been transferred to a Council of Administration, information arrived of the near approach of the Nimach troops. They had a fresh accession of strength from the defection of the Kota contingent. The contingent had come to reinforce the garrison at Agra. But their good faith was suspected and it was decided to apply a test to them. Their infantry and horse were ordered to accom-

[33] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, pp 230-33
[34] *Idem*, Vol. III, p 235

pany the force in its march against the insurgents, while their guns should be left with the reserve Europeans for the protection of the cantonment.[35] They did not deem it safe to part with their artillery and they went to the insurgent camp. Brigadier Polwhele had at first decided to await the Nimach rebels at Agra, but he later changed his mind and went out to fight them. The battle of Shahganj ended in a complete defeat but luckily for the British the victors did not press their advantage. The Nimach men did not enter Agra but the city mob rose and the Christian population, nearly six thousand in number, took shelter in the fort. It was a motley crowd, says an inmate, "in which not only was every part of our British Isles represented, but we had also unwilling delegates from many parts of Europe and America. Nuns from the banks of the Garronne and the Loire, priests from Sicily and Rome, missionaries from Ohio and Basle, mixed with rope-dancers from Paris, and pedlars from Armenia. Besides these we had Calcutta Baboos and Parsee merchants." At first Indians were excluded from the fort but it was soon found that the Europeans and Eurasians could not look after their daily needs and there were not a sufficient number of Christian servants to attend them all. After two or three days the servants came back and brought with them a horde of washermen, water-carriers, tailors, shepherds, cooks, and sweepers. Life in the fort of Agra offered a striking contrast to life in the Residency at Lucknow.

Agra was not besieged but the garrison was not at first aware of the fact. Once an alarm was raised by a sound of firing. When some of the inmates rushed to the spot with their guns they found a number of English soldiers and men out of uniform shooting through stakes. The shots were not returned for there was no enemy anywhere and it was later discovered that the soldiers were firing for their own amusement at a donkey and a flock of vultures! "The donkey went on grazing, and the vultures, gorged with the flesh of some dead sheep lying near, sat placid."[36] "There was no sanitary arrangement and the fort was full of filth of all sorts". "For the first two days", writes Thornhill, "all was bewilderment; on the third, as the condition of things began to be realised, murmurs arose against the autho-

[35] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. III, pp 380-81. The contingent was distrusted from the beginning and had been sent to Mathura. "Some of Mr Colvin's advisers thought the force mutinous and better away. Others put faith in its loyalty, and wished it brought in to take the place of the disbanded regiments." Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p 110. Again, "They feared the men intended to mutiny. They adopted a precaution that was almost certain to insure their doing so. They sent an order for the force to separate. The artillery was directed to proceed to one place, the cavalry to another, and the infantry to a third." p 185

[36] Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p 167

rities. The discontent was increased by rumours, at first whispered, soon openly spoken, that in real fact authorities there were none. Mr. Colvin's mind, it was said, had given way, and the General become imbecile. The first of these statements was an exaggeration, the other altogether untrue; but at the time they both obtained general credence."[37] The return of the servants relieved the tension, the soldiers and the civilians discovered that there was no enemy anywhere and they were free to go out.

The defeat of Shahganj cost Brigadier Polwhele his command and he was succeeded by Colonel Cotton. Some of the refugees had heard of hidden hoards of the Moghuls and treasure-hunting became the chief recreation. But all their labours were lost in ridicule. Then the numerous vaults were explored in search of a secret passage, but only a heap of human bones was brought to light. The palace, of course, had its ghosts but ghost-hunting is not as entertaining as ghost stories. On the whole, the inmates of the fort had rather a good time. But there was no harmony between the civilian and the military. The military succeeded in having their own way in the demolition of a mosque in the face of civilian opposition. "They, however, had a consolation." If the mosque was doomed, so was the beautiful new residence of the military favourite Joti Prasad, the Commissariat contractor. "In this expectation they were doomed to disappointment. The preliminary difficulties having been arranged, an army of workmen were let loose in the suburb. For some days they were concealed in a cloud of dust, out of which occasionally came the sound of explosions. When the dust cleared away, the mosque had gone, the suburb had gone, but to the indignation of the civil authorities the house of Jotee Pershand appeared as before—bright with fresh paint, white and triumphant."[38] But the squabbles went on. "The civil authorities disputed with the military, the militia with the regulars, and all among themselves; and, as if this were not enough, some of the civil officials made a very unprovoked attack on the Roman Catholic bishop and clergy."[39]

At last the Agra authorities turned to more serious things and decided to make a demonstration of their military power. But the expedition did not achieve anything. It went as far as Hathras, fought a few fanatic Ghazis and came back. The rebels were in possession of the town as soon as the column turned back.

On the 9th September Colvin passed away. In ordinary times

[37] Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp 174-75
[38] *Idem*, p 261
[39] *Idem*, p. 262

his long and wide experience, his love of fair play, and his respect for the right of the individual would have earned him the respect of the governed. But the Mutiny demanded a man of stronger mettle which he did not possess. His ill health may to some extent explain his vacillation. He had with him a number of able men at Agra but he could not make them work in harmony. His death was followed by the fall of Delhi but, cheering as the news was, it was not without its dark side. The rebels, expelled from Delhi, came to Mathura, and it was uncertain which way they would go. The Indore mutineers were also reported at Dholpur. Should they combine and attack Agra from two sides, how long could the fort be held? However, the Delhi rebels crossed the Jumna and the Indore insurgents were not in a hurry to move. But the proximity of the rebels had caused a great panic and confusion at Agra. It was learnt that a column under Colonel Greathed had been sent from Delhi to clear the Doab and it had reached a place about forty miles from Agra. To Greathed was sent an urgent appeal for relief, and on the 10th October Greathed crossed the Jumna. It was a band of wild-looking men in tattered uniforms that Greathed brought to the relief of Agra. There was nothing spectacular as the men filed past. "The spectacle was imposing from the impression it gave of strength and power, but it had nothing of the show and glitter of a review. The Lancers wore uniforms of plain blue cloth, and the rest, both the Sikhs and English, were dressed in drab-coloured cotton. The poles of the lances were of plain ash, and had neither varnish, pennons, nor other decoration. In short, it was the reality of war—not its dress rehearsal."[40] Greathed was told that there was no imminent danger from the Indore people, for they were, according to the information of the Intelligence Department, on the other side of the Khara Nadi, but hardly had the tents been struck when a cannon shot announced the advent of the enemy. The insurgents had surprised Greathed, and Greathed had also unwittingly taken them by surprise, for neither party was aware of the presence of the other. While the Agra people thought that the insurgents were miles away, the Indore rebels had no information about Greathed's arrival. The battle ended in a British victory but pursuit of the defeated sepoys was somewhat delayed because Colonel Cotton as the senior officer decided to exercise his right and assume the command. Agra was henceforth safe and Greathed was free to resume his way to Kanpur. The city gradually returned to its normal life.

[40] Thornhill, *op. cit.*, p 295

## Chapter Nine

# THE PUNJAB

The Punjab was the problem province. It was annexed in 1849 and was the home of a warlike people. But the people were divided among themselves and in "their jealous rivalry" the new rulers found their security. "To keep the two classes in mutual check—to counterbalance race by race and creed by creed" was the aim of the British administration. The administration was run by a band of very able men, in fact the pick of the civil service had been drafted to the Punjab from the older provinces of the east. In the Punjab the Purbiah sepoy was not in an overwhelming majority. Of the sixty thousand men cantoned at different stations from Ambala to Mardan the Hindustanis numbered 36,000 against 24,000 Europeans and Punjabis.[1] Between the Sikh and the Purbiah there was no love lost and Cave-Browne states that the term 'Purbiah' was deliberately revived, "for it revived the contempt and hatred with which the class had ever been regarded; it widened the breach between the Punjabee and the Hindostanee, and rendered any coalition the more difficult."[2] The Purbiah sepoy in the Punjab, except in the border districts of Gurgaon, Rewari, and Hissar was not only in a strange but in a hostile country. A tradition that promised the followers of the Guru the plunder of Delhi was also revived and the Sikhs were assured that the prophecy would come true under British leadership.

The news of Meerut and Delhi reached Lahore on the morning of 12th May. Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, was at Rawalpindi on his way to Murree. His mantle had fallen on Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner. He took into his confidence the principal civil and military officers at the station and decided to disarm the native troops at Mian-Mir with the concurrence of Brigadier Corbett. The original plan was to deprive them of their ammunition and percussion caps but a Sikh non-commissioned officer in the police force brought the

[1] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 41
[2] *Idem*, preface, pp xv-xvi

report of a widespread conspiracy.[3] There was no time to examine the sources of the report and it was decided to avoid all risks by disarming the Indian regiments altogether. Montgomery and his friends kept their decision a strict secret. A ball scheduled for the 12th night at the Mian-Mir cantonment was not postponed but early in the morning a parade was held apparently to read the general order disbanding the 34th N.I. at Barrackpur. At the end of the parade, the 16th, 26th, and 49th N.I. and the 8th Native Cavalry found themselves confronted with loaded guns. It was explained to them that they were being disarmed because the Brigadier did not want to give them an opportunity of ruining their reputation. If there was a slight hesitation at first the Indian troops obediently piled up their arms and the disarming was completed without any incident. "Thus were some 2500 native soldiers disarmed in the presence of scarcely 600 Europeans, and marched off to their lines comparatively harmless!"[4] observes Cave-Browne. "Never was a more decisive victory gained", exclaims Rice Holmes.[5]

Next action was taken at Govindgarh that commanded Amritsar, the sacred city of the Sikhs and it was equally easy and equally decisive. A company of Her Majesty's 81st, under Captain Chichester left Lahore in ekkas on the night of the 12th and reached Govindgarh early next morning. They were quietly admitted into the fort before sunrise and the authorities had no more anxiety on account of the sacred city of the Sikhs.

At Ferozepur things did not go on so smoothly. Two Native Infantry regiments, the 45th and the 57th, were cantoned there, besides the 10th Native Cavalry. The loyalty of the cavalry was not suspected, and of the infantry regiments, the 57th was believed to be the most disaffected. The British element in the brigade consisted of two companies of Foot-artillery, a Light Field Battery and Her Majesty's 61st Regiment. Montgomery had warned the authorities at Ferozepur about the troubles at Meerut and Delhi and the likely revolt of the Hindustanis in the Punjab. Brigadier Innes who had taken charge of the station only two days earlier was convinced of the danger, but the commanding officers of the regiments were not. Innes decided to place the two N.I. regiments apart and then disarm them separately. The 57th obediently marched to their camping ground but the 45th took a short cut to the ground allotted to them and noticed the new disposition of the European soldiers and artillery, about which they were not

[3] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp 93-96
[4] *Idem*, Vol. I, p 99
[5] Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 315

expected to know anything. "Dugha Hai", (There is treachery !) rose the cry and about two hundred of the sepoys made a rush for the ramparts while the rest marched on.[6] The Sikh non-commissioned officers had reported to Montgomery that there would be simultaneous rising on the 15th at Lahore, Govindgarh, Ferozepur, Jullundur, and Kangra. But at Ferozepur even when the sepoys found tangible evidence of the Brigadier's design, only two hundred men mutinied. The 57th remained perfectly quiet that night. The next morning the Light company gave up their arms without any opposition and returned to their lines. Shortly afterwards a company of European troops were ordered to clear the lines and the rest of the 57th imagined that the Light company had been made prisoners after being deprived of their means of defence and bolted to the *maidan*. In the evening, however, they were persuaded by their commanding officer to march to the European lines and give up their arms. The 45th, however, with the exception of 130 men, left the station. They were pursued and scattered, some found their way to the territories of the Sikh Raja of Patiala and were imprisoned there, others were arrested by villagers and brought in, the remnant found their way to Delhi and swelled the ranks of the rebels there. The 10th Native Cavalry remained loyal.

At Jullundur the 36th and 61st N.I. were suspected on account of their past association with Meerut and Lucknow respectively. When the 61st had left Lucknow, more than a year ago, that station was free from all contagion but it was feared that they had kept their contact with their former friends, the 19th and the 34th of Berhampur and Barrackpur fame. But it was not thought wise to take any open step against them immediately as many of the outstations were without any European troops and were, therefore, completely at the mercy of the sepoys. But a body of European troops was introduced into the strategic arsenal of Philaur and the Raja of Kapurthala detailed his troops for the protection of Jullundur. The Brigadier and the Commissioner had decided to disarm the two sepoy regiments and were only waiting for a suitable opportunity. But the date was twice changed and it was impossible that the sepoys should have been totally in the dark about the intention of their officers. On the 7th June they anticipated their masters by rising in arms. Joined by the Indian part of the Philaur garrison, they marched to Ludhiana where they met with some armed resistance. They did not wait there long and went on their way to Delhi. But their

[6] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 107-108

brief appearance in the city demonstrated how little the British rulers could depend on the affection of the Punjab villagers. "Arson, murder, highway robbery, cattle-lifting, and dacoity suddenly revived; and some of the offenders, when apprehended, naively accounted for their misconduct by confessing that they had believed the rule of the British to be over."[7] The Magistrate took stern measures against the law-breakers. A punitive fine was imposed on the city and its population were disarmed because they had not used their weapons in defence of the law.

The 4th N.I. who garrisoned the fort of Kangra gave up their arms on demand. "Their conduct, however, was throughout most orderly, and apparently loyal." If there was a general conspiracy among the sepoys to make a simultaneous rising on the 15th, it apparently lacked resolute leadership and they were but indifferent conspirators who tamely allowed themselves to be disarmed without any concerted resistance only two days before the day fixed for the insurrection.

There was considerable anxiety on account of Multan, for Multan commanded the road to Sindh and Bombay. It was considered impossible to disarm two thousand Purbiahs with sixty Europeans and one thousand Irregulars of questionable fidelity. Major Crawford Chamberlain therefore had an intimate talk with the native officers and the danger was for the time being averted. But the Jullundur rising on the 7th June again revived the suspicion. The loyal elements had in the meantime been strengthened by the arrival of reliable Punjabi troops and the order to disarm came on the 9th June. The two suspected regiments were moved from their parade grounds and found themselves trapped between a body of loyal horsemen and European artillery. "To attempt a rush would have been madness—to hesitate, death." The order to pile arms was obeyed and Multan 'saved'.

Peshawar commanded the Indo-Afghan frontier. The division once formed a part of the Afghan kingdom. Dost Muhammad lost it to Ranjit Singh and it was later annexed by Lord Dalhousie with the rest of the Sikh kingdom. The Warden of the Marches was Colonel Herbert Edwardes, a man of proved ability and mature judgment. His was a difficult charge. Dost Muhammad had indeed been won over by British diplomacy and British gold; but it was not certain whether he was finally reconciled to his loss. There was ample reason to fear that he might exploit the difficulties of his new allies by reviving his old claims. The valley and the neighbouring hills were the home of a warlike people

[7] Holmes, *op. cit.*, p 332

akin to the Afghans in race, language, and culture. But their tribal differences were stronger than the bond of race and religion and each Khel or tribe stood or fell by itself. They had little regard for law and the sanctity of life and property was to them a meaningless myth. The barren hills gave a poor return to their labours and from time immemorial they had earned their living by the sword. A ready prey to the lure of loot, they might welcome the sepoy risings as a godsend. Their ancestors had harassed the phalanx of Alexander the Great, and defied the might of the Great Moghul. The gibbets of Avitabile had failed to tame them, and the British arms were not likely to strike greater terror in their hearts while troubles were brewing all around.

Edwardes had at his disposal about 13,000 troops, only 3,000 of whom were Europeans.[8] Of the rest the majority were Purbiahs, but the Khelat-i-Ghilzai, a Purbiah regiment, was thoroughly reliable; equally dependable were the Guard Corps and the Punjabi elements in the army. But the situation was full of danger and Edwardes had to proceed very warily. He could not afford to betray worry or alarm, but he could not ignore any untoward symptom; he had to watch the sepoys on the one hand and the troublesome tribes on the other. To ensure their neutrality alone would not suffice; if possible, their military co-operation must be enlisted on the British side. His first care was to provide for the security of the valley. Edwardes, therefore, called a council of his colleagues, Colonel Nicholson, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Brigadier Sydney Cotton, the officer commanding the station and General Reed, the seniormost military officer in the Punjab. Colonel Neville Chamberlain was also immediately summoned from Kohat. It was decided that General Reed should assume the command of the Punjab troops and join the Chief Commissioner at Rawalpindi. A movable column was organised under Colonel Chamberlain and it was decided that the two regiments suspected to be most disaffected should be dispersed at different places so that they might not be able to plan any joint action. The 64th N.I., therefore, were divided into three detachments and detailed to garrison three different forts. Two companies of the 55th were left at Naushera and the rest were marched to Hoti Mardan to relieve the Guide Corps which was ordered to join the movable column. On the 16th May Edwardes left for Rawalpindi on the invitation of the Chief Commissioner. He returned on the 21st to find that the Indian troops at Peshawar were also considered undependable. He at once decided to dis-

[8] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 141

arm the 24th, 27th, and the 31st N.I. and the 5th Light Cavalry. What evidence was found against them is not precisely known but most of the officers had complete confidence in the loyalty of their respective regiments. The sepoys never suspected what awaited them when they gathered in their parade grounds on the 22nd May. They found themselves between two columns ready to fire at the least sign of resistance and obediently piled their arms when ordered to do so. Some of their officers threw their swords on the pile as a protest against what they considered unmerited humiliation of their corps.[9] Thus three thousand sepoys and five hundred sowars were disarmed without a shot being fired, but a company of the 51st had the hardihood of running away under cover of night. This treasonable desertion—for desertion it undoubtedly was according to the letter of the law—was not to go unpunished. A price was set on the heads of the fugitives and the tribesmen had a merry time hunting them, and earning a few honest pieces of silver. The prisoners were sternly punished; "it was not a time for tenderness—for mercy—even for justice", says Kaye.[10]

The story of the 55th N.I. is somewhat different. A few men of the regiment were on guard duty at Kairabad on the right bank of the Indus. Fateh Khan Khatak, a loyal tribesman, was also posted there with his newly raised levies. On the 21st May, the Khatak leader reported to Major Vaughan, in charge of Attock on the opposite bank, that a sepoy of the 55th N.I. had tried to seduce some of his men. Lieutenant Lind was sent across to chastise the offender. What exactly followed we do not know, but the Subadar and his men defied his authority and moved in the direction of Naushera. On the way they came across a small party of the 24th N.I. who were escorting some stores to Peshawar. Evidently they were not at the station when their regiment was disarmed and they now joined the men of the 55th. The party was, however, arrested and disarmed on their arrival at Naushera by the 10th Irregulars but they were rescued by other men of the 55th while on the way to the European Guards. They then tried to cross the river and go to Hoti Mardan where the main body of the regiment was stationed. But the bridge of boats had been broken and only one or two of the sepoys could get to the other side and warn their friends at Hoti Mardan of what had happened. Colonel Spottiswoode, their Commander, sent for the detachment left at Naushera. They marched out under Captain

[9] Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp 325-26
[10] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 481

Cameron on the 22nd night and reached the headquarters the next morning. "Their demeanour towards their own officers was, with one or two exceptions, perfectly respectful; indeed, the officers of the 58th declared themselves to be more apprehensive of danger from the sowars of the 10th Irregular Cavalry than from their own men, while the officers of the 10th returned the compliments." So far the 55th N.I. at Hoti Mardan had committed no overt act of mutiny. In spite of the importunities of Spottiswoode, troops were sent from Peshawar to Mardan under Colonel Chute, and Colonel Nicholson accompanied him as the political officer. On the night of the 24th the native officers of the 55th went to their Colonel in a body and asked for an explanation. He had none to offer and after they left he committed suicide. The 55th then left Mardan and fled in the direction of Swat. They had a fairly long start but the inexorable Nicholson went after them and killed more than a hundred and captured a hundred and twenty, of whom a terrible example was to be made.[11] Nicholson pleaded for the Sikhs and young recruits. The Sikhs, it is said, had given the authorities timely notice of the mutinous intentions of the Purbiahs but why they cast in their lot with the rest when the 55th fled from Hoti Mardan is nowhere explained. Sir John Lawrence also was not for hanging all the prisoners. "A hundred and twenty men are a large number to put to death. Our object is to make an example to terrify others. I think this object would be effectually gained by destroying from a quarter to a third of them."[12]

Six regiments of Purbiahs were thus effectively eliminated and the Punjab Government could now devote all their energy to the important task of reinforcing the Commander-in-Chief. But Sir John Lawrence had his doubts about the ultimate result of the policy that declared war against all sepoys irrespective of whether they had done anything disloyal or not. In a letter to Edwardes he observed—"The misfortune of the present state of affairs is this,—Each step we take for our own security is a blow against the regular Sepoy. He feels this, and on his side takes a further step, and so we go on, until we disband or destroy them, or they mutiny and kill their officers."[13]

The three detachments of the 64th were to be disposed of next. They had been sent to the forts of Abuzai, Shab Kadar, and Michni. Chute and Nicholson marched to each of these places

[11] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 164-70. Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, pp 482-86

[12] Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. II, p 489

[13] *Idem*, Vol. II, p 472

and disarmed the detachments in detail, without any resistance or obstruction. Edwardes was now free to raise a new army to fight the old and he boldly invited the tribesmen to gather under the British standard. This was a daring experiment but it proved a success. The tribesman had no love for the British who had intruded into his hills but his love of plunder prevailed for the time being over his hatred for the foreigner. He had heard of the fabulous wealth of India and his imagination was dazzled by the prospects of spoils that awaited him at Delhi and Lucknow. It was only these white Christians who could lead him to that El Dorado. Once away from their mountain lair, the Afridi, the Khatak, and the Momand felt that safety demanded that they should remain loyal to their new masters. Memories of old feuds and tribal rivalry had kept them apart at home, they were not likely to be forgotten in the plains of Hindustan. It was a master stroke of policy to enlist these turbulent people and remove them from their native districts where they might prove a constant source of worry and anxiety and to take them far beyond the five rivers where their military instincts and greed for plunder would have the fullest play. The sepoys had gone to Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Bannu as the instrument of the British imperial policy. The table was now turned on them and the Punjabi Muslim and the Sikh, the tribesmen of Kohat and the Yusufzai country were united against the Hindustanis, Muslims and non-Muslims, by the common hatred they bore against them. The Sikhs had no leader round whom they could rally. The son of Ranjit Singh was not in the land of his fathers. And many of the Sikh Sardars had good reasons to be grateful to their conquerors; if the ruling house had been despoiled, British diplomacy had taken good care to safeguard the interests of the individual chiefs. The return of the old order might not be altogether to their advantage. The Sardars suspected to be disaffected found an excellent opportunity of rehabilitating themselves in British favour and they offered their services at this crisis. But it will be wrong to suppose that what little trouble the British administrator experienced in the Punjab all came from the discontented sepoys. The Rangars and other tribes in the neighbourhood of Delhi rose in arms but their predatory instincts would exploit any opportunity offered by anarchy and chaos. But in the border districts of Hissar, Rewari, and Gurgaon the Punjabi population also contributed to the rebel strength and some Sikh chiefs joined them with all their heart.

On the 1st June, Sir John Lawrence issued a proclamation to the Hindustani soldiers of the Bengal Army. "Those regiments

which now remain faithful will receive the rewards due to their constancy;" he declared, "those soldiers who fall away now will lose their service for ever. It will be too late to lament hereafter when the time has passed by;—now is the opportunity of proving your loyalty and good faith. The British Government will never want for native soldiers. In a month it might raise 50,000 in the Punjab alone. If the Purbiah sepoy neglects the present day, it will never return. There is ample force in the Punjab to crush all mutineers. The chiefs and people are loyal and obedient, and the latter only long to take your place in the army. All will unite to crush you. Moreover, the sepoy can have no conception of the power of England. Already from every quarter English soldiers are pouring into India."[14] But the sequel shows that the choice was not to be left to the sepoys. It was not for them to decide on which side they should range themselves, it was for the authorities at Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Peshawar to determine whether any such opportunity should be vouchsafed. They had decided that the sepoys could not be trusted with their arms and they had to pursue that policy to its logical end.

The next regiment in the Peshawar division to be trapped were the 10th Irregulars at Naushera and Peshawar. They had not been guilty of any overt act. But they had allowed the prisoners of the 55th to be rescued and released and they had not shown sufficient zeal in the pursuit of the fugitives from Hoti Mardan. So their fate was sealed but they were blissfully ignorant of their impending doom. The operations went on without any hitch at both the places on the same day, 29th June, and the 10th Irregulars were safely disarmed. But the loss of pay and pension, the loss of character was not to be their only penalty. All their property was to be confiscated and the confiscation was not to be limited to their mounts. Their lines were searched and all their belongings except the clothes they were in were taken away from them, not sparing even the few ornaments and trinkets that the women and children had on their persons. "They were crossed over the Indus in boats, received four rupees each as a *viaticum*, and sent adrift to find their way as best they could to their homes, with a warning that they were watched, and any attempt at disturbance would seal their doom."[15]

[14] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 216-17

[15] *Idem.* Vol. I, pp 284-90. The work of confiscation is thus described by Cave-Browne: "every hut, every wall and roof was examined, every crack and cranny searched; the Punjabees revelling in the opportunity of crushing the Poorbeahs, and at the same time, no doubt, enriching themselves at their expense. The sowars were stripped of their uniforms; their waistbands, turbans—all searched; money, jewels, everything 'taken charge of'; and

Meanwhile the movable column had been on the march. On the 21st June it had reached Jullundur. Brigadier Neville Chamberlain, its first Commander, had been appointed Adjutant-General of the Army on the death of Colonel Chester and Nicholson had been appointed to the consequent vacancy with the rank of a Brigadier. He refused to be encumbered with the 35th Light Infantry and 33rd N.I. The regiments had hitherto been quiet but the 35th had been under strict vigilance and the 33rd had not yet joined the column. Together they might be a source of danger and Nicholson at once made up his mind. The column marched to Philaur and there within the range of the fort guns the 35th Light Infantry was disarmed. When the 33rd arrived after a double march they also obediently laid down their arms. "By this masterly arrangement some 1500 mutinous sepoys were quietly disarmed in presence of about 800 Europeans and a dozen guns—not a shot fired, or a drop of blood shed!"[16]

But there was no half-way halt. The Punjab had not been completely denuded of Purbiahs. There were at least six more regiments still with arms. "At Rawul Pindee were the 58th N.I., at Jhelum the 14th N.I., at Sealkote the 46th N.I., with a wing of the 9th Light Cavalry, and the other wing in the Movable Column; while the 59th N.I. were at Umritsur, the 4th N.I. at Kangra and Noorpoor, the 2nd Irregular Cavalry at Goordaspore, *all armed.*"[17] There were no European troops at Jhelam or Sialkot, at Kangra or Gurdaspur. So, it was decided to render the remaining Purbiah regiments harmless by taking away their arms. The Rawalpindi and Jhelam sepoys were to be disarmed simultaneously. In order to facilitate the operations two companies of the 14th N.I. were transferred from Jhelam to Rawalpindi before the blow was struck. At the same time Nicholson had been instructed to retrace his steps and move upwards. From Jullundur he had marched to Philaur and from Philaur to Amritsar. On the 7th July a parade, as usual on such occasions, had been ordered at Rawalpindi. But the appearance of the European troops and the Artillery frightened the sepoys and they at once broke and bolted to their lines. There the men of the 58th peacefully surrendered their arms but two companies of the 14th N.I. made for the city. They were pursued by the mounted police and those who escaped were beheaded by the villagers, for a price had been set on every rebel head.

then, with only their *pugerics* (turbans), *chupkans* (jackets), and pantaloons, they were marched out that night under charge of Lind's Mooltanees." pp 288-89

[16] *Idem*, Vol. I, p 303

[17] *Idem*, Vol. II, p 48

Things did not go on smoothly at Jhelam. Sometimes even the best-laid plan goes wrong and Colonel Ellice arrived at Jhelam with his punitive force after, and not before, daybreak. His mission had been kept a strict secret even from his colleagues and they had been given sealed orders which were not opened until they were within one march of Jhelam. But the drama had been staged so often that the sepoys had no doubt about the mission of the Europeans and Multanis when they were observed from the parade ground. The sepoys at once rushed to their arms and an obstinate fight began. Muskets had no chance against guns and rifles; but for a whole day the sepoys fought with the desperation born of despair. Hope of escape they had none. The bridge of boats was gone and the Jhelam could not be crossed. One or two parties seized stray boats only to fall into enemy hands on the other side. Of the five hundred who fought Colonel Ellice on the morning of the 7th, not even fifty ultimately escaped. One hundred and fifty died in the encounter, one hundred and eighty were captured afterwards. One hundred and twenty found their way to the Kashmir territories to be arrested and delivered later to the British authorities. Thus disappeared the 14th N.I.[18]

The troopers of the 9th Light Cavalry at Sialkot had been forewarned. They had heard of the battle of Jhelam, but probably did not know how it had ended. They had certain information about Nicholson's proceedings at Philaur. It was a matter of guess, according to Cooper of Amritsar, whether there had been a concert between Sialkot and Jhelam, or whether Sialkot people had heard of the desperate resistance there. "But it is certain that a man connected with the wing of the 9th, forming part of the Movable Column at Umritsur, who had imprudently obtained leave, was the immediate cause of the insurrection. He brought the stories of the disarming of the 33rd and the 35th N.I. He must have inflamed the passions of the cavalry by every sort of lie, for a second conclave was held with delegates from the 46th N.I. that very night."[19] Whether the man from Amritsar had recourse to lies is a matter of conjecture, for the bare truth was bad enough Nicholson had disarmed the two regiments without any warning and without any explanation. In the eyes of their brother sepoys the victims of this outrage were innocent men, for they had committed no offence. And Nicholson was coming north. To smite or be smitten were the only alternatives and the sepoys decided not to leave the initiative to the other side. The

[18] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 57
[19] Cooper, *op. cit.* p 137

lead was taken by the cavalry; the 46th N.I. played a passive part.

The news of Jhelam reached the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot on the 8th. He at once communicated the information to Brigadier Brind, the officer commanding the station. When European troops were removed from Sialkot Sir John Lawrence had advised the ladies and children to be removed to Lahore. But with the passing of the first alarm confidence was more than restored and all but a few decided to stay. There was an old Sikh fort at Sialkot in a fair state of preservation and there the Europeans took refuge when the Mutiny broke out on the morning of the 9th. A few of the fugitives were killed or wounded on their way to the fort but a large number owed their lives to the devotion of their servants and the sepoys. Only in one case a woman and a child, Mrs. Hunter and her baby, were killed; the culprit, however, was not a sepoy but a degraded flogger of the Sialkot district jail.[20] In all other cases the women were allowed to go unhurt, though men were fired at.

It was the cavalry that began the Mutiny. Dr. Butler says, "At a quarter past 4 A.M. I was called up to see the sowars, who were in open mutiny, riding about the Cantonments, shooting all they could of the male sex having a European garb."[21] A few Indians, known to be in the confidence of their British masters, also shared this fate. But the 46th N.I. were inclined to be loyal to their officers. They shut the latter up for safety in the regimental quarter-guard and after nightfall not only escorted them safely to the fort with their families but supplied them with money before they left Sialkot. There is a story that they ran great risks to enable a lady under their protection to recover her property left at her bungalow. "During the day when they were penned up in the quarter-guard, the wife of the quarter-master sergeant was seen weeping. The havildar in charge of the guard came forward and asked her what was the matter; to which she replied that though they had saved her life, she was penniless as everything had been left behind in her bungalow. The havildar at once got some men together, and with fixed bayonets marched her back through the Cantonment to her house, where she was given time to collect her cash and other valuables." The 46th also wanted their Commanding Officer Colonel Farquharson and Captain Caulfield to stay with them. The Colonel was offered a salary of Rs. 2,000 per mensem with leave to reside in the hills.

[20] Rich, *The Mutiny in Sialkot*, p 25
[21] *Idem*, p 32

Captain Caulfield was to be paid one thousand rupees per month, should he choose to serve with his old regiment.[22] Father Paul had taken shelter with two nuns and the children of the Convent in a dhobi's hut. Though they were in Indian garb their hands and feet betrayed them and though the sepoys threatened violence none was offered.

About four in the afternoon the rebels left for Hoshiarpur. They had taken with them an old signal gun which was to prove of great use to them subsequently when they were overtaken by Nicholson.

The day before the Sialkot outbreak, Nicholson had paraded the 59th N.I. at Amritsar and "complimented them on their general good conduct, and assured them that he rejoiced in having no reason for disarming them." But the news of Jhelam decided their fate. The next morning (9th July) they were paraded apparently to witness an execution. When the execution was over the 59th were suddenly ordered " to 'pile arms' ". "With Europeans and guns in front and on either side, they obeyed without a moment's hesitation."[23] But they had made up their minds. If unqualified submission was any proof of loyalty they were loyal, for on their return to their lines they restored to their officers 700 more muskets. The next morning came the turn of that wing of the 9th Cavalry which had so long been associated with the movable column. A roll-call without uniform and arms was ordered and the troopers were told what their comrades had done at Sialkot. Their arms were then collected and removed to Govindgarh under European escorts and their mounts were appropriated for the use of the army.[24]

Nicholson next went after the Sialkot men. By a forced march he reached Gurdaspur on the 11th. The next morning he learnt that the rebels were at Trimmu Ghat, some ten miles away, so he was again on the move. After a sharp fight the insurgents retreated towards the river and Nicholson's men were so exhausted that they could not start on a pursuit. But nature favoured the fortunate general. The river had risen suddenly and trapped the fugitives in a small strip of land which had become an island overnight. Here they were destroyed in detail. While their attention was engaged by the artillery on the banks, Nicholson crossed over to the island unnoticed. The Sialkot brigade was destroyed.

The 10th Light Cavalry had so far been loyal. They had rendered active service in the suppression of a revolt in the

[22] Rich, *op. cit.*, pp 53-54
[23] Cave-Browne, *op. cit*, Vol II, pp 70-71
[24] *Idem*, Vol. II, pp 72-73

territories of the Raja of Nabha. But after Jhelam and Sialkot, no Hindustani could be trusted with arms, however good his previous record. So loyalty was no longer a safeguard against disgrace. It was impossible for the Purbiah to prove his fidelity and earn the confidence of the Punjab Government. The 10th was disarmed, but not dismounted for the time being.

The 4th N.I. at Kangra and Nurpur had a philosophy all their own. When arms were demanded at Kangra they were readily given up. The sepoys were assured that there was no suspicion whatever about their good faith but the removal of the weapons would save them from contagion of other mutinous corps. "Their reply was, that 'their arms were the property of Government, and they were quite ready to give them up at the request of their officers, and only regretted that any show of force had been made'."[25] The Nurpur detachment was, if possible, more obliging. They carried their arms to the bungalow of their commander, Major Wilkie, about a mile from the fort. Thus was the cycle completed. With the exception of the Khelat-i-Ghilzai, the Purbiah regiments throughout the Punjab, irrespective of their past record and present attitude, were put out of harm's way. But human beings are not mathematical units. It cannot be foretold how two individuals will react under the same impulse. The 4th N.I. obviously did not consider it humiliating to be deprived of their arms. The 14th and the 46th revolted at the very idea.

The Hindustani sepoy with arms was a menace; disarmed, he became a problem. He could not be left to himself. He could not be allowed to go home.[26] But a caged bird always seeks an outlet through the bars. On the 30th July the disarmed 26th N.I. bolted in a body from their camp at Mian-Mir. They had no better weapon than hatchets and knives but they had the advantage of number. They rushed at Major Spencer who tried to intervene and put him to death. The Sergeant-Major who came to his aid was also killed. If there was any hesitation or wavering, the indiscriminate firing of the Sikh levies "precipitated the murders and frightened all, good, bad, or indifferently disposed to flight."[27] An unexpected dust storm provided them with the much wanted cover and it was not known at first in which direction they had fled. The next day their presence was reported by unfriendly villagers to the Tahsildar of Ajnala who at once attacked them with a police force. Unarmed and famished, the

[25] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 82
[26] The disarmed sepoys at Agra were granted leave to go home.
[27] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p 153

poor fugitives could not defend themselves and one hundred and fifty of them were done to death before Frederick Cooper, Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, appeared on the scene with a party of horsemen. He found them "crouching like a flock of wild fowl" awaiting death in an island. Boats were procured and zealous villagers brought them ashore with their hands tightly pinioned. A few of them escaped death by the rope as they plunged into the river in despair. The rest numbering two hundred and eighty-two were conveyed to Ajnala. The Deputy Commissioner had ordered out a large supply of rope to hang the culprits. In the eye of Cooper the prisoners were all murderers and he decided that they should all die. But the supply of rope was not sufficient to hang so many, so it was decided to shoot them in small batches. The rest of the story, let the hero of Ajnala himself relate: "About 150 having been thus executed, one of the executioners swooned away (he was the oldest of the firing-party), and a little respite was allowed. Then proceeding, the number had arived at two hundred and thirty-seven; when the district officer was informed that the remainder refused to come out of the bastion, where they had been imprisoned temporarily a few hours before. Expecting a rush and resistance, preparations were made against escape; but little expectation was entertained of the real and awful fate which had fallen on the remainder of the mutineers: they had anticipated, by a few short hours, their doom. The doors were opened, and, behold! they were nearly all dead! Unconsciously, the tragedy of Holwell's Black Hole had been re-enacted. No cries had been heard during the night. . . . Forty-five bodies dead from fright, exhaustion, fatigue, heat, and partial suffocation, were dragged into light, and consigned, in common with all the other bodies, into one common pit, by the hands of the vilage sweepers."[28]

Cooper tells us that his righteous act was incomplete in the opinion of the assembled natives, to whom the crime was fully explained, in as much as "the Magistrate did not hurl headlong into the chasm, the rabble of men, women and children, who had fled miserably with the mutineers" and they "marvelled at the clemency and the justice of the British."[29]

Not content with the approval of the rural public of the Punjab, Cooper thought it necessary to preach a homily to those

[28] Cooper; *op. cit.*, pp 162-63. Cave-Browne is silent about death by suffocation. He says, "Here, on the following morning, a general execution took place; and within forty-eight hours of the outbreak at Mean-Meer, the 26th N.I. had ceased to be; and the peace of the Punjab was still secured." Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp 100-101

[29] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p 163

of his countrymen who were not so strong in nerves. "Certain mock philanthropists may cry out; but with all their resolutions and orations they will never bring life back again to those that were sacrificed through the fault of the living who shrank unreasonably from obvious and simple duty, though the performance of it might have involved circumstances of magnitude, or caused sights which might tax weak nerves, and who, in closely contemplating the severity rather than the justice of the punishment, lose all sight and memory of the awful and wide catastrophes, which have waited . . . . and ever will wait, in India, upon timid counsel and hesitating action."[30]

Cooper's action met with immediate official approbation. "I congratulate you on your success against the 26th N.I.", wrote Sir John Lawrence. "You and your police acted with much energy and spirit, and deserve well of the State." More enthusiastic and warm was Robert Montgomery in applauding Cooper's achievements. "All honour to you for what you have done, and right well you did it . . . . It will be a feather to your cap as long as you live." He added a post-script which is well worth quoting, "The other three regiments here were very shaky yesterday, but I hardly think they will now go. I wish they would, as they are a nuisance; and not a man would escape if they do."[31]

But all the regiments who considered themselves wronged were not overawed by the horrible end of the 26th N.I. The 10th Cavalry had received the Commander-in-Chief's thanks for their fidelity and good service. None the less they were disarmed because other people were suspected to be false. When they were disarmed the Brigadier had assured them that they should be the first regiment to receive back their arms, when a suitable time arrived, in consideration of their good conduct. Their horses were the private property of the troopers, they did not belong to the Government. But the Government needed mounts for the new troopers they were recruiting and decided to make use of horses now lying idle and useless. First one hundred, and next fifty horses, belonging to the troopers of the 10th Cavalry, were taken by the Government and in August the order came that the remaining horses should also go to the remount depot. Brigadier Innes tried to persuade the Lahore authorities to revise their decision for the loss of their mounts was regarded as an additional humiliation. On the 18th the final order of the Government reached Ferozepur, on the 19th the disarmed 10th Cavalry

[30] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p 166
[31] *Idem*, pp 167-69

revolted. Their attempt to seize the guns failed but the whole regiment, with the exception of about one hundred troopers, moved out with their horses and by a judicious selection of route safely got away.

The *emeute* at Ferozepur was followed by the rising of the disarmed 51st N.I. at Peshawar. The authorities there instituted a search in the sepoy lines obviously for hidden arms. The 27th N.I. whose lines were first searched offered no resistance but the 51st broke out in a body. The alarm was sounded and the Afghans threw themselves upon the sepoys. It was a forlorn cause. The sepoys fought well but they could muster a few swords or muskets only against the rifles and guns of their assailants. They were totally destroyed. "Of the 870 men who, on the morning of the 28th, composed the 51st N.I., within eight-and-forty hours not the odd 70 survived; and a few days after, it was reported on credible authority that only 19 famished fugitives lingered on in the neighbouring hills."[32]

In the Punjab the sepoys were no longer a source of danger. Edwardes had apparently pacified Peshawar. But the authorities could not shake off their anxiety. They could not trust their newly found friends, they knew that their loyalty rested on very slender basis, they feared that the Punjabi Muslim and the Sikhs, the Multanis and the tribesmen might combine against their Christian masters at the least sign of weakness.[33] Even the mercantile community that had profited so richly from the strong rule of the British hesitated to subscribe to the Government loans. The bankers of Peshawar offered only 15,000 rupees but Edwardes coerced them to contribute five lakhs.

But despite the strong measures which the authorities adopted from the start, the Punjab had not as yet seen the last of its troubles. On the 1st September a band of hillmen attacked Murree but the police had been forewarned of the intended onslaught and the raiders found them ready. They had to beat a retreat before any harm could be done. More serious was the insurrection in the Multan district. The leader of the new revolt was Ahmad Khan, the head of the Khurrul tribe. With him had joined other warlike clans, and for a few days all communication between Multan and Lahore was interrupted. Multan was weakly garrisoned and could not spare troops enough to meet this unexpected danger. The rebels held the jungles of Gogaira and had some initial success against their British opponents. Major

[32] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 113

[33] Brigadier Chamberlain in a letter dated 1 September, 1858 says that the Sikhs have commenced to think a revolt possible.

Chamberlain found himself besieged in a small serai and no relief could be expected from Multan. Sir John Lawrence, however, promptly sent a squadron of the newly raised Punjab cavalry. On the twenty-eighth September they were joined by a small detachment sent from Multan and relieved Chamberlain at Chichawatni serai. The initiative now passed into British hands but the warlike clansmen continued to fight from the shelter of the jungles. Ahmad Khan's death did not bring the fighting to an end. The insurgents found a new leader in Mir Bahawal Fatwanah. But pressed from all sides, the rebels gradually retreated into the heart of their native forest, where the British troops, guided by some shepherds, attacked and routed them. Thus ended the insurrection of Gogaira.[34]

Lawrence and his colleagues had staked all to win all. They denuded the Punjab of European troops to strengthen the thin line on the ridge at Delhi. They knew that no Indian element could be really favourable to British interests, yet they raised the Sikh strength in the army almost to the point of saturation. They boldly played with the tribal leaders knowing well that they might turn against the Firinghi at any moment. But India had to be saved and they did not hesitate to strain the resources of the Punjab and Peshawar to their utmost limit. When the empire seemed almost lost Lawrence was prepared to pay the highest possible price to keep it. He seriously proposed that Peshawar should be abandoned, the troops engaged in the Frontier province should be diverted to India, and Dost Muhammad should be invited to take charge of what once belonged to him. But Edwardes stoutly opposed the proposal and Lawrence was not called upon to make this supreme sacrifice. The men he sent, the materials he supplied, turned the scale in his country's favour.

[34] Cave-Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp 200-23

## Chapter Ten

# THE LAST PHASE

With Lucknow in British hands and the North-Western Provinces fairly reduced Sir Colin Campbell was in a position to turn his arms against Rohilkhand where a rebel government had been functioning since June 1857. Rohilkhand had from the earliest times been the nursery of war-like races. There the Katheria Rajputs, from whom the region derived its earlier name of Kather, had migrated from their ancestral home in the east. The Rohilas were newcomers, comparatively speaking. They made Kather their home in the closing years of the seventeenth century. Not until the beginning of the nineteenth did the homeland of the valiant Pathans become a British province. In 1774 Warren Hastings had lent the Nawab of Oudh military aid in consideration of forty lakhs of rupees and the British troops conquered Rohilkhand for the Nawab. But in 1801 the Nawab ceded Rohilkhand to the East India Company and in course of time it became a Commissioner's division with Bareilly as its headquarters. The division consisted of five administrative districts: Bareilly, Moradabad, Shahjahanpur, Budaun, and Bijnour.

In May 1857, three native regiments, the 8th Irregular Cavalry, the 18th and 68th N.I., with an Indian battery of artillery were cantoned at Bareilly.[1] Brigadier Sibbald commanded the station, and next in seniority was Colonel Colin Troup who inspired the much-criticised proclamation of Lieutenant-Governor Colvin. Not till the last week of May was any trouble apprehended at Bareilly. The leading citizens had volunteered to exert themselves in the cause of peace and Khan Bahadur Khan, the doyen of the Muslim aristocracy, paid daily visits to Mr Alexander, the Commissioner.[2] It was naturally expected that the Rajput Thakurs and the Rohila chiefs would act as a counterpoise against each other, and that their age-old rivalry would serve the cause of peace and order better than anything else.

[1] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 302
[2] Alexander's Report, para 22

Early in May the Risaldar Major of the cavalry, Muhammad Shafi, had assured the Brigadier that the cavalry would in any case remain staunch and suppress any disturbance the infantry might cause.[3] The ladies had already been sent to the hill station of Nainital in April.

Discerning eyes had already detected a subtle change in the sepoys as early as March. Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, the cavalry clerk, noted an indefinable difference in their manners and conversation which developed into definite rudeness in April. He says that it was in April that the story of the greased cartridge gained currency in the cantonment, and he reported it to the authorities.[4]

The first sign of active discontent manifested itself at Moradabad on the 19th May when a party of the 29th Infantry broke open the Jail. On the 21st May Brigadier Sibbald and Commissioner Alexander spoke to the troops and their officers respectively at Bareilly, and urged them to dismiss all fear and suspicion about their religion, and assured them that there had been no change in the attitude of the Government towards them. They were apparently satisfied with the result of their address and Brigadier Sibbald wrote to the Government of North-Western Provinces, "From the cheerful and obedient spirit now evinced by the troops I augur the happiest results, and am convinced that should their services be required they will act as good and loyal soldiers."[5] On the 29th Colonel Troup was told that infantry regiments would rise the next day at 2 P.M. and murder their European officers. He had still no doubt about the fidelity of the 8th Irregular Cavalry. Nothing happened on the 30th and everything was still quiet in the morning of the 31st. But as the regimental gongs struck eleven, guns roared, muskets rattled, and fires broke out in the sepoy lines and officers' quarters. The Brigadier at once made for the cavalry lines but he was shot in the chest, though he did not expire till he reached the rendezvous. Colonel Troup had no faith in the goodwill of the cavalry and decided to ride to Nainital. Captain Mackenzie, their commanding officer, however had not yet lost his confidence. He found one wing of his regiment drawn up side by side with the infantry and tried to argue with them when the green flag was hoisted and he lost control over both the wings. So Mackenzie also joined Troup and other officers in their flight.

Durgadas Bandopadhyaya's account is somewhat different, but he does not claim any personal knowledge of the events. He

[3] Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p 83
[4] *Idem*, pp 80-81
[5] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 304

was caught unawares by the Mutiny. Though it was a Sunday he had gone with the monthly accounts to the Adjutant's bungalow[6] at half past ten in the morning, but he found Lieutenant Becher absent. Shortly afterwards firing all round convinced him that the long dreaded moment had arrived. He had heard that the European officers had been forewarned about the impending outbreak, and gathered in a mango grove near the cavalry lines with twenty trusted native officers before 10-30 A.M., the appointed hour. The cavalry rode towards the mango grove with a view to joining the Europeans. But as they approached the place the Europeans got frightened and turned their horses towards Nainital. When Risaldar Major Muhammad Shafi arrived there the Europeans were half a mile away. When he tried to overtake them the fugitives increased their speed. Shafi realised that his intentions had been misconstrued, so he began to signal with a red handkerchief, but the officers never looked backward and, therefore, could not notice his friendly signal. Shafi was in a fix. If he rode after the officers they might open fire and the loyal troopers would at once fall upon and destroy them. He, therefore, came back and joined the mutineers, for he had no means of paying and provisioning his men. Durgadas heard this story from Muhammad Shafi himself. In any case the cavalry did not follow the fugitives.[7]

The command of the rebel army was assumed by Bakht Khan, the Subadar of the Artillery, with the style of Brigadier. Khan Bahadur Khan became the head of the administration, not as an independent potentate, but as Viceroy of Kather on behalf of the Emperor of Delhi. He was the natural leader of the Rohilas. Though a septuagenarian, he was the grandson of Hafiz Rahamat Khan, the last independent ruler of Rohilkhand and, therefore, the lawful heir to his rights and claims. As the head of the family he used to get from the British Government a monthly stipend of one hundred rupees. He had earned another pension as a judicial officer in the British service. He lacked both the physical energy and the mental vigour that the situation demanded, and he was probably a genuine advocate of law and order before the Mutiny broke out. On the 30th he warned the Commissioner "that the case was hopeless, and that the Regiments would certainly mutiny". "This was the last time that I saw him.", says Alexander. "He shook hands with me and his last words were significant, *Apne Jan buchao* or Look out for

[6] Because it was the last day of the month, he says
[7] Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp 91-92

your life."[8] On the day previous Khan Bahadur Khan was reported to have been visited by the regiments.[9]

Was there a previous understanding between the old man and the insurgents? Was he playing a double role with the Commissioner? Alexander does not think so. If the chapatis conveyed any meaning to their recipients, only then can it be assumed that they were prepared for the rebellion. "But on no other assumption from fact, or document, nor from any oral evidence and enquiry, can it be believed or even inferred that prior to the fortnight immediately preceding the 31st May, there was out of the lines of the Regiments any organised conspiracy for the overthrow of the existing Government, or the establishment of one to usurp its place." "The nature of the Government which immediately sprung up after the mutiny, disproves in my opinion, the notion of a previous conspiracy".[10]

The old man must have been carried away by the rising tide of rebellion. There were other candidates to the Viceroy's office and if he declined it, his rival would not renounce the honour and the power associated with the Nizamat.[11] The government of Rohilkhand was once vested in his family and the British authorities paid a paltry pension of one hundred rupees in lieu of his rights. That Government had also been overthrown and a Muslim Badshah was once more installed at Delhi. Was he to deprive himself and his sons of the ruling power that the Mutiny brought within his reach? The old man made up his mind, but he was too weak to maintain order and peace in the city. The sepoys recklessly robbed the rich men of Bareilly and four English officers were murdered in his name, if not under his direct orders. At least one Englishman was murdered in his presence and he issued a proclamation threatening everybody giving shelter to Europeans with death. As elsewhere, the riff-raff of the town rose with the army and looted shops and business places on their own account. Among the people arrested under suspicion were the Bengalee clerks attached to the civil and military departments of the British Government.

Khan Bahadur Khan, now Nawab Nazim of Rohilkhand, took early steps to conciliate the Hindus in general and the

[8] Alexander's Report on Bareilly, para 56

[9] Alexander's Report, para 55

[10] Alexander's letter to Secretary to Government N.W.P. dated 30 November, 1858, No. 331 of 1858, paras 7 & 8

[11] Mubarak Shah, the chief of a Pathan clan, was the rival aspirant to the office. He was in fact on his way to the Kotwali when he found that Khan Bahadur Khan was also going there. A clever man, he at once acknowledged Khan Bahadur Khan's claims and was appointed Nazim of Budaun. Inglis's Report on Bareilly, pp 2 & 13, Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp 140-42

Rajput Thakurs in particular, and to obtain from Delhi a formal appointment to his self-assumed office. He, therefore, sent a *nazar* and rich presents to the Emperor and in due course obtained the necessary Farman. Jaimal Singh, one of the leading Thakurs, was the first to acknowledge Khan Bahadur Khan as his lord,[12] and his example was followed by others. Sobha Ram, a Bania, was appointed Dewan, and his establishment was, with one exception, entirely Hindu. After Bakht Khan's departure for Delhi, Khan Bahadur Khan tried to restore order and appointed a committee of eight, of whom two were Hindus and six Muslims, to conduct the administration. Thakur Jaimal Singh was a member of this committee and it continued to function for the entire period Khan Bahadur Khan was in power.[13] He also forbade cow-killing in the city no doubt in deference to Hindu sentiments, but he could not control the Syeds of Nau Mahalla and private feuds often assumed a communal colouring. Sobha Ram was not in the good books of the Muslims and a tax-gatherer makes many enemies. As the head of the revenue department of a newly established government in chronic want of money, Sobha Ram had given offence to many men of power and influence. One day when he was away in his office, an unruly Muslim crowd forced its way into his residence, and, on pretence of searching for Englishmen suspected to be in hiding there, plundered it.[14] A worse case was that of Baldeo Gir Gosain. Mir Alam Khan, a relative of Khan Bahadur Khan, attacked the Gosain in his own house and threatened him and his wife with violence. The Gosain killed the Mir in self-defence. He was tried by a Mufti and acquitted, but Mir Alam's brother took the law into his own hands and murdered the Gosain. Khan Bahadur Khan could not bring the offender to book and the Hindus naturally felt aggrieved.[15] The new administration was particularly unpopular with the business community, for they were too frequently called upon to subscribe to the state funds. The committee of assessment was entirely Hindu in its composition and Khan Bahadur Khan had taken care to arm himself with a *fatwa* from the Muslim divines and a *Vyavastha,* signed by Brahman scholars, in favour of his imposition, but it was resented by those on whom the burden fell. The business class known to be in sympathy with the British and sometimes people not well affected to the new government were particularly selected for Sobha Ram's extortions. Misr Baijnath

[12] Inglis's Report, p 7, Alexander's Report, para 46
[13] Inglis's Report, p 6
[14] Durgadas Bandopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p 220
[15] Inglis's Report, pp 13-14

and "Kunjet Lall, the Government Treasurer" had to pay Rs. 54,000 once, but that was not the only time that Baijnath had to part with his money.[16] In a sense he escaped lightly, for he not only kept contact with the fugitive officers at Nainital through his spies, but one of his agents traced Edwards of Budaun in one of Hardeo Baksh's villages and supplied him with much-needed funds.[17] But the rebel government were not fully aware of Baijnath's activities and he escaped with loss of money alone. But his financial losses were more than made up after the restoration of British power. He was not only rewarded with the title of Raja but got in addition large estates.

The story of the events at Budaun and Bijnour can be told briefly. Budaun was not a military station and William Edwards, the Magistrate, was the solitary European officer there. When the few sepoys, posted there, rose, he left the station and reached Fatehgarh. Luckily for him he did not belong to the unfortunate majority who decided to stay there. He joined Probyn at Dharampur, the fortified residence of Hardeo Baksh, a friendly zamindar, and moved from one inaccessible village to another until it was felt safe to leave for Kanpur.

Bijnour had a very interesting story. About the end of May the jail was attacked by the bad characters of the neighbourhood. The jail guards however fired upon the assailants and they were dispersed. Nothing serious followed, though some of the convicts managed to escape. Later the Roorki mutineers appeared at Bijnour. It was then that a Muslim officer, who was later to come to fame as a great statesman and educationist, got an opportunity of displaying his diplomatic talent. Syed Ahmed, the Sadr Amin of Bijnour, had a parley with the rebels and persuaded them to leave the Europeans unmolested. But the departure of the rebel troops afforded the European officers of Bijnour only temporary relief. Nawab Mahmud Khan, a nephew of Ghulam Kadir of evil repute, invested the house in which the Europeans had taken shelter. Syed Ahmed again came to their rescue and arranged an amicable settlement by which the Europeans were allowed to leave for Meerut, while the district was left to the Nawab "till the English returned to claim it". Subsequently three Hindu zamindars, of whom Chaudhuri (later Raja) Partab Singh of Tejpur was the leading spirit, combined against the Pathan Nawab and compelled him to retreat. They invited the European officers to return and take charge of the

[16] Inglis's Report, p 5 and Alexander's letter. No. 331 of 1858
[17] Edwards, *op. cit.*, p 26 & p 156

district, but Cracroft Wilson, Special Commissioner asked Syed Ahmed to run the administration in collaboration with Muhammad Rahmat Khan, Deputy Magistrate, and Mir Turab Ali Khan, Tahsildar. But for the indiscretion of one of the Hindu confederates, Syed Ahmed might have safely held Bijnour for his British masters till their power was re-established, but the Chaudhuri sacked a Muslim village, and the Muslims made a common cause with the rebel Nawab and restored his authority.[18]

Moradabad witnessed an unexpected *emeute* on the 3rd June. The 29th N.I., over whom Mr. Cracroft Wilson claimed to have acquired uncommon influence, not only remained steady but participated in the suppression of disturbances. The Gujars and Mewatis and, in some cases, the Jats had taken advantage of the collapse of the constituted authorities and returned to their marauding habits. The Magistrate reports, "Several expeditions were carried out against these marauders with perfect success by the civil authorities, with the aid of detachments of the 29th native infantry and irregular cavalry, at Amroah, and also in the neighbourhood of Chuglut and Hussunpore, and peace had been almost completely restored to the district by the end of May, and we were very sanguine of being able to retain our posts and weather the storm in safety. A large force of the sappers and miners who had deserted from Meerut, were attacked on their way through the district to their homes, and made to lay down their arms, to the number of upwards of sixty stands. A party of twenty sepoys of the 20th native infantry returning to their homes with treasure plundered from the Government coffers at Mozuffernuggur, were also attacked, and their ill-gotten gains taken from them; two of the party having been killed and twelve or thirteen apprehended."[19] With this record of discipline and obedience why the men of the 29th finally decided to defy authority it is difficult to explain. The Magistrate attributed the outbreak to the bad example of Bareilly, the news of the revolt there having inflamed their feelings. But no harm was done to the officers. When some sepoys pointed their muskets at the Magistrate and the Judge, their officers reminded them of their oath, and no attempt was made on their lives. Some Indian officers of the Irregular Cavalry were then on leave at Moradabad and their services were placed at the disposal of the civil authorities. They safely escorted the fugitives to Meerut.[20] The British

[18] Graham, *The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*, pp 15-20
[19] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, p 351
[20] *Idem*, p 352

Government had a firm friend in the Nawab of Rampur and he held the district for the most part during the absence of the European officers. Not that his authority was not challenged, for there were champions of faith among his subjects who would fain see him lead them against the enemies of religion.

The white people at Shahjahanpur were less fortunate. The Bareilly incidents had nothing to do with the outbreak there, for it took place on the same day though not at the same hour. The death roll was heavy, for the sepoys, armed with swords and lathis, had attacked the church while divine service was going on. The survivors fled to Powain, the seat of a powerful landlord, on the border of Oudh, but he did not think his place safe for the fugitives. A note was sent from Powain to Mohamdi, in Oudh, where another party was waiting for safe escort. From Mohamdi the unfortunate people set off for Aurangabad but were cruelly massacred by a party of sepoys when within a mile of their destination. But the life of Captain Orr, who had accompanied them from Mohamdi, had been saved by a Jamadar named Lachman. He escorted the Captain to Mithauli where his wife had preceded him. The outbreak at Mohamdi was probably precipitated by the advent of the refugees from Shahjahanpur.[21]

For nearly eleven months British authority disappeared from Rohilkhand and Khan Bahadur ruled undisturbed at Bareilly. An attempt was made in the closing months of 1857 to finance a Hindu revolt in Rohilkhand and Captain Gowan was authorised to spend 50,000 rupees for the purpose. But nothing came out of his efforts and he wrote on November 14 (1857), "I have been quite unsuccessful in my attempts to induce the Thakoors round about here to collect together any number of men. I had been led to suppose that they were inclined to render effectual aid to Govt. but find that the extent of aid goes not beyond professions of goodwill for the present and boastings of what they would do, if they were backed by a well appointed European force."[22] But Khan Bahadur Khan's attempts to dislodge the handful of European fugitives from Nainital was equally unsuccessful. There was no trained sepoy in his army, and though his fighting force was popularly estimated at 30 to 40 thousand, they lacked military experience[23] and had no competent officer to lead them.

Sir Colin again raised the question of priority. Was Oudh to be subjugated first, or should Bareilly come first in the

[21] *Annals of the Indian Rebellion*, pp 355-65
[22] Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 25, 27 Aug., 1858
[23] Mostly impecunious Pathans, according to Durgadas Bandopadhyaya.

programme of the next campaign? Sir Colin would leave Rohilkhand for future operations and reduce Oudh. He explained his reasons to Lord Canning in his letter of the 24th March 1858. "It seems that there are two modes of making use of these troops—the one being to employ them in the province of Oudh in the support of the central position of Lucknow, the other being the prosecution of operations beyond the limits of the province, in Rohilcund. In favour of the latter—viz., Rohilcund—it may be said that great anxiety exists for its occupation. Those best acquainted with it allege that this can be effected with but little risk; but they admit that it requires combined operations from different quarters, and a considerable body of troops." "The province of Oudh being still in a state of active rebellion, it becomes a matter of doubt whether any mere garrison could take care of itself—that is to say, whether it might not be liable to be blockaded and cut off from supplies, unless the country within a certain radius be thoroughly reduced and held. To do this effectually will demand the occupation of certain points of strategic importance as regards Lucknow." "Whenever our columns have marched they have literally walked over the insurgent bodies; but that, directly they had passed, the rebels again formed in their rear, cut off their communications, and intercepted their supplies." "It is more expedient to be satisfied with the affirmation of real authority without delay in this province, than to attempt another operation in Rohilcund without leaving means behind to ensure the former. I would prefer, therefore, to shut in Rohilcund during the next four or five months, which would allow time for the organisation of Oudh." But Lord Canning decided otherwise. "You will perhaps remember," the Governor-General answered, "that my opinion of the paramount importance of dealing first with Oudh was based upon the political necessity of wresting, not the province itself, but its capital from the rebels." The plan of the campaign, of course, was the business of the Commander-in-Chief, the policy alone was laid down by the Governor-General.[24]

Rohilkhand was to be entered from different points. Brigadier-General Walpole was to clear the left bank of the Ganges. The Commander-in-Chief would personally proceed from Fatehgarh and join Walpole on the frontier of Rohilkhand. Major-General Penny was to march from Meerut and join the Commander-in-Chief at Miranpur Katra between Shahjahanpur and Bareilly. A fourth column under Brigadier-General Jones would penetrate

[24] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, pp 333-36

into Rohilkhand from their base at Roorkee. All the columns were to converge on Bareilly and there deal a decisive blow at the main rebel army, while Major-General Seaton was to watch the movements of the insurgents along the Ganges from his headquarters at Fatehgarh. The scheme was implemented according to the schedule but not without some loss. Walpole suffered heavy losses in his assault on Ruya, the stronghold of Narpat Singh. Two sides of the fortress were well protected by an impenetrable bamboo forest while the other two were comparatively easy of approach. The death of a popular officer, Colonel Adrian Hope, magnified the first repulse into a serious defeat, but the next morning the fort was found abandoned. Sir Colin rode ahead of his troops to Fatehgarh to meet General Penny. Walpole's division meanwhile executed their part of the plan and joined the Commander-in-Chief near the Ramganga river. Penny, however, allowed himself to be ambushed near the town of Kukerowlee and though the general programme was not interrupted, he paid for his carelessness with his life. Brigadier-General Jones crossed the Ganges near Hardwar and encountered the insurgent force in the Bhagniwala jungle. One of his Indian officers, Imam Baksh, captured, on his own initiative, a small fort where a Nawab had taken shelter. The column then proceeded to Moradabad where the Brigadier halted, as he had got no information about the movements of the Commander-in-Chief. He was to join the main army near Bareilly just in time to participate in the attack. Jones resumed his march on the 3rd May and on the 5th reached Mirganj, within fourteen miles of Bareilly. At Mirganj was posted Shahjada Firuz Shah of Mandisore fame who retreated without offering any resistance. But there was no news of Sir Colin.

Sir Colin encamped outside Shahjahanpur on the 30th April. He left a small force there to garrison the jail building which commanded the city. On the 3rd May he reached Fatehgarh in Rohilkhand, so called because the Nawab of Oudh and his British allies had scored a victory here over the Rohilas of Hafiz Rahmat Khan more than eighty years ago. Colonel H. R. Jones joined the main force at Miranpur Katra with Penny's column as previously arranged. The dawn of the 5th May found the combined army at Faridpur and the vedettes reported the appearance of the Rohila cavalry. Preparations were at once made for the battle. It opened with a heavy cannonade followed by a furious charge by the Ghazis. The Highlanders fought desperately and the Ghazi horsemen were mowed down by artillery fire. The Ghazis came to die in the cause of religion and they neither sought nor expect-

ed any quarter. The battle of Bareilly was lost by the Rohilas and next day, the Roorkee Field Force, under Brigadier Jones, reached the outskirts of the city after repulsing a small body of rebel troops that held a stone bridge over a small stream that flows by Bareilly. Khan Bahadur Khan left for Pilibhit and his capital was completely occupied by the British.

After the victory of Bareilly Sir Colin found no respite. The Maulavi of Faizabad had no military training, but he had the natural instincts of a born leader. He never missed a weak point in the enemy line and always strove to strike at it. Having been defeated by Sir Hope Grant near Lucknow, he turned his attention to Rohilkhand. Probably he wanted to create a diversion in favour of the defenders of Bareilly, or, failing that, to harass the invading army by intercepting the convoys and cutting off the weaker outposts. The small garrison at Shahjahanpur did not escape his notice, and the Maulavi led his men against it hoping to eliminate the weak outpost while Sir Colin was engaged elsewhere. But he could not take the town by surprise. A spy warned the Englishmen of the Maulavi's approach and they struck their tents, which they had pitched in a grove near the jail, and promptly placed themselves on the defensive in the entrenchment. The Maulavi took possession of the old fort, the suburbs and the town and turned his guns against the jail. Nor did he forget to execute the pro-British citizens, for to him they were no better than traitors. For eight days and nights the small garrison held its post before Brigadier Jones came to its succour with the Roorkee Field Force, now re-christened Shahjahanpur Field Force. The Maulavi, however, did not retire without a fight. He had been in the meantime reinforced by Shahjada Firuz Shah and Begam Hazrat Mahal. But Jones repulsed their attack and Shahjahanpur was saved. Sir Colin left Walpole in charge of Rohilkhand and returned to Fatehgarh after reinforcing Jones. The Oudh campaign was postponed for the cold season. But the Maulavi did not survive to fight Sir Colin again. Repulsed from Shahjahanpur, he posted himself on the Mohamdi road from where Jones could not dislodge him. Before he left Mohamdi he took care to demolish all the defences at that place. On the 5th June he appeared before Powain, a small fort on the Oudh-Rohilkhand border, a few miles from Shahjahanpur. But the Raja closed the gates of his fort against the Maulavi. He charged the gates with his elephant but was shot dead by the garrison as he made an easy target on his *hawda*. The severed head was then sent to the Magistrate of Shahjahanpur and it was exposed at the Kotwali of the town. The body was burnt and the ashes thrown

into the river. The Raja got Rs. 50,000, the price of the Maulavi's head.[25]

According to Sir Thomas Seaton, the Maulavi was "a man of great abilities, of undaunted courage, of stern determination, and by far the best soldier among the rebels."[26] Malleson pays the highest tribute to the Maulavi as a man and a patriot. "If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongfully destroyed, of his native country, then most certainly the Moulvi was a true patriot. He had not stained his sword by assassination, he had connived at no murders: he had fought manfully, honourably, and stubbornly in the field against the strangers who had seized his country, and his memory is entitled to the respect of the brave and the true-hearted of all nations."[27]

During the hot months of the summer military operations were not altogether suspended. Sir Hope Grant conducted a campaign in Oudh and recovered Sultanpur. But both the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief realised that military coercion alone was no cure for a revolt so widespread and the policy of indiscriminate burning of villages ultimately recoiled on the constituted government, for it cut the revenue supply at its sources. Coercion and conciliation, kicks and kisses must, therefore, be tried simultaneously, and an attempt should be made to persuade the great majority of the rebels to lay down their arms and return home in peace. The more important leaders were not expected to be won over, in fact men like Nana, Tatya Tope, Khan Bahadur Khan, and Nawab Tafazzal Hussain of Farrukhabad had been singled out for condign punishment. But the time had arrived when the part played by lesser persons in the revolt and its aftermath should be overlooked. An opportunity for such an experiment was afforded by the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. In August 1858, the Bill, passed by the two houses of Parliament terminating the East India Company's Government in India, came into force and on the 1st November the Queen's Proclamation was read at a magnificent Darbar at Allahabad. It guaranteed the rights and honour and dignity of the Indian princes and declared that none would be in any way favoured or molested on the ground of religion and "all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of law". It enjoined on all who might be in authority under the Queen "that they abstain from all interference with the religious

[25] G. P. Money to R. Alexander, 17 June 1858, Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 138, 27 Aug., 1858

[26] Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 541

[27] *Idem*, Vol. II, p 544

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, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge."

The Proclamation did not prove an unqualified success. Its sincerity was challenged by another queen, Begam Hazrat Mahal of Oudh. She at once issued a counter-Proclamation in the name of her son. It urged the people concerned not to place their faith in the offer of pardon, "for it is the unvarying custom of the English never to forgive a fault be it great or small" whereas the kindness of Hindustani rulers is well known to all. "It is written in the Proclamation that the country of Hindoostan which was held in trust by the Company, has been resumed by the Queen". But wherein asked the Begam lay the difference when the Company's settlement continues as before and the servants of the Company, the Governor-General and the judicial administration of the Company all remained unchanged? The Queen of England said that she would honour all contracts and agreements entered into by the Company. The ruler of Oudh cited a number of cases in which Indian princes had been grossly wronged in direct contravention of the treaties they had signed. He explained how his own predecessors had been gradually mulcted of such districts as Shahjahanpur, Bareilly, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Gorakhpur, Etawa, and Allahabad. "These are old affairs; but recently in defiance of treaties and oaths, and notwithstanding that they owed us millions of rupees, without reason, and on the pretence of the mis-government and discontent of our people, they took our country and property worth millions of rupees. If our people were discontented with our Royal predecessor Wajid Ally Shah, how comes it they are content with us? and no ruler ever experienced such loyalty and devotion of life and goods as we have done! What then is wanting that they do not restore our country." To the assurance that the Queen wanted no increase of territory was posed the question. "Why does Her Majesty not restore our country to us when our people wish it?" "In the Proclamation it is written", the prince added, "that the Christian religion is true". "What has the administration of justice to do with the truth, or falsehood of a religion?" he asks. "The rebellion began with religion, and for it millions of men have been killed. Let not our subjects be deceived". "It is written in the Proclamation that they who harboured rebels, or who caused men to rebel, shall have their lives, but that punishment shall

be awarded after deliberation, and that murderers and abettors of murders, shall have no mercy shown them". The prince warned his people that the assurance meant nothing. "Everything is written and yet nothing is written." The inhabitants of every village or estate visited by the army (obviously sepoy army) would somehow or other find themselves implicated. Those village headmen who had foolishly reported themselves to the English were called upon to present themselves at the prince's camp before the 1st January. "No one has ever seen in a dream", he repeated, "that the English forgave an offence." The Oudh Proclamation concludes by pointing out that the English "have promised no better employment for Hindoostanies than making roads and digging canals. If people cannot see clearly what this means, there is no help for them. Let no subject be deceived by the Proclamation."[28] It will be futile to try to ascertain at this distance of time how Begam Hazrat Mahal's Proclamation was accepted by the people of Oudh but the Governor-General certainly did not expect that the assumption of the Government by the Crown, or the liberal terms, in which his Sovereign's Proclamation was couched, would bring the war to an end. He had already anticipated his Sovereign in certain respects. On 7th July 1858 William Muir, Secretary to the Government of North-Western Provinces, wrote to the Commissioner of Rohilkhand that in awarding punishment "wherever an officer has a doubt, and is not able to submit it, for the decision of superior authority, His Lordship desires that he should resolve it on the side of mercy. The simple acceptance of office under the rebels is not in itself a sufficient ground for condemnation". But the final subjugation of Oudh was the army's responsibility. The Commander-in-Chief was getting ready for the next campaign when the Proclamation was read.

On the 2nd November, Sir Colin Campbell, now Lord Clyde of Clydesdale, left Allahabad from Oudh. His plan was to encircle the rebel troops and gradually push them towards the Nepal frontier and there crush them in toto or leave them to die of privation and disease in the fever-infested forests of the Terai. The sepoy leaders had strangely enough persuaded themselves that the Nepal Government were favourably disposed towards them.[29] Before Jang Bahadur had crossed into Oudh a Sikh

[28] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 3022, 31 Dec., 1858

[29] "The rebel leaders in Dang and Deokurh having been summoned by proclamation issued by the Nepalese Government to evacuate those valleys and repair to the Terai east of the Terai Nullah and north of the Goruckpore frontier prepared to obey in firm and full expectation that the Gurkhas were

envoy, Hukum Singh, was sent on a double mission to the Gurkha Darbar. He was to bring back Rani Jindan, Ranjit Singh's widow, with a view to organising a Sikh rising in the Punjab. He gave a cock-and-bull story about Golab Singh holding the Punjab in trust for his sovereign and a Frenchman kidnapping Dalip Singh, who had already reached Aden on his way to India. These lies naturally gained no credence, and Hukum Singh failed even to cross the Nepal frontier.[30] Even after Jang Bahadur had openly ranged himself on the side of the British and actively co-operated with the Commander-in-Chief in the reduction of Lucknow, the Wali of Oudh, his agents and Nana Saheb continued to correspond with him. On the 19th May 1858 the Wali wrote to the Prime Minister of Nepal—"It is known to everyone that my ancestors brought the British to Hindoostan. . . The British sometime ago, attempted to interfere with the faith of both the Hindoos and Mahomedans, by preparing cartridges with cow's grease for the Hindoos and that of pigs for the Mahomedans and ordering them to bite them with their teeth. The Sepoys refused, and were ordered by the British to be blown away from guns, on the parade ground. This is the cause of the war breaking out." Six days later Jang Bahadur was informed that "temples and imambaras have been broken down. You are also aware, that the British do not care either for the religion or life, of Hindoos or Mahomedans; and their cunningness and treachery, as well as their forgetfulness of favours, is not unknown to you." Ali Muhammad Khan complained that "the British nation is bent on depriving the inhabitants of this country, of their religion, faith, dominions, and lives; and no hope is left to any prince by this cursed nation." Jang Bahadur was, however, too much of a politician to play the role of the defender of faith and he curtly replied, "As the Hindoos and Mahomedans have been guilty of ingratitude and perfidy, neither the Nepal Government nor I can side with them."[31] He himself did not lay much store by gratitude or good faith, but the rebuff left the rebels still unshaken in their faith in Nepalese sympathy and friendship. Lord Clyde's military strategy gained considerable support from the rebel psychology.

their friends at heart and would assuredly side with and assist them in opposition to the British should the latter attempt to molest them after their quitting the hills, and with such faith they accordingly proceeded in the direction pointed out." Summary Report of Lieutenant Eustace Hill. In another document it is recorded that the rebels were confirmed in this belief by Begam Hazrat Mahal

[30] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 448-53, 27 Nov., 1857. Hukum Singh was formerly a Jamadar in a cavalry regiment

[31] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 100-103 and 32, 27 Aug., 1858

His plan was simple. One column was to enter Oudh from his old headquarters, Fatehgarh, another from Shahjahanpur, a third from Azamgarh and he himself would advance from Soraon near Allahabad. His intention was to open the campaign in November but the insurgents anticipated him by an attack on a small post at Sandila a month earlier. Lord Clyde wanted to reduce the strongholds of the Rajput chiefs in Oudh one by one. Rampur Kasia, the headquarters of the powerful Khanpuria clan, was the first to be assaulted. It was a strong place but it was reduced in a few days by Wetheral and Hope Grant. Clyde next turned his arms against the Raja of Amethi. The Raja, Lal Madho Singh, had extended his hospitality to British fugitives at the beginning of the troubles and escorted them to Allahabad. Subsequently, however, he had actively joined the insurrection. Lord Clyde summoned him to surrender his fort, his troops, arms and ammunition with his person, but the Raja had no control over the strong rebel force that had taken refuge in his fort. Unable to do anything better, he stealthily left his fort and presented himself at the Commander-in-Chief's camp. The rebels followed the example of their host and the next morning the stronghold of Amethi was found untenanted except by the Raja's personal retainers.

The next objective was Shankarpur, the seat of the most valiant of the Baiswara Rajputs, Beni Madho. Village bards have immortalised his valour and their ballads are still chanted by the rural population at the time of the Holi.[32] In April he had interfered with the settlement operations in South-east Oudh and chastised all zamindars who had come to terms with the British. Sir Hope Grant led a column against him on the 28th April but he had to return to Lucknow without destroying Beni Madho and his troops. Lord Clyde assured him that his claims to retain his estates would be considered if he submitted without further resistance. Beni Madho replied that he could not surrender his person, because that belonged to his sovereign for whom he was bound to fight, but he would give up the fort as it was his own property.[33] He left Shankarpur under cover of night and instead of going north or east went to Dundia Khera where Babu Ram Baksh Sing, whose men had fired on Mowbray Thomson's party, lived. Brigadier Evelegh was ordered to pursue him but nothing was known about his whereabouts and he was reported from all

[32] Pandit K. L. Dubey, formerly Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University, kindly sent me one of these ballads. Beni Madho of Shankarpur should not be confused with the chief of the same name of Atrauli

[33] Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p 517

quarters.[34] At last it was learnt that he had retired to Ram Baksh's village. The fort there had been partly demolished in May by Sir Hope Grant. On the 24th November an action was fought. The rebels were defeated but Beni Madho eluded capture. He was closely pursued but he crossed first the Gomati, then the Gogra and entered Oudh never again to return to Baiswara, his ancestral home and the scene of his earlier exploits. In a report, dated Lucknow the 4th December, we read that Beni Madho's army was broken up and dispersed. His troops had quietly settled down in their villages. "About 5000 of them, however, have followed their Chief in small parties into the Baraitch Division." A few days later he was reported at Mithauli near Bairam Ghat. But the utmost exertion of the Commander-in-Chief failed to cut off his retreat northwards. The campaign had, however, gone according to Lord Clyde's plans. Beni Madho, Devi Baksh, Muhammad Hasan, Mehndi Hasan, Amar Singh, Khan Bahadur Khan, Begam Hazrat Mahal, Mammu Khan, Nana Saheb, Bala Saheb, Jawala Prasad, with other prominent rebel leaders were driven out of their home districts and hemmed in a narrow region on the border of Nepal. It now remained to push them north into the inhospitable land of Jang Bahadur.

One insurgent chief refused to walk into the trap. With two thousand followers Firuz Shah doubled back and crossed the Ganges and appeared near Etawa. Brigadiers Troup and Barker failed to intercept him. Firuz Shah later joined Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope. He shared their adventures but not their fate.

Lord Clyde in the meantime was busy closing his net. Bala Saheb was reported at Tulsipur near the Terai region. The widowed Rani was believed to be on the rebel side. So Sir Hope Grant was despatched to reduce her stronghold. He arrived at Balarampur on the 16th where he was joined by the friendly Raja. On the 23rd Brigadier Rowcroft occupied Tulsipur. Lord Clyde reached Bahraich on the 17th. According to the information of his spies both Nana Saheb and Begam Hazrat Mahal were at that old city. But they moved away as the Commander-in-Chief approached, but Lord Clyde halted for five days there. "There were political reasons for our delay at Buraech", says Russell. "First: there are two of the Begums willing to surrender. Next: Mummoo Khan makes overtures. Nay, the Begum herself

[34] "Bene Madho to be discovered. We have 'certain' intelligence that he is at all points of the compass at exactly the same hour of the same day, and we have not thirty-one columns to spare to verify these reports." Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 320

and Brijeis Kuddr despatch letters and emissaries to the Civil Commissioner, Major Barrow. Old Hunwunt Sing sets off to use his persuasive powers with his obstinate and gallant kinsman, Bene Madho, and is sanguine of securing his submission. Major Barrow believes that, if the chiefs are not pressed, and if the Commander-in-Chief halts while delicate manipulation and subtle diplomacy are at work, there is a probability they will come in and lay down their arms; but if they are not allowed time to consider our propositions, they will fly where we cannot follow them, and cause trouble, annoyance, and expenditure."[35] But Major Barrow's diplomacy failed in its main objective. The Begam had little faith in British sincerity. Beni Madho would not surrender so long as the Begam continued in arms. Nor could Mammu Khan follow an independent course of his own. Nana, as we shall see later, would not submit unless the Queen herself or the Viceroy promised his life and their guarantee was seconded by another power. So Lord Clyde marched towards Nanpara where the rebel leaders were next reported, but on the 26th spies brought the news that they had left the place. The fort of Nanpara in the midst of a dense forest had recently been strengthened and Beni Madho intended to dispute the progress of his enemies there. But the battle that was fought at Barordiah was lost and the stubborn Rajput retreated further. A fort belonging to the Raja of Churda, where Nana was said to be in hiding, was next occupied and demolished. On the 29th Lord Clyde returned to Nanpara to learn that Nana and Beni Madho were at Banki on the banks of the Rapti about twenty miles away. Lord Clyde ordered a night march on the 30th to overtake them unawares. But the picquets were on the alert and the secret was not well kept. Nana who was two miles in the rear crossed the river, but the rebel army did not follow him until they had offered a fight. With the rebels in Nepalese territories Lord Clyde's task was accomplished and on the 18th January 1859 he returned to Lucknow.

The battle of Banki was followed by the submission of some of the more prominent rebel leaders. "On the morning of the 7th," writes Russell, "before we left, the Nawab of Furukabad crossed the Raptee with his followers and surrendered to Major Barrow. Mehndie Hoossein and other famous rebel chiefs also surrendered. The scene was extremely interesting, and the particular coolness and self-possession of these men, who had been fighting against us a few hours before, and who now sat perfectly at their ease in the Special Commissioner's tent, was very

[35] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 359

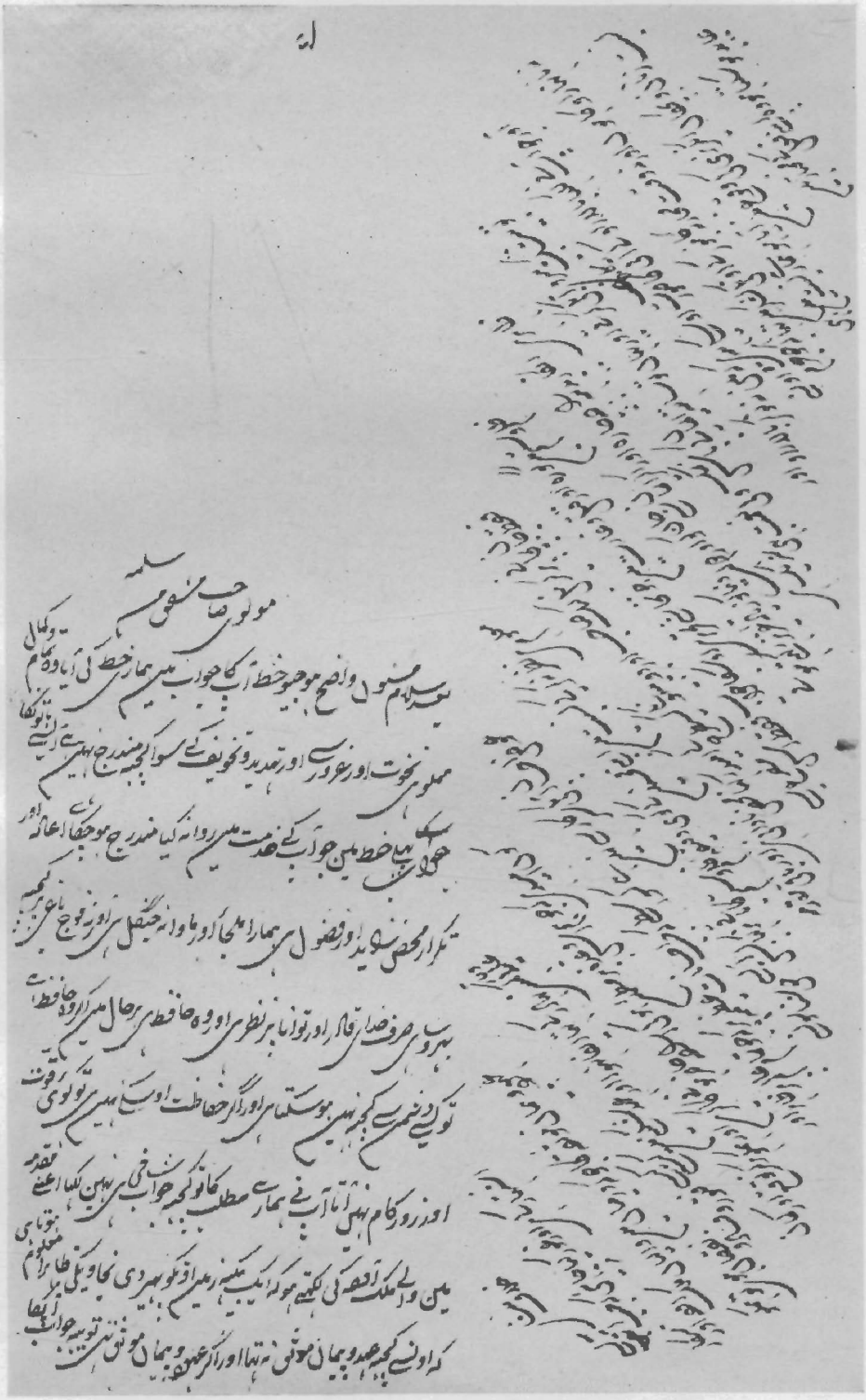
striking."[36] If Nawab Tafazzal Husain of Farrukhabad and Mehndi Hasan surrendered on the same day, the treatment that awaited them was very different. Mehndi Hasan was, before annexation, a Chakladar in the service of the King of Oudh. He had fought for his king and country as long as he could and laid down his arms when he found that the cause was lost. On the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief he was granted a pension of two hundred rupees per mensem but he was not permitted to return to his old home in Faizabad district.[37] The Nawab of Farrukhabad, however, was tried and condemned to death, for he was held responsible for the murder of some Europeans, but his life was spared according to Major Barrow's promise at the time of surrender. He was packed off to Arabia and there left to shift for himself.

Tej Singh, Raja of Mainpuri, had surrendered much earlier on the 11th June 1858. When Sir Hope Grant's column passed through Mainpuri on its way to Kanpur in October 1857 he was compelled to leave his ancestral stronghold and the British general placed it in charge of Rao Bhawani Singh, the uncle of the Chauhan chief and a claimant to his estates. As soon as Hope Grant left, Tej Singh came back and Bhawani Singh had to seek an asylum at Agra. In April 1858 Tej Singh left Mainpuri and threatened Etah. But his following was melting away and on the 11th he had only one hundred retainers with him. He afterwards sought the hospitality of Kunwar Zor Singh of Pratabner who persuaded him to surrender. Tej Singh was promised his life and he was further assured that no indignity would be offered to him and should it be necessary to confine him he should not be associated with ordinary criminals. The Raja was later removed to Benares where he lived on a monthly subsistence allowance of Rs. 250/-. His estates were granted to Rao Bhawani Singh.[38]

When Lord Clyde opened his concluding campaign in Oudh an epistolary contest was going on between Sheikh Khairuddin, Deputy Magistrate of Gorakhpur, and Syed Muhammad Hasan Khan who was Nazim or governor of that district before annexation and, for a short while, during the revolt. In his first letter, dated the 13th November, 1858, Khairuddin told the ex-Nazim "that the rebels should abandon their (present) short-sighted line of conduct which can only end in their ruin" and referred him to "Her Majesty's Proclamation, issued this month, which

[36] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 395
[37] Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 372-73, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)
[38] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 122 & 270, 25 June, 1858; Foreign Department Procdgs. Gen. B 1862 March, Nos. 238-39; Nos. 97-98; November, Nos. 67-68 and December, Nos. 181-84

contains a declaration of pardon to all. From it you will perceive that those only who have been guilty of the murder of British authorities or subjects shall be liable to punishment". "Under these circumstances you ought to reflect how hopeless of advantage your continuance in the rebel ranks is. If you hold out you will undoubtedly be either captured or slain." Muhammad Hasan was advised not only to take advantage of the proferred pardon himself but to advise other chiefs, such as the Raja of Gonda, to do so, and also to inform the sepoys that they would be allowed to go home if they submitted under the terms of the proclamation. Muhammad Hasan had in the early days of the outbreak not only extended his hospitality to English fugitives but arranged their flight to Gorakhpur. He was not in any way concerned with the murder of Christians and he could safely take advantage of the terms of the proclamation. But he was apparently reluctant to come to terms while his master's wrong remained unredressed. Moreover, like the Begam, he seemed to have his doubts about the real intent of the proclamation. His lengthy answer was, therefore, more of a plea for the royal house and the rebel cause than a request for pension and pardon for himself which the Government were eager to grant. Muhammad Hasan began with a statement of his innocence of European blood. "I have never killed any official or subject, although the European officers and their soldiers have slaughtered thousands of innocent and insignificant men, including women, blind men and mendicants, and have burned down their dwellings, looting their property." He admitted that what Khairuddin had written about the might of England to frighten him was quite true. He also confessed that he could not expect any advantage by remaining with the insurgents. "The almighty however, whose name is 'Strong' and the 'Protector' is omnipotent, if an enemy is mighty He is more mighty, He if He chooses makes the strong weak and the weak strong—whom He wills He exalts and whom He wills He debases." "I neither fear capture or death in the least". He argues that if per chance he is captured he has nothing to fear, for under the Proclamation he is not liable to any punishment. "If on the other hand I am killed while fighting for my religion and my earthly sovereign, I then attain the prosperity of the two worlds." The Nazim next went on to examine the text of the Proclamation. "The phraseology of the proclamation where it promises pardon of offences is somewhat obscure and indefinite". After elaborating his point he added, "The English rulers of Hindostan have retracted from the binding engagements entered into with the native Princes and acted



*Letter of Muhammad Hasan*

خلاصہ مطلب یہ ہے کہ میں تو کسی امور دنیوی کے کارنہ ہی کا ہوں جب تک اونکی

حق میں کوئی تجویز منظور سرکار انگریزی سے نہیں ہوتی تو اپنے حاضر ہونے سے

ہرگز جایز نہیں جانتا ہوں اور آپ کے تحریر کا جواب مصرح نکتہ من بحر جاحنہ

بیفایدہ ہے کہ کیا فایدہ اسکی کہ آپ کو تلخی اور ملال ہو اسواسطے اس پر

اکتفا کیا گیا فقط

مرقوم ماہ ربیع الثانی ۱۲۷۵ھ

contrary to the provisions which ought to have been irrefrangible." Who could then rely on assurances which can be construed in totally different ways? It was notorious how unfairly the king of Oudh had been treated. "Their kingdom has been wrested perfidiously from a dynasty which never opposed and which always conciliated the English Government". "The Princes and peoples of Hindostan . . . took the opportunity of the revolt of the army . . . and the outbreak took place, involving the slaughter and plunder of thousands of innocent servants of God." He asserted that the rebellion was the direct result of the annexation of Oudh. But for this act of injustice there would have been no bloodshed, for the chiefs would have undoubtedly fought against the insurgents. Muhammad Hasan, therefore, expected Her Majesty to restore Oudh to its legitimate rulers since she had promised to honour all the treaties and engagements of the East India Company and assured the princes that she did not desire any further extension of her territories. He argued that the expression "now in possession" should apply to the time of writing the Proclamation for at that time the greater part of Oudh was not in British occupation. "We servants and dependants of the King of Oude", he concluded, "consider it essential to our prosperity in both worlds to display devotion in protecting the Kingdom and opposing the efforts of invaders who seek to gain a footing in it. If we fail in doing so we are traitors and will have our faces blackened in both worlds."

Khairuddin as a loyal servant of the British Government could not let these charges of murder of women and blind men, of faithlessness and usurpation, go uncontradicted. He indignantly repudiated the allegation that the British soldiers were guilty of murder of women, of the maimed and of children and charged the Nazim with association with Bala Rao, who and whose brother were really guilty of such offences. "What you propose concerning the restoration of the Kingdom of Oude and your submission being only consequent on that, is nonsense. Government will never give up one beegah of land which it has once appropriated. What have you to do with such discussions, you may write whatever you choose about yourself, but not of what concerns the State. In short I give you to understand that if you wish to save your life, you must at once surrender." Khairuddin reminded Muhammad Hasan that the period of grace will expire in forty days and after that his services to European officers would be of no avail.

These threats had no immediate effect. The Nazim was still firm in his resolution and his answer was at once calm and

dignified. He began by repeating that he did not rely on the rebel forces for his life. "My reliance is on the powerful and omnipotent God: if He protects me no enemy can do me harm, and otherwise no strength is of avail." "The Government having committed every description of oppression, it is foolish in me, to have any hope, for my having saved Col. Lake (Lennox) and his two ladies". "If I valued my life and worldly wealth more than my religion I would certainly come to you." "I am not a servant of Bala Rao's or Nana Rao's nor did I come into his camp at Cawnpoor: so his crimes committed on the English women and children cannot return upon me." "I do not consider my submission would be lawful, but criminal. As for the rest to answer to what you have written would only be a useless and bitter discussion, therefore let this be sufficient."[39]

Nothing illustrates the ideology of the Oudh leaders better than these two letters of Nazim Muhammad Hasan. They fought for their king and their religion, and their religion enjoined on them to stand loyally by their king. Muhammad Hasan was subsequently persuaded to submit but many other leaders, Beni Madho of Shankarpur, Devi Baksh of Gonda, Golab Singh of Biswah died in the malaria-infested jungles of Nepal but did not forsake their earthly sovereign and deny One who ruled from above.

The Governor-General must have been impressed by the tone of the rebel Nazim's correspondence as his notes on it indicate. "Send copies of these letters to the C-in-Ch. Say that much may be excused to Md. Hossein in consideration of his sheltering and treating kindly Col. Lennox and his family and that in the event of Md. Hossein falling into the hands of the Com-in-Ch or seeking terms, he may receive assurance not only of life and liberty, but of liberal maintenance, although his removal from the scene of his recent hostility to the Govt. will be necessary."[40] But Wingfield, Commissioner of Gorakhpur, was not so leniently inclined. It was at his instance that Khairuddin Ahmed had opened his negotiations with Muhammad Hasan and the rebuff he had received might have influenced the Commissioner. He wrote to G. F. Edmondstone, Foreign Secretary, in a letter dated 26th December 1858, "Though it is a matter with which our Government has no concern yet in order that an unduly favourable estimate may not be formed of his character from the single act of humanity, I would draw attention to the foul murder by him

[39] Foreign Political Consultations, Nos 7-9, 18 March, 1859
[40] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 7, 18 March, 1859

of the Banker Ramdutt in open court, the circumstances of which are detailed in the official papers on the annexation of Oudh—Could he have been apprehended at the time the Oudh Government would, at the instance of Colonel Sleeman, most assuredly have put him to death."[41] After he had surrendered to the military authorities Wingfield complained that Sir Hope Grant had shown the rebel chief special marks of regard and Muhammad Hasan was accused of compassing the death of a European, Mr. Peppe.[42] Hope Grant roundly denied that Muhammad Hasan had received any special treatment in his camp[43] and Mr. Peppe, luckily for the Nazim, was found alive.[44] The Nazim did not belong to the landed aristocracy of Oudh and had no income independently of the salary he received as a servant of the state. A monthly allowance of 200 rupees was, therefore, considered sufficient for him and he was directed to live in Sitapur district.

The principal rebel leaders found their way to Nepal. The number of their followers has been variously estimated from four to twenty-five thousand. From their correspondence it appears that the fugitives had not given up all hopes of sympathy in the land of refuge and an attempt was being made to win the good will of Jang Bahadur. But Jang Bahadur had made it clear as early as January 1859 that he would have nothing to do with the enemies of his British allies. On the 15th January he wrote to the Begam of Oudh—"Be it known, that an intimate friendship exists between the British Government and the Nepal State, and both of them are bound by Treaty to apprehend and surrender to the other the enemies of either. I therefore write to you, that if you should remain or seek an asylum within my Territory and frontier, the Goorkha troops will most certainly, in pursuance of the treaty agreed upon by both the high states, attack and make war on you. . . And be it also known, that the Nepal State will neither assist, show mercy to, nor permit to remain in its territories or within its frontier those who have been so faithless and ungrateful as to do mischief, and raise animosity and insurrection, against

[41] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 12, 18 March, 1859

[42] G. E. W. Couper to the Secretary, Government of India, Foreign Department, 16 May, 1859. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 79, 27 May, 1859

[43] Hope Grant wrote—"I treated him with marked coolness, in order that he might not suppose he would be exempted from any consequences he might have incurred by my temporarily detaining him in the Military power." "I heard he had in his possession when he surrendered, five elephants, and he used I believe to ride one of these on the line of march". This was the subject of Wingfield's complaint. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 100, 5 Aug., 1859. Letter No. 256 dated Lucknow, 9 June, 1859

[44] Couper to Beadon, 12 August, 1859. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 29, 26 Aug., 1859

their masters, of whose salt they have partaken; to whom they owe their change for the better; and by whom they have been fostered."[45] Jang Bahadur could not afford to tolerate insurgents within his border for his own authority rested on brute force and not on the free consent of his people. At the same time he could not refuse asylum to fugitives of princely rank without offending the traditional usage of his land. But he seems to have relented somewhat, for we learn from a letter of Birjis Qadr of the 1st February, that he had received from Jang Bahadur a letter, dated 8 Magh, sambut 1915, (26th January 1859) desiring him (Sarkar) to go with his army, Rajas, Talukdars etc. to Chitwan.[46] From a letter of the 18th February it appears that Mammu Khan had offered Jang Bahadur's brother, General Badri Narsing a sum of Rupees 15,000, and the Rajas in the rebel camp were prepared to present him jewels if an interview was granted, but all these offers were rejected. It appears that the Nepal Government had decided to make the rebel chiefs surrender by persuasion, if possible, and by force, if necessary.

The fugitives moved from place to place between Chitwan, Bhutwal and Nayakot and suffered terrible privations. Some of the sepoys had to sell even their muskets to buy their food. The Gurkhas were prepared to sell them rice but the price demanded was exorbitant and fever and dysentery took as large a toll as starvation. The Nepal Government employed their troops for the capture and expulsion of their uninvited guests. It was in such an encounter that Beni Madho, Dabir Jang Bahadur, the popular hero of Shankarpur, met with his death. Unwilling to surrender, he fought the Gurkha troops in the Dang valley and died with many of his troops. His brother Jograj Singh was also killed on this occasion.[47] His surviving brother, widow and son were in Nepal till December 1859. The boy was thirteen or fourteen years of age at the time of his father's death. He was granted an estate with an income of 6,000 rupees per year and was sent to Sitapur for his education.[48] Nawab Mammu Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan and Brigadier Jawala Prasad with others of less note were delivered to the British authorities. Raja Devi Baksh of Gonda, Harprasad, Chakladar of Khairabad, Golab Singh of Biswa died in Nepal under what circumstances we do not know. Hardat Singh of Bundi was killed. Azimullah, Nana's friend, died at Bhutwal sometimes in October. The malaria of the Terai also

[45] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 413L, 15 July, 1859
[46] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 541, 30 Dec., 1859 (Supp.)
[47] Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 184-88, 24 Feb., 1860
[48] Foreign Department Procdgs., Nos. 214-15, 9 March, 1860

claimed Bala Saheb and probably his brother Nana Saheb as well.

In April 1859 Nana and Bala both sought to negotiate with the British authorities for terms of capitulation. But their letters differed widely in their tone and purport. Bala sent a 'petition' to the English,[49] Nana addressed an *Ishtahar* to the Queen of England among others. Bala threw all the blame for the rebellion on his brother. "The sepoys would not allow me to leave them, my brother would not permit me to separate from him. I was therefore necessitated to act according to my brother's orders. I have saved the life of a child, 9 or 10 years of age, the daughter of the Judge of Futtehpoor, and kept her concealed with my wife, and have shown her to General Budree Nur Sing."[50] "It is in your power to do with me as you wish. You can imprison or kill or hang me." But Nana was still defiant. His head carried a price of one lakh of rupees and an absolute and unconditional pardon was promised for his apprehension even to "persons who have been guilty of the murder of Europeans."[51] But he stoutly denied that he had any share in the murder of Englishmen and women and did not pray for mercy. "You have forgiven the crimes of all and the Nepal Chief is your friend. With all this you have not been able to do anything. You have drawn all to your side, and I alone am left but you will see what the soldiers I have been preserving for two years can do. We will meet, and then I will shed your blood and it will flow kneedeep. I am prepared to die."[52] Whether it is the last cry of despair or the stubborn defiance of a spirit still untamed, it is not possible to determine.

Major Richardson, to whom the *Ishtaharnama* was delivered by a Brahman, wrote in reply that "the Proclamation which was issued by Her Majesty the Queen of England, was not for any one party or person, but for *all*. And the identical terms under which the Nawab of Furruckabad, the Nawab of Banda and other Chieftains and Rajas of Oudh, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves to Government, those terms are open to you and all those who may wish to surrender. In writing as you do that you have not murdered women and children (Mehm our lurken), it becomes you to come in without fear". This answer had not the approval of the Governor-General-in-Council and it was decided that in future "all overtures from rebels who have been proscribed by the Government or who stand suspected

[49] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 68, 27 May, 1859
[50] Nothing is known about this child
[51] Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 456, 28 May, 1858
[52] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 66, 27 May, 1859

of having taken part in murders are to be answered by a communication of or reference to the Queen's Proclamation without further comment."[53] But Nana Saheb refused to surrender on such terms. "I cannot surrender myself in this manner," he wrote back, "if a letter, written by Her Mejesty the Queen and sealed with her seal, and brought by the Commanding Officer of the French ("Fransees") or the Second in Command, reach me, I will, placing reliance on these officers, accept the terms without hesitation. Why should I join you, knowing all the "dagabazi" perpetrated by you in Hindoostan?" "Life must be given up some day. Why then should I die dishonoured? There will be war between me and you as long as I have life, whether I be killed or imprisoned or hanged. And whatever I do will be done with the sword only."[54] Nana had so long been an elusive shadowy figure. Even in the early days of Kanpur he was in the background. Then he quietly flitted from Bithur to Farrukhabad, from Farrukhabad to Bareilly, from Bareilly to Bahraich and thence to the forests of the Terai. But he left the stage with a grand flourish of his sword. He must have been endowed with an uncommon histrionic sense. What happened to him later we do not know. The Nepal Government was satisfied that he was dead. The Government of India was not quite sure. Nana became a bogey that could not be easily laid.

The ladies of the Peshwa's family, two widows of Baji Rao II, Nana's widow and Bala's widow were allowed to spend their last days in Nepal. They had with them a young daughter of Baji Rao, the last representative of the Bhat family, she left her step-mothers and sisters-in-law to join her husband in Gwalior when peace was restored.

Begam Hazrat Mahal of Oudh also preferred to stay with her son and a small retinue in the country of the Gurkhas. She was promised a suitable pension independently of the allowance granted to her husband, the ex-King of Oudh. She was assured of all honours befitting her rank. But she could not be induced to come back to India. She was a woman of great energy and ability, says Russell. "She has excited all Oude to take up the interests of her son, and the chiefs have sworn to be faithful to him." "The Begum declares undying war against us; and in the circumstances of the annexation of the kingdom, the concealment of the suppression of the treaty, the apparent ingratitude to the family for money lent, and aid given at most

[53] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 67, 27 May, 1859
[54] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 68, 27 May, 1859



*Letter of Nana Saheb*

critical times, has many grounds for her indignant rhetoric."[55] Having lost the war the Begam declined to tacitly renounce the rights of her son by accepting a British pension. She was a better 'man' than her husband and lord.

Khan Bahadur Khan paid for his ambition with his life. He was tried, condemned, and hanged. In vain did he plead that he would not have surrendered if he had been guilty. The evidence against him was too strong. Unlike the King of Delhi, the Rani of Jhansi, and the Begam of Oudh, he had been a British subject, and though every man has the right to fight for the political freedom of his country the penalty of failure is death. Sobha Ram, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, escaped with simple imprisonment for life, a sentence worse than death for a cripple. He was sent to Moulmein.[56]

Bakht Khan had found his way to Lucknow after the fall of Delhi. What part he played in the defence of Lucknow and the subsequent campaign we do not precisely know. He was reported to have been killed in an action on the 13th May 1859.[57]

Jawala Prasad was hanged near Sati Chaura Ghat at Kanpur on the 3rd May 1860.

With the disappearance of their leaders the common soldiers laid down their arms, if they still possessed any. They gladly left the death trap where fear of life had driven them and returned to their village homes to confirm the report of their final discomfiture. It was decided to leave the Bihar leaders alone unless they were guilty of homicide. The total number of armed rebels made over by the Government of Nepal to their British allies amounted to two thousand.

We left Tatya and Rao Saheb on their way to Rajputana after the defeat of Jawra Alipur. Tatya rightly realised that his safety now lay in popular support. He could not expect active co-operation from the civil population but their good feeling he would not alienate on any account. Rao Saheb, therefore, announced that everything his troops needed would be obtained by fair purchase. The villagers should not abscond on their approach for they need not apprehend any molestation at their hands. On the contrary, he would pay for anything he bought at higher than the market rate.[58] With the peasants and tradesmen

[55] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp 274-75
[56] Letter to Secretary N.W. Provinces, No. 4407 of 15 July, 1859
[57] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 187, 17 June, 1859
[58] While passing through Jaipur Tatya's men got their provisions from villagers. Their practice was to send parties in advance explaining that they had no desire to injure the villages or their inhabitants—they required supplies for which they paid twice the value and if refused, would threaten to take what they

thus conciliated, Tatya turned his attention to the troops of the Indian states. It was in them that he rested his hopes and he was not always disappointed. He crossed the Chambal and turned towards Jaipur, but his movement in that direction was anticipated by General Roberts, and Tatya marched to Tonk. The Nawab with a few faithful adherents shut himself in the citadel but his troops joined the rebels *en masse*.

Hard pressed by Colonel Holmes, Tatya traversed the difficult hilly region of Bundi and entered into Mewar. In August Tatya was defeated by Roberts near Bhilwara and he fled towards Kankrauli. Roberts pressed his pursuit and again defeated Tatya on the banks of the Banas. But such set-backs and reverses did not dispirit Tatya. When everybody else thought that the river was no longer fordable he crossed the Chambal and appeared at Jhalrapatan, the capital of the small state of Jhalwar. The Raja's troops readily fraternised with the rebels and Tatya demanded a large ransom. The Raja effected his escape but not before he had paid five lakhs of rupees. Tatya and Rao Saheb were now within fifty miles of Indore and if he had succeeded in repeating his Gwalior exploit and raising the troops against their master, a more serious crisis might have been caused. But General Michel took the precaution of covering Indore by despatching a small force to Ujjain. On the 15th of September he attacked Tatya near Biowra.

After his defeat at the hands of Michel Tatya divided his troops and selected Bundelkhand as the next theatre of operation. He himself was to march against the famous fort of Chanderi and Rao Saheb with his division was to move in the direction of Jhansi. Failing to get possession of that strategic fort, Tatya moved towards the west bank of the Betwa. Here he was followed by Michel and defeated at Mangrauli on the 10th October. Nothing daunted, he crossed the Narmada and entered into Madhya Pradesh of to-day. If he expected any popular support in a former Maratha state he was sorely disappointed. On the contrary he found his enemies very much on the alert and he struck for Asirgarh. He found the region well guarded and moved to Kurgaon where he was reinforced by some of Holkar's mutinous troops. Despite all the attempts of his adversaries Tatya crossed the Narmada and made for Baroda, a Maratha state where he probably expected some support for the Peshwa. But

required by force, as in some instances they did. Eden, Political Agent, Jaipur to A.G.G. 24 July, 1858

he was not destined to reach the Gaikawad's capital, for Parke overtook him at Chhota Udaipur fifty miles from Baroda.

Headed from Gujarat, Rao Saheb and Tatya entered the small Rajput state of Banswara. From Banswara the two rebel leaders entered Mewar for a second time. Kesri Singh, the Chief of Salumbar, was not on good terms with his overlord, and the diplomat in Tatya probably expected to exploit the differences between the ruler of Mewar and the baron of Salumbar. The baron gave him some provisions and he moved through Bhilwara, the scene of one of his former exploits, to Pratabgarh, another Rajput state. But he was not given any respite by his inexorable foes. He was hemmed in by enemy troops on every side and he encountered a small detachment of them in the neighbourhood of Pratabgarh. From Pratabgarh he ran to Mandisore and from Mandisore to Zirapur.

The new year (1859) found him in the territories of Kota. At Nahargarh he joined Man Singh, his new ally and friend. It was adversity alone that had brought these strange persons together. Man Singh had no grievance against the English. A Rajput chief of Narwar, he rose against his overlord the Maratha ruler of Gwalior in defence of what he considered his rightful claims to his uncle's fief. His capture of the fort of Paori brought him in direct conflict with the British authorities. After being dislodged from the stronghold of Paori by General Napier, Man Singh had betaken to his native jungles. But Tatya parted company with him to join Shahzada Firuz Shah at Indargarh.

Firuz Shah's ranks had been sadly decimated, for he had also received chastisement at Napier's hands. After crossing the Ganges Firuz Shah had proceeded towards Kunch and Kalpi, a region with which the sepoys were quite familiar. Napier at once decided to intercept him. The two leaders unexpectedly encountered at Ranod, for neither was aware of the movements of the other. Firuz Shah next took shelter with his shattered army in the jungles of Aroni out of which he was chased by Captain Rice from Guna. When he joined Tatya at Indargarh their combined force did not number more than two thousand. Tatya and Firuz Shah left Indargarh just a day before Brigadier Honner arrived there, but Brigadier Showers fell upon them at Daosa between Jaipur and Bharatpur on the 14th January 1859. One-tenth of their entire following was slain on that fateful day but Tatya and Firuz Shah gave the pursuers a slip once again. They hovered in Jaipur territory and encamped at the small town of Sikar, the seat of a subordinate chief. But Colonel

Holmes from Nasirabad was already on their track. He covered more than fifty miles in twenty-four hours and surprised the rebel camp on the 21st January. Tatya's force was again routed but the leaders effected their escape as usual. Tatya had led the British Generals a jogtrot so long. Each one of them coveted the credit of netting the arch-rebel and free exchange of information among the different detachments was probably on that account lacking.[59] But Tatya now perceived that he could not elude them for long. From Central India he had rushed to Rajputana in July 1858, from Rajputana he ran to Bundelkhand, from Bundelkhand he went to the Madhya Pradesh, and from there he made for Baroda to be pushed back into Rajputana. Rivers like the Chambal, the Betwa, and the Narmada hampered the progress of his enemies but offered him no difficulty. He moved through hills and jungles by the shortest cuts. He found friends not only in the peasants but in the primitive tribes as well. Why did he not make a dash for the Deccan? Was he waiting for Nana? The question will never be answered, for he was silent on the point.

After the disaster of Sikar the three leaders Tatya Tope, Rao Saheb and Firuz Shah, decided to part. In small bands they might still hope to elude their ubiquitous enemy and find shelter in lonely hills or remote jungles. But together they were bound to be tracked and trapped. Tatya is reported to have told his followers to shift for themselves as best they could, for he could not continue the unequal fight any longer. With three attendants, three horses and a pony he left Rao Saheb's camp to seek shelter in the jungle of Paron, under the protection of Man Singh. Rao Saheb and Firuz Shah baffled all attempts to intercept them, crossed the Chaturbhuj pass and found a safe hide-out in the heart of Sironj jungle. But even there they were not left in peace. With their superior resources the British Generals tried to cordon the jungle and search it foot by foot and inch by inch. At last the four columns combined to sweep the forest clean and the rebel camp was reached. But the British officers were doomed to disappointment. Rao Saheb and Firuz Shah had vanished into thin air.

But the rebels had lost heart after the route of Shikar and negotiations for terms were opened not only on behalf of the two

[59] "The columns were all commanded by officers of zeal and experience; and they all wanted to be the one to catch Tantia Topee; and as each wanted his own column to do it without interference from another, in addition to chasing the rebels, the columns were often running from one another." Mrs. Paget, *Camp and Cantonment*, pp 441-42

princes but lesser chiefs as well. The Nawab of Banda took advantage of the Queen's Proclamation and surrendered soon after its publication in November 1858. He was granted a pension of 400 rupees per mensem. On the 19th February two men were arrested near Nimach who claimed to be envoys from the rebel camp. Two letters were found on their person, one in English from Wazir Khan, formerly Sub-Assistant Surgeon at Agra, addressed to the Officer commanding at Nimach and the other in Persian, without any address or date, signed by Syed Zahur Ali on behalf of himself and his brother officers. Wazir Khan began by saying that he was 'neither a rebel nor a mutineer' and was compelled to leave his post at Agra under peculiar circumstances. He claimed to have persuaded the rebels to surrender and to have written to that effect to the Officer commanding the column in the district of Bikaner. But he received no reply. He now requested for a clear explanation of the terms of the Proclamation and concluded with a prayer for amnesty on behalf of Firuz Shah and Rao Saheb. He wrote, "I believe if the Prince Firoze Shah and the Rao are both convinced of safety not a single soul will remain in arms against Government—Should Government not deem Rao worthy of pardon I think the Prince alone will bring away almost all the mutineers to surrender provided he will be pardoned for joining the mutineers." Zahur Ali wrote, "We received a copy of Her Majesty's Proclamation from Seekar—In that the limit is fixed for submission by 1st January, 1859—but in the margin a further extension of six months is granted—merely for the purpose of explanation on certain points. We have sent our Vakeels Sirmust Khan and Abdool Karreem Khan to you. According to what they say if we can be assured of safety, whenever you may direct we will surrender ourselves." Captain Dennys, Superintendent of Nimach, promptly replied that with regard to every one who may surrender under the terms of the Queen's Proclamation, every promise made therein would be rigidly observed. This applied equally to Rao Saheb, Firuz Shah and the common soldiers.[60] From a telegraphic message from Sir Robert Hamilton of the 14th March we learnt that an agent of Rao Saheb had been to Sir Robert Napier with peace proposals. "The Vakeel produced a list of indulgences for the Rao Sahib but was informed that they could not be entered into the Proclamation and my former reply, promising his life, and that he should not be treated with personal indignity, were all that could be communicated to him. The Vakeel says Feroze-

[60] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 618, 15 April, 1859

shah is anxious to come in, but fears."[61] Rao Saheb had found an influential advocate in Baba Saheb Apte, Baji Rao's son-in-law. Apte was the Sindhia's Sar-subadar in Malwa and therefore in the good books of the English. While his two brothers-in-law waged war against the British he remained loyal to Sindhia. From a letter addressed to him by Sir Robert Hamilton, it may be fairly assumed that he had intervened not only on behalf of Rao Saheb but for Bala Saheb and Nana Saheb as well; for Sir Robert starts by saying that he had nothing to do with Bala Saheb and Nana Saheb, and he could deal with Rao Saheb alone so long as he remained within the limits of his jurisdiction. "If Rao Sahib surrenders his life will be pardoned. He will not be put into irons or imprisoned—nor suffer any indignity—a provision will be made for his maintenance. He will have to reside in such part of India as the Govt. will fix for him. These promises are made to him provided he has not with his hand or tongue incited or caused the murder of British subjects."[62] Rao Saheb, however, did not take advantage of these terms. Did he want his uncles to be included in the amnesty? When he was arrested in Jammu territories three years later he made a statement incriminating both of them. But in 1862 Bala and Nana were, or were believed to be, beyond the reach of any earthly power, and Rao Saheb was out to save his own life.

Firuz Shah demanded better terms. He could not reconcile himself to any restriction on his movement, nor would he allow the few followers who still remained with him to be disarmed. The style and tone of his letter gave offence to Sir Richard Shakespear, Sir Robert Hamilton's successor in Central India. Had his letter been couched in more humble terms Shakespear would have felt inclined to recommend some provision for a man "so utterly unable to gain his own bread". But even dire adversity could not make the proud prince forget that he was a descendant of Timur and Babur. He would not relinquish the title of his imperial ancestors, and to a man of Wazir Khan's rank and status he could address only a Parwana, not a letter. Sir Richard Shakespear noticed that the Parwana was addressed to one of Firuz Shah's subordinates but not to the representative of Viceroy of India. The assumption of imperial titles gave him offence. The Parwana runs as follows: "from the Lord of World and mankind, the son of the holy preceptor of the Universe and its inmates, Mirza Mahomed Firoze

[61] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 196, 25 March, 1859
[62] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 288, 17 June, 1859

Shah Bahadoor, to his confidential servant Moulvee Mahomed Wuzeer Khan, dated 3rd Zilkab 1275 (4th June, 1859). As your petition has been received and the contents learned, I write certain conditions. Should these be agreed to, and full assurance obtained I have no objection in coming to terms. 1st Condition. What arrangement has been made for my maintenance. 2nd. I should be allowed full liberty, that is, I should be allowed to remain or go wherever I like, without molestation. 3rd. The arms of my followers, about ten or twenty in number will not be given up. After obtaining an answer to the above conditions give me information. On a former occasion, I had sent a man to Indore from whom I have not heard to this hour. Enquire about him and communicate to me the result of your enquiries."[63] In no case would the British Government concede freedom of movement to Firuz Shah, and a young man of his adventurous spirit would not agree to a fixed place of residence. Like Rao Saheb, but for a different reason, Firuz Shah did not or could not accept the terms of amnesty.

In April Man Singh betrayed Tatya Tope. His capture was reported on the 8th of that month by Captain Meade who had been employed by General Napier in clearing the Paron jungles and opening road through it. Man Singh had not the stamina of the Maratha Brahman, and a season's campaigning and life in the wild sufficed to damp his martial ardour. On the 2nd April he entered Mead's camp and formally surrendered to him. He was now anxious to ingratiate himself with his new friends and threw hints that he was not unwilling to sacrifice his unsuspecting guest. Meade writes, "From hints dropped by Maun Singh at various times since his surrender, I was satisfied that he had it in his power to enable us to surprise Tantia Topee, and I have done all I could by kind and encouraging counsel, to urge him to establish by so signal an act of service, his claim to the consideration of Government". Man Singh did not need much persuasion, he had already made up his mind. His only fear was that Tatya might slip through his fingers at the last moment. Tatya knew that Man Singh had gone to Meade's camp and he could not decide whether he should leave or stay. He was living in the heart of the jungle with only two attendants and was cut off from all communication with the world outside. Yet he could move from one secret corner of the jungle to another and Man Singh might lose all trace of him on the day appointed. Man Singh therefore arranged an interview with Tatya on false pretexts. Meade was

[63] Foreign Political Consultations, No. 172, 1 July, 1859

anxious to participate in the enterprise but Man Singh desired that the arrangements should be left entirely in his hands, and a small party of native infantry was placed under his orders. Man Singh was particular that no horseman should accompany him as the slightest noise might spoil his scheme. Even the footmen had no idea of the duty on which they were proceeding. No resistance was apprehended, for Man Singh intended to catch his friend asleep. "By Man Singh's directions the Sipahis were placed in ambush near a hollow which he and Tantia Topee had been in the habit of frequenting and he led his unsuspecting victim there and held a long conversation with him, till after midnight, when Tantia fell asleep. The Sipahis were then fetched by Maun Sing, and Tantia Topee was secured and pinioned, his arms being seized by Maun Sing himself". Two cooks who were with Tatya fled in the melee. The only arms that Tatya had with him were a sword and a Kukri. He had on his person three gold armlets and one hundred and eighteen gold coins. Next morning the long wanted Brahman was brought to Meade's camp whence he was conveyed to Sipri.[64] On the 15th April he was court-martialled on the charge of "having been in rebellion, and having waged war against the British Government between January 1857 and December 1858 especially at Jhansi and Gwalior." The result was a foregone conclusion. "He was found guilty of the heinous offence charged," writes Forrest, "and in accordance with the law, he was sentenced to death." To wage war against an alien government is not a heinous offence though it is criminal in the eye of law to fight the constituted authorities of the country. It is to be noted that no charge of murder was brought against him. Tatya was not born a British subject. It was not till the death of Baji Rao II that any of his men could be expected to pay allegiance to the British Government in India. Tatya never failed in his loyalty to the house of his master.[65]

Rao Saheb was betrayed, not by a Rajput, but by a man from Maharashtra. It was learnt that Rao Saheb was in residence at Chenani in the Jammu territory with his wife and child. Mr. McNabb, Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot, at once proceeded to Jammu to arrange for his arrest which was effected without

[64] Foreign Political Procdgs., No. 166, 22 April, 1859

[65] Malleson gives him the credit of having a good eye for selecting a position and a marvellous faculty for localities. "He had more than once or twice made the tour of Rajputana and Malwa, two countries possessing jointly an area of one hundred and sixty-one thousand seven hundred square miles," in nine months. "The qualities he had displayed would have been admirable, had he combined with them the capacity of the general and the daring of the aggressive soldier" Malleson, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp 381-82

any trouble. In his statement he denied that he had anything to do with the murder of English subjects.[66] In the enquiry conducted by Colonel Williams about Kanpur incidents none of the sixty-one deponents accused Rao Saheb of inciting or committing murder. There was no evidence that he had been guilty of any such offence in Central India. But Bibighar had to be avenged and Rao Saheb had to atone for the sins of others. Fresh witnesses came forward to testify to his offence, and Panduranga Sadashiv alias Rao Saheb was found guilty and hanged.

The itinerary of Rao Saheb, since he left the forest of Sironj had been limited to North India. He travelled from one holy place to another till he reached Chenani where he was arrested. From Sironj he had travelled to Ujjain and from Ujjain he went to Udaipur, and it was there that his wife had joined him. With her he proceeded to Delhi, probably because the most crowded city formed the safest hide. They later visited Thaneswar, Jwalamukhi and Kangra localities where they were least expected and from there reached Chenani where he was arrested.

Firuz Shah did not deem it safe to stay in India. His wanderlust had earlier taken him to lands beyond the seas and he was still in his early youth, full of life and hope. In 1860 he was heard of in Kandahar. He had obviously travelled through Sindh. Henceforth his movements were no secret to the British Intelligence Department, and wherever he went the vigilant eyes of their agents watched him. In 1861 he found his way to Bokhara. He was in great financial straits and lived on the charity of the local princes. In 1862 he retraced his steps and turned up at Teheran. An enquiry was made early in 1863 whether any reward had been offered for his apprehension. The Government of India, however, did not deem it expedient to interfere with him in a foreign country and violate its territorial sovereignty. During the next few years he moved between Herat and Bokhara and in 1868 he came within dangerous proximity of the Indian frontiers in Swat valley. From Swat he travelled to Kabul. The Amir found in him an inconvenient guest. Firuz Shah's presence at his capital could not but cause suspicion and anxiety to his British friends and neighbours in India. The Amir, therefore, persuaded him to move to Badakshan. But he did not stay there long and was subsequently seen at Samarkand. With what object was he travelling from one Muslim Court to another can be vaguely surmised, but if he expected to organise an ex-

[66] Foreign Department Political Procdgs., Nos. 228-29, April, 1862

pedition to India he found no support in Afghanistan, Persia or Central Asia. In October 1872, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople reported Firuz Shah to be residing there. Firuz Shah was not the only political refugee at the Turkish capital. Constantinople had attracted a group of Indian Muslims with anti-British leanings, but Firuz Shah was not their leader. Privation, worry, and hardship had told upon his health and he had turned prematurely old. In July 1875 Captain Hunter wrote, "It is commonly reported in Stamboul that Feroze Shah left for Mecca with Mirza Mahomed Bey some months ago. The fact that he is still here is only known to the Hindustanis and to such of the Turks as are personally acquainted with him. . . . . My informant was taken to see Feroze Shah by Sultan Ibrahim and sat with him for some time. He described him as a broken down looking man, blind, or nearly so, of one eye, and lame."[67] He could not have been more than forty-five at the time. In June 1875 he went to Mecca and there he was vouchsafed an abiding rest on the 17th December 1877. "It appears that he was in a state of poverty and almost dependent on an allowance made to him by the High Sheriff of Mecca, he also at times received assistance from the Indian Sheikhs and people. The only relation he has left at Mecca is a wife."[68]

Thus died Firuz Shah, in the last stage of destitution, an old man in the prime of life, a stranger among strangers, far from his native country for which he had bled, and away from his countrymen for whom he had suffered so much. If Robert Bruce was a patriot, Firuz Shah was certainly one. Alone he travelled from Mecca to Bombay and from Bombay to Central India to organise the revolt there. A young man without any following or financial resource, he built up an army and fought against heavy odds for two long years. His hands were not stained with innocent blood. He believed in the ultimate success of his cause but feared that it had been deferred by the murder of helpless women and children.[69] No other rebel leader condemned the massacres so openly and in such unreserved terms. His youth, his piety, and his imperial descent made a saintly hero of him and it was in the fitness of things that he should die at Mecca, an end coveted by every pious Muslim. It is a pity that he left

[67] Foreign Department, Secret Procdgs., Nos. 5-10 & K.W., Sept., 1877
[68] Foreign Department Political Procdgs. B., 39-42, January 1879
[69] In his proclamation dated 17 February, 1858, he says, "The delay in defeating the English has been caused by people killing innocent children and women, without any permission whatever from the leaders whose commands were not obeyed. Let us avoid such practices and then proclaim a sacred war." Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 122, 30 April, 1858

no account of his peregrinations for he traversed the greater part of the Middle East and Central Asia during the years of his exile. It is a greater pity that few of his countrymen remember him to-day.

The widow of Firuz Shah applied for a compassionate allowance to the Government of India. In November 1881 a monthly pension of Rs 5 only was granted to her on condition that she should never return to Delhi. Lord Ripon raised this paltry sum to Rs. 100 per month with retrospective effect. It was made clear that it was a personal pension for the Begam and was not to be treated as hereditary.[70]

[70] Foreign Department, Financial Procdgs. B., Nos 32-33, April 1882, and Nos. 122-23, June 1883

## APPENDIX I

Foreign Political Consultations, No. 3022, 31 Dec., 1858

# PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY THE BEGAM IN BIRJIS QADR'S NAME

At this time certain weak-minded foolish people have spread a Report that the English have forgiven the faults and crimes of the people of Hindoostan; this appears very astonishing, for it is the unvarying custom of the English never to forgive a fault, be it great or small; so much so, that if a small offence be committed through ignorance or negligence, they never forgive it.

The Proclamation of the 10th November 1858, which has come before us, is perfectly clear, and as some foolish people, not understanding the real object of the Proclamation, have been carried away, therefore, we, the ever abiding Government, Parents of the people of Oudh, with great consideration put forth the present Proclamation, in order that the real object of the chief points may be exposed, and our subjects be placed on their guard.

First. It is written in the Proclamation, that the country of Hindoostan which was held in trust by the Company, has been resumed by the Queen, and that for the future, the Queen's Laws shall be obeyed. This is not to be trusted by our religious subjects; for the Laws of the Company, the Settlement of the Company, the English Servants of the Company, the Governor General, and the Judicial administration of the Company, are all unchanged; what then is there new which can benefit the people or on which they can rely?

Second. In the Proclamation, it is written that all contracts and agreements entered into by the Company will be accepted by the Queen. Let the people carefully observe this artifice. The Company has seized on the whole of Hindoostan, and if this arrangement be accepted, what is then new in it? The Company professed to treat the Chief of Bhurtpoor as a son, and then took his Territory; the Chief of Lahore was carried off to London, and it has not fallen to his lot to return; the Nowab Shumshooddeen Khan on one side they hanged, and on the other

side they took off their hats and salaamed to him; the Peishwa they expelled from Poonah Sitara, and imprisoned for life in Bithoor; their breach of faith with Sultan Tippoo, is well known, the Rajah of Benares they imprisoned in Agra. Under pretence of administering the Country of the Chief of Gwalior, they introduced English customs; they have left no name or traces of the Chiefs of Behar, Orissa and Bengal; they gave the Raes of Furruckabad a small monthly allowance, and took his territory, Shahjehanpoor, Bareilly Azimgarh, Jounpoor, Goruckpoor, Etawa, Allahabad, Futtehpoor &c., our ancient possessions, they took from us on pretence of distributing pay; and in the 7th Article of the Treaty, they wrote on Oath, that they would take no more from us, if then the arrangements made by the Company are to be accepted, what is the difference between the former and the present state of things? These are old affairs; but recently in defiance of treaties and oaths and notwithstanding that they owed us millions of rupees, without reason, and on the pretence of the mis-Government and discontent of our people, they took our country and property worth millions of rupees. If our people were discontented with our Royal predecessor Wajid Ally Shah, how comes it they are content with us? and no ruler ever experienced such loyalty and devotion of life and goods as we have done! what then is wanting that they do not restore our country.

Further, it is written in the Proclamation, that they want no increase of Territory, but yet they cannot refrain from annexation. If the Queen has assumed the Government why does Her Majesty not restore our Country to us, when our people wish it? It is well known that no King or Queen ever punished a whole Army and people for rebellion; all were forgiven; and the wise cannot approve of punishing the whole Army and people of Hindoostan; for so long as the word 'punishment' remains, the disturbances will not be suppressed. There is a well known proverb 'a dying man is desperate' (Murta, Kya na Kurta) it is impossible that a thousand should attack a million, and the thousand escape.

Third. In the Proclamation it is written that the Christian religion is true, but no other creed will suffer oppression, and that the Laws will be observed towards all. What has the administration of Justice to do with the truth, or falsehood of a religion? That religion is true which acknowledges one God, and knows no other; when there are three Gods in a religion, neither Mussulmans nor Hindoos, nay—not even Jews, Sun worshippers, or fire worshippers, can believe it true. To eat pigs, and drink wine, to

bite greased cartridges, and to mix pigs' fat with flour and sweetmeats, to destroy Hindoo & Mussulman temples on pretence of making roads, to build Churches, to send clergymen into the streets and alleys to preach the Christian religion, to institute English schools, and pay people a monthly stipend for learning the English Services, while the places of worship of Hindoos & Mussulmans are to this day entirely neglected; with all this, how can the people believe that religion will not be interfered with? The rebellion began with religion, and for it millions of men have been killed. Let not our subjects be deceived; thousands were deprived of their religion in the North West, and thousands were hanged rather than abandon their religion.

Fourth. It is written in the Proclamation that they who harboured rebels, or who were leaders of rebels, or who caused men to rebel, shall have their lives, but that punishment shall be awarded after deliberation, and that murderers and abettors of murderers, shall have no mercy shown them; while all others shall be forgiven, any foolish person can see, that under this proclamation, no one, be he guilty or innocent, can escape; everything is written and yet nothing is written but they have clearly written that they will not let off any one implicated; and in whatever Village or Estate the army may have halted, the inhabitants of that place cannot escape. We are deeply concerned for the condition of our people on reading this Proclamation, which palpably teems with enmity. We now issue a distinct order, and one that may be trusted that all subjects who may have foolishly presented themselves as heads of Villages to the English, shall before the 1st of January must present themselves in our camp, without doubt their faults shall be forgiven them, and they shall be treated according to their merits. To believe in this Proclamation it is only necessary to remember, that Hindoostanee rulers are altogether kind and merciful. Thousands have seen this, Millions have heard it. No one has ever seen in a dream that the English forgave an offence.

Fifthly. In this Proclamation it is written that when peace is restored public Works, such as roads and canals will be made in order to improve the condition of the people. It is worthy of a little reflection that they have promised no better employment for Hindoostanies than making roads and digging canals. If people cannot see clearly what this means, there is no help for them. Let no subject be deceived by the Proclamation.

## Appendix II

Foreign Political Consultations, No. 8, 18 March, 1859

## CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SHEIKH KHAIRUDDIN AND MUHAMMAD HASAN KHAN

From Khyrood Deen to Mahommed Hussun—d/- 13th Novr/58

After Compliments

The English Govt is very powerful and has annihilated number of rebels, however with a view to putting a stop to the effusion of more blood, it now inclines to mercy. The Government of Hindostan is desirous that the rebels should abandon their (present) short sighted line of conduct which can only end in their ruin, and cease to fear that the impression a false one entirely, now prevalent that hanging awaits those who surrender, will turn out correct—I herewith forward to you a copy of Her Majesty's Proclamation, issued this month, which contains a declaration of pardon to all. From it you will perceive that those only who have been guilty of the murder of British authorities or subjects shall be liable to punishment, that life will be granted to all leaders among the rebels who may have been innocent of such a crime, and that any good deeds they may have performed in the way of saving English officials will be taken into consideration. Under these circumstances you ought to reflect how hopeless of advantage your continuance in the rebel ranks is. If you hold out you will undoubtedly be either captured or slain. You had much better come and give yourself up to me or any European officer you may prefer. I know that you have not murdered any official or subject. You are free from suspicion of any such crime. If then you really wish to participate in the advantages of this mercy, advise likewise the other chiefs such as the Raja of Gonda to do so also, and tell the sepoys that every one will be allowed to go to his own house. Nobody will obstruct them, provided always that they have not been guilty of shedding the blood of any European or British subject. To kill in fight is not considered a crime.

No. 2. d/- 16th Rubee ool sanee—
From Mahommed Hussun Khan to Kyrooddeen

I have received your friendly communication, the tenor of which has caused me much gratification, with its enclosed copy of the Queen's Proclamation, the merciful provisions of which I shall, as you direct be made known to & impressed upon, all. In future everyone will be answerable for his own actions. I shall, after being thus assured of Her Majesty's justice, always consider myself as absolved from offences. From the expressions in your letter also my innocence is established. I am much delighted, because I have never killed any official or subject, although the European officers and their soldiers have slaughtered thousands of innocent and insignificant men, including women, blind men and mendicants, and have burned down their dwellings, looting their property. By the just provisions of Her Majesty's Proclamation all who have been guilty of such murder are liable to punishment. I am one of those men who have saved the lives of European officers, when the mutiny of the troops broke out, and the sepoys ruthlessly murdered their officers, and when those who ventured to aid Europeans in any way were slain along with them and their property looted or destroyed, I then fearlessly sent some of my retainers and saved the lives of two colonels, with the wife and daughter of one of them, entertained them for some time with every care at my own residence and had them conveyed in safety to the Gorruckpore authorities. Subsequently when at the peremptory command of my Chief I, with God's help, restored Gorruckpore to the Kingdom of Oude, to which it had been in former times attached, I preserved all the native officials from being looted or killed, and also shielded from injury several Christians and sent them away safe and sound. I consider myself therefore entitled to praise and commendation from the just British authorities. I fully admit the truth of what you write, to frighten me, regarding the power of the British Govt, the annihilation of so many rebels, my own hopelessness of advantage if I remain with the insurgents &c &c. The might & resources, the power and the awe inspiring force which Her Majesty, the Sovereign of Sovereigns, may her prosperity be everlasting, commands, preclude the possibility of successful opposition. The Almighty however, whose name is 'Strong' and the 'Protector' is omnipotent, if an enemy is mighty He is more mighty, He if He chooses makes the strong weak & the weak strong. Whom He wills He exalts & whom He wills He debases. This has become apparent to all in

this time of confusion. Save with God's permission no one can slay or burn. Had the British Government the power of God they would in their retaliation on the sepoys, have destroyed every native of Hindostan. And the thousands of Christians who have fallen by the blood thirsty sepoys would have been saved. If you have studied in history the narratives of bouleversements such as this in the world, you will have found them all like the story of Sohak and the Blacksmith's cow. One sees that the man who treads in the way of slaughter as of his creed, first imagines himself as slain, so I neither fear capture or death in the least. Should I, as God forbid that I should, be taken prisoner, I have committed no crime to render me, under the Proclamation, liable to punishment. Through Her Majesty's mercy I am assured that no one can do me harm, on the contrary that I shall be released. If on the other hand I am killed while fighting for my religion and my earthly sovereign, I then attain the prosperity of the two worlds. Just as you and all the other employees of Govt. hope to attain worldly advantage and also prosperity in the world to come by fighting determinedly as in a Jehad, on the side of the English Govt, so I also consider it ennobling and sure to benefit me now & hereafter to fight and die in the tenets of my creed and in the cause of my illustrious sovereign. As the European officers are both considerate in listening to the excuses of inferiors and capable of accurately judging actual worth, they must be favourably impressed with my constancy and fidelity. The phraseology of the proclamation where it promises pardon of offences is somewhat obscure and indefinite, there is nothing to seize upon as an indubitable assurance of such a pardon. For instance it is stated that the generality of men who have committed crime involving injury to the State during this disquieting revolt shall be pardoned on certain specific conditions. Now reflect—all the offences committed are offences 'involving injury to the State'. They are therefore all to be classed as equal in this respect—moreover the use of the expression 'generality of' and the non-specification of the 'conditions' in a definite manner, produce doubt and want of confidence in men's minds. The English rulers of Hindostan have retracted from the binding engagements entered into with the native Princes and acted contrary to the provisions which ought to have been irrefrangible. Who then can look upon obscurely phrased contracts such as those they are in the habit of entering into, & which are capable of totally different construction as actually binding on them. The British have exceeded all bounds in their breaking of promises—this is notorious—(witness the treaties) between them and the

Raja of Lahore, the Peshwa and other Princes too numerous to mention. My business is with the King of Oude. All the world knows of the binding engagements and treaties which existed between those two exalted Powers, the King of Oude & the English Government. According to them the English had no right to establish themselves in Oude. The Rulers of this Kingdom always used to aid the English with their resources & their soldiers, and to act in a friendly & conciliatory manner. They never were guilty of any act implying breach of faith and were submissive even to allowing the English to forcibly annex Oude. The latter appropriated their residences and their property of all kinds. Even then there was no resistance. The King of Oude never went so far as to fight against them as an enemy, but appealed first to the Resident & then to the Governor General & finally when they disregarded him, he sent his brother and mother to plead (his cause) before the Queen. The Company have as yet paid no attention. Seeing this breaking of covenants & faithlessness the chiefs remain with their fingers on their teeth (i.e. are suspicious and perplexed). Their kingdom has been wrested perfidiously from a dynasty which never opposed & which always conciliated the English Govt, and all kinds of tyranny have been perpetrated. No one now puts any trust in the British. I may sum up with the proverb "who has not received the reward of his deeds?". The Princes and peoples of Hindostan, witnessing this perfidious oppression, took the opportunity of the revolt of the army (the result also of the English Govt's own conduct) and the outbreak took place, involving the slaughter and plunder of thousands of innocent servants of God. The English have now opened the doors of bloodshed more determinedly than their Government used formerly to provide for keeping them closed. This rebellion arose solely out of the annexation of Oude. Had that not taken place there would have been no bloodshed, because no defection of the Chiefs, who would have on the contrary inflicted chastisement on the mutinous sepoys. If Her Majesty even now acts justly and gives back his Kingdom to the King of Oude all this disturbance will be brought to an end, the justice and mercy of the Queen will be blazoned forth & extolled in the seven regions of the world, and all the Chiefs of Hindostan will return to their allegiance and put a stop to this war and anarchy. From the tenor of Her Majesty's Proclamation it (lit) trickles out that she intends to do this eventually, for it is intended that she will recognise and fulfil all engagements contracted by the Hon'ble E.I. Company or with their sanction—that she expects the native rulers on their part also to execute what they have agreed to, and that she does

not wish to extend her territories beyond their present limits. Her Majesty ought therefore, in accordance with these promises, to fulfil as in justice bound the contract entered into between Sooja ood Dowla and the Company's Govt, and restore the Kingdom of Oude to its hereditary rulers, paying no attention to the new treaties extorted subsequently from reigning kings by Residents, for the original compact embraced the descendants of the contracting parties in perpetuity, and consequently all those new compacts which have in contravention of it been forced on later Kings by the Residents are iniquitous and worthless. The Kingdom of Oude is now in the possession of the King, and those portions of it which the British have from time to time taken forcibly have been freed from their rule, such forcible annexations are unworthy of being paid attention to. If the expression 'now in possession' is applied to those territories actually in the possession of the English at the moment of writing the Proclamation then many portions which at that time were not occupied by them ought to remain in the hands of those in whose actual possession they were. The meaning of all I have written is this. We servants and dependants of the King of Oude consider it essential to our prosperity in both worlds to display devotion in protecting the Kingdom and opposing the efforts of invaders who seek to gain a footing in it. If we fail in doing so we are traitors and will have our faces blackened in both worlds. "I will not withdraw my hand until it has grasped what it attains to, I will obtain my desired one or perish". If the Queen in merciful consideration of the condition of the inhabitants of Hindostan, & to close the doors of slaughter, or in mere justice, restore Oude to the King, we will all cease fighting and slaying and revert to our allegiance to Her Majesty & her officers, disturbances will then cease in India & all will be peace. I therefore beg that you will forward this letter for the consideration of the Governor General, and if he should think proper to fulfil the terms of the Proclamation, abstain from molestation of Oude, and enter into a compact in accordance with the provisions of that contracted with Suja ood Dowla, then I will act as vakeel and see all the points in it faithfully executed. I await a speedy answer &c.

From Khyrood Deen to Mahommed Hussun—28th Novr.

After Compliments.

I have received your reply to my letter, from it I perceive that you are still slumbering in folly, for I merely wished to

impress upon you, explaining the meaning of the Proclamation that if you at once surrendered, it would be much the better for you. You however disregarding this have written a long useless rigmarole in reply, in which you make many foolish and unjust aspersions regarding the European soldiery and authorities. For instance you say that the British armies have slain thousands of helpless men, blind, maimed & beggars besides women & children, such an accusation is entirely false and without foundation. You and your retainers have in truth committed and still commit acts such as these, and generally whenever your men begin looting the defenceless, the British sally out and protect them from you. You write that you have never put to death any British officer or subject, how is it then that you have summoned and associated with yourself as an ally & supported Bala Rao, who in conjunction with his brother the Nana caused to be taken captive and butchered several hundred innocent European women and children, similar massacres of innocent people have been perpetrated in many places, massacres such as are not justifiable by any religion, yet you say that you are fighting for your faith. Point out to me any religion which permits such deeds. Your eyes are evidently closed, for you accuse the European soldiers and officers of having committed the crimes which in reality the rebel armies and the budmashes have perpetrated & continue to perpetrate. You call the war you maintain a 'Jehad', tell me how such slaughters of women and children can be justified and by what creed looting is allowable. What you propose concerning the restoration of the Kingdom of Oude and your submission being only consequent on that, is nonsense. Government will never give up one beegah of land which it has once appropriated. What have you to do with such discussions, you may write whatever you choose about yourself, but not of what concerns the State. In short I give you to understand that if you wish to save your life, you must at once surrender. Otherwise be assured that the British forces will very soon attack you from all sides, occupy Gonda & Baraitch and surround & blow you out of, with their guns, the jungle which you look upon as your asylum. The rebels will become so many heads of game to the soldiers & officers. You will then see of what avail your alleged acts of fidelity to Govt will be. It cares not whether you are induced to surrender. My object in writing was to explain the terms of the Proclamation to you, and thus preclude the possibility of your saying when captured that you had never seen it or you would have surrendered at once. You call the language of the Proclamation obscure, in my opinion it is very

clear, if you read it carefully you will understand it entirely. If you reckon upon being set at liberty when captured because you saved the life of Col —— & his wife and children, you must bear in mind that the period of grace is only for 1 month & 10 days from this time, after its expiration that will not be taken into consideration and you as well as other rebels will when caught be treated as you would have been before the issue of the Proclamation. You had better come in within the limited time otherwise you will die, after fleeing about from place to place, in the jungles. Reflect on this well before you answer and place no confidence in the rebel army with you and Bala Rao, which has always fled before the European soldiers when they met in battle. How can you expect them to fight in obedience to your orders when they have been so unfaithful to their former masters whose salt they had eaten for 20 or 30 years, perhaps they may make an end of you by making you a target for their musket balls. If you have any sense and if any more years of life remain to you, pay attention to what I say.

## Appendix III

Foreign Political Consultations, Nos. 63-69, 27 May, 1859

### LETTERS OF NANA SAHEB AND BALA SAHEB

D/ Goruckpoor the 27th April 1859

Sir,

I have the honor to forward for the information of His Honor the Lieutt. Governor copy of a vernacular Isteharnamah from the Nana of Bithoor brought by a Brahmin into Coll. Pinkney's camp at Dhukehree and delivered to Major Richardson Comdg. Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry with translation of the document and Major Richardson's reply, which have been sent to me by Brigr. Rowcroft C. B.

Goruckpoor
Commissioner's Office
The 27th April, 1859

I have the honour to be &c.
Sd/- Alan Swinton
Offg. Commissioner

Translation of an Istiharnamah to Her Majesty the Queen, the Parliament, the Court of Directors, the Governor General, the Lieutt. Governor and all Officers Civil and Military.

You have forgiven the crimes of all Hindoostan and Murderers have been pardoned—it is strange that your Sepoys have killed your women and children and Mummoo Khan and the people of rank of Furruckabad, who truly are Murderers have been forgiven, and you have written to Jung Bahadoor to send the Begum and the Rajas to their own country under his guarantee. It is surprising that I who have joined the rebels from helplessness have not been forgiven. I have committed no murder. Had General 'Hawla' (Wheeler) not sent for me from Bithoor my soldiers would not have rebelled, besides he did not send for my family to the intrenchments. My soldiers were not of my own Country, and I previously urged that so insignificant ('gureeb') a person as myself could render no material aid to the British. But General 'Hawla' (Wheeler) would not listen to me and invited me (into the intrenchment). When your Army mutinied

and proceeded to take possession of the Treasury my soldiers joined them. Upon this I reflected that if I went into the intrenchments my soldiers would kill my family, and that the British would punish me for the rebellion of my soldiers, it was therefore better for me to die. My ryots were urgent and I was obliged to join the soldiers. For two or three years I petitioned the '(roobkary Kya) Surkar' but no attention was paid to it. At Cawnpore the soldiers disobeyed my orders and began killing the English women and the ryots. All I could save by any means I did save, and when they left the entrenchments provided boats in which I sent them down to Allahabad, your sepoys attacked them. By means of entreaties I restrained my soldiers and saved the lives of 200 English women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoys and Budmashes at the time that my soldiers fled from Cawnpore and my brother was wounded. After this I heard of Istiharnamah that had been published by you and prepared to fight and up to this time I have been fighting with you, and, while I live, will fight. You are well aware that I am not a murderer, nor am I guilty, neither have you passed any order concerning me. You have no enemy beside me, so, as long as I live I will fight. I also am a man. I remain two Coss distant from you. It is strange that you, a great and powerful nation, have been fighting with me for two years and have not been able to do anything; the more so, when it is considered that my troops do not obey me and I have not possession of any Country. You have forgiven the crimes of all and the Napal Chief is your friend. With all this you have not been able to do any thing. You have drawn all to your side, and I alone am left but you will see what the soldiers I have been preserving for two years can do. We will meet, and then I will shed your blood and it will flow knee deep. I am prepared to die. If I alone am worthy of being an enemy to so powerful a nation as the British, it is a great honor to me, and every wish of my heart is fulfilled, death will come to me one day, what then have I to fear? But those whom you have taken to your side will on the day fixed turn upon you and kill you. You are wise, but have erred in your wisdom. I sent a letter to Chundernugger but it did not reach, this has disappointed me or you would have seen what I could do I will however still try for Chundernugger.

If you think proper send an answer to this. A wise enemy is better than unwise friend.

D/- 17th Rumzan 1275 Hijree
or 20th April 1859

Copy of a reply sent by Major J. F. Richardson Commanding Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry to the Ishtahar bearing the seal of the Maharaja of Bithoor. Dated the 17 Rumzun 1275 Hijree

The Ishtahar bearing the seal of the Maharaja of Bithoor sent by the hands of a Brahmin has been received by Major Richardson Commanding European Cavalry who has made himself acquainted with the contents. I now write that the Proclamation which was issued by Her Majesty the Queen of England, was not for any one party or person, but for *all*. And the identical terms under which the Nawab of Furruckabad, the Nawab of Banda and other Chieftains and Rajas of Oudh, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves to Government, those terms are open to you and all those who may wish to surrender. In writing as you do that you have not murdered women and children (Mehm our lurken), it becomes you to come in without fear, a reply to this is requested.

Sd/- J. F. Richardson
Commdg. B.Y.C.

Camp Dhukurea
23rd April 1859

Service Message

From

Mr. Beadon, Calcutta, 2nd May

To

The Lieutenant Governor, Allahabad

The Governor General in Council has received your message of the 30th. He has also received a copy of the Nana's letter and of Major Richardson's reply. He does not approve of that reply, all overtures from the Nana or from any other rebel who has been proscribed or who stands suspected of taking part in murder are to be answered by a simple reference to the Queen's proclamation and by nothing more. Inform Major Richardson by Telegraph that he is not to reply to any further letters from the Nana without taking instructions upon them, and that if any, are received by him he is to send copies immediately to the local Government and to the Government of India.

Electric Telegraph Deptt
The 3rd of May 1859

From

Brig. H. Rowcroft, Commanding Gorruckpore District

To

Major General Birch C. B., Secy. to the Government of India, in the Military Department, Calcutta

D/- Goruckpore 7th May 1859

Sir,

I have the honor to forward the enclosed Documents as noted in the margin,* for submission to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India.

2. I beg to report that I have sent up orders to Coll. Pinkney not to allow such communications to be carried on and signed by any subordinate officer, but to take such matter entirely into his own hands, and to keep them from being publicly known in camp as far as possible, obtaining the assistance of Major Richardson or other confidential officer; and, in future, on any letter or overtures being received from such rebel chiefs, merely to refer them to Her Majesty the Queen's Proclamation in reply, sending in the native letters without delay, for transmission to Government, informing the parties that their letters have been so forwarded.

* Two Native letters original from the Nana and Bala Rao dated 25th and 26th April 1859, with Translations
Copies of the replies sent by Major Richardson Comdg. B. Y. Cavy. under the sanction of Coll: Pinkney C. B., Commdg. the Column

I have the honor to be &c.
Sd/- H. Rowcroft Brig
Commdg. Gorruckpore District

Translation of a letter from the Nana

Major Richardson in his reply to my Ishtihar received on the 23rd April 1859 has noticed only one of the many subjects contained in it. This I accept but I cannot surrender myself in this manner, if a letter, written by Her Majesty the Queen and sealed with her seal, and brought by the Commanding Officer of the French ("Fransees") or the second in command, reach me, I will, placing reliance on these officers, accept the terms without hesitation. Why should I join you, knowing all the "dagabazi" perpetrated by you in Hindoostan? If you are heartily desirous of putting an end to the troubles of the Country, an

autograph letter of Her Majesty, brought by the Commanding Officer of the French, I will accept. Some years ago, I sent an Eilchi to London, by whom Her Majesty sent me a letter written with her own hand, and sealed with her own seal. This I have in my possession to this day. If you wish it, the thing can only be done in this way, and to this I consent. If not, life must be given up some day. Why then should I die dishonored? There will be war between me and you as long as I have life, whether I be killed or imprisoned or hanged, and whatever I do will be done with the sword only. Nevertheless if Her Majesty's letter as above described comes to me, the thing may be—I will present myself. If you consider it proper, be sure to send me an answer.

D/ Deogurh
22nd Ramzan
26th (*sic.*) April 1859

From Bala Rao

Translation of a "Petition to the English"

I am the brother of the Nana—from the time of the English I have been with him—he never permitted me to go anywhere without his orders, threatening me with disinheritance, so I remained in subjection to him, and was not acquainted with any of his English visitors. This rendered me helpless. I was however desirous of preserving my honor and kept aloof from all. No one has put in a complaint against me; if any such 'roobkaree' can be produced, I will be guilty. When he rebelled at Cawnpore, he beguiled and took me there, and placed my wife with his women, and they are together to this day. When the sepoys marched to take the Treasure, I perceived my utter helplessness, for I knew none of the 'Sahib log'. The sepoys would not alow me to leave them, my brother would not permit me to separate from him. I was therefore necessitated to act according to my brother's orders. I have saved the life of a child, 9 or 10 years of age, the daughter of the Judge of Futtehpoor, and kept her concealed with my wife, and have shown her to General Budree Nur Sing. I petitioned Jewajee Scindia of Gwalior on my own account (he is yet living) at the time he came to Bithoor, but he replied, he could not keep me alone without permission of the Governor or of my brother. Thus I continued helpless. I am guiltless and this will be found to be the case on enquiry. If

you send a reply, I will come to you, and relate every thing. It is in your power to do with me as you wish. You can imprison or kill or hang me. Whatever may happen I will be freed from my present anxieties. If you are not for me, the world is not. Who ever dies, dies alone, for thus it happens. According to your reply I will act.

D/8th Bysakh
1916 Summut
or
25th April 1859

Sd/- H. Rowcroft Brig
Commdg. Goruckpore District.

Reply sent to Bala Rao by Major Richardson

Bala Rao, Your representation, dated the 8th Buddee Summut 1916, sent by the hand of the Brahmin, reached me last evening. I have perused it, and in return send you a copy of the Proclamation of the Queen of England written in Nagri and bearing Her Majesty's royal seal. The Terms of this Proclamation are such as could only be by a great and good Queen. Read it carefully and having done so, give me your answer. If you do not understand it, I will, on your informing me, explain as far as I can or if you like to send me a trustworthy man whom I guarantee to pass free to and fro, I will explain to him that which you do not understand. Mistake not the Proclamation of England's Queen. You mention that you have a Christian child with you. Recollect you are a man, and as such, it is your duty to protect that child from harm. Terms beyond those of the Ishtihar of Her Majesty I have not the power to offer you. As I have no person who can well read Sanskrit, I have had difficulty in reading your representations—it will be better if you reply in Oordoo or Nagri.

## Chapter Eleven

# A REVIEW

We have seen how the movement of 1857 originated, gained in momentum, and ran its course. Was it a spontaneous outburst of sepoy discontent or a premeditated revolt engineered by clever politicians? Was it a mutiny limited to the army or did it command the support of the people at large? Was it a religious war against Christians or a racial struggle for supremacy between the black and the white? Were moral issues involved in this mutiny and did the combatants unconsciously fight for their respective civilisation and culture? These are some of the questions that must be answered fairly and squarely.

The story of the chapatis lends some colour to the theory of prior preparation, propaganda, and conspiracy. In January 1857 small wheaten cakes were circulated from village to village in many districts of Northern India. A sinister meaning was later read into it but it is doubtful whether the mysterious cake bore any evil portent. District officers were naturally interested and made some enquiries. Thornhill of Mathura writes that "The occurrence was so singular that it attracted the attention of the Government, who directed inquiries; but notwithstanding all the efforts that were made, it could not be ascertained either by whom the distribution had been contrived, where it commenced, or what it signified. After being a nine days' wonder the matter ceased to be talked about, and was presently for the time forgotten, except by those few who remembered that a similar distribution of cakes had been made in Madras towards the end of the last century, and had been followed by the mutiny of Vellore."[1] The village chaukidars, the agency employed for the circulation of chapatis, probably knew nothing about Vellore, and the rural folk, whom they served, were not likely to be better informed. Wallace Dunlop of Meerut says that the chaukidars were under the impression that the cakes were distributed by order of the Government. "The transmission of such little cakes from one district to another is supposed by the Hindoos to effect

[1] Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp 2-3

the removal of epidemic disease". In his district the chapatis made their appearance at the end of February and beginning of March. He observes that "The excitement at the time among the Sepoys, and the occurrence afterwards of the mutiny, has led many to connect this cake distribution with our disturbances, but without any sufficient grounds for so doing. It is probable that if any connexion existed it was accidental, and the relationship acknowledged by either designing or ignorant persons was consequent upon the distribution, and did not cause or precede it." In his opinion the chapati was no 'fiery cross' signal. "Its real origin was," he concludes, "doubtless, a superstitious attempt to prevent any return of the fearful visitation of epidemic cholera which devastated the North-West Provinces the year before, and still lingered in scattered spots."[2] Sir Theophilus Metcalfe of Delhi also testified that the chapatis were supposed to have something to do with sickness and the men who brought them were under the impression that the circulation was by Government orders.[3] Jat Mal, a witness at Bahadur Shah's trial, said that the chapatis had different meanings for different people. Some said, "it was a propitiatory observance to avert some impending calamity." Others saw in it an official direction to eat the same food as the Christians. The chapatis were indiscriminately distributed among Hindus and Musalmans alike.[4] Hakim Ahsanullah deposed that nobody could tell what was the object of the distribution of chapatis. All the people in the palace wondered what it could mean.[5] Edwards of Budaun was definite that rural population of all classes, among whom the cakes spread, were ignorant of the real object.[6] An anonymous native of Northern India affirmed that the chapatis "were mere 'chalawas' to stop the progress of some disease, . . . and never a political move".[7] Sir Syed Ahmed points out that cholera was prevalent at the time of the circulation of chapati which was according to some people a talisman to ward off the disease. "The fact is that even at the present day we do not know what caused the distribution of those chuppaties."[8] A conspiracy is not conducted through such an unintelligible and uncertain medium of communication when it did not demand much ingenuity to find a

[2] Dunlop, *Service and Adventure with the Khakee Ressalah*, pp 23-26
[3] *Proceedings of Bahadur Shah's Trial*, p. 85.
[4] *Idem*, p. 78
[5] *Idem*, p. 165
[6] Edwards, *op. cit.*, p 15
[7] *The Thoughts of a Native of Northern India on the Rebellion, its Causes and Remedies*, p 11
[8] Syed Ahmed, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, p 3

more effective device. The Government would not have failed to discover some evidence if chapatis had a political motive behind them.

Chapatis appeared in Madhya Pradesh as well. But there also their circulation was not suspected to be susceptible of any political interpretation. Captain Keating of Nimar wrote to Sir Robert Hamilton, "The year 1857 opened in Nimar by a general distribution of some small cakes which were passed on from village to village. The same, I am aware, occurred all over India and has been spoken of as having been a signal for the disturbances which took place late in the year. At the time they appeared in Nimar they were everywhere brought from the direction of Indore. That city was at that time subjected to a severe visitation of cholera and numbers of inhabitants died daily. It was at that time understood by the people in Nimar, and is still believed, that the cakes of wheat were despatched from Indore after the performance over them of incantations that would insure the pestilence accompanying them". So in Madhya Pradesh the chapatis were regarded as carriers of pestilence and not as harbingers of political troubles.

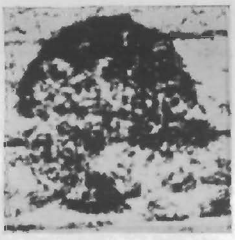
In 1858, of course, everything out of the ordinary was treated with suspicion. In September of that year small balls of atta filled with gur and thuli were circulated in Berar. They were suspected to have come from Bombay. How they were distributed is not known but one officer attributed them to Nana and his agents.[9] A pair of ochre-coloured flags with a cocoanut, a betelnut and a green betel leaf were going from village to village in Chhindwara district in the month of October 1858. This was also supposed to have been done in Nana's interest with some semblance of reason, for Shivaji's banner was ochre-coloured. But it might have been adopted by any religious organisation as well. In any case the atta balls and ochre-coloured flag followed and did not precede the Mutiny.

A novel interpretation of the chapati came from Sitaram Baba, a Hindu anchorite, examined by H. B. Devereux, Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, and Captain J. L. Pearse. Sitaram was interrogated for days together (18th January to 25th January 1858) at Mysore. He gave a fantastic story of a conspiracy started by Baiza Bai of Gwalior, twenty years earlier, in which all the principal princes were involved. Baiza Bai dissociated herself from the intrigue when her objective of securing the state for

[9] Major J. A. Spence, Deputy Commissioner, Nagpur to Captain W. H. Chrichton, Deputy Commissioner, Chanda, 3 September, 1858



*Seal of Rani Lakshmi Bai*



*Seal on the Hindi letter attributed to Rani Lakshmi Bai*

Jayaji Rao was achieved. When Baiza Bai withdrew Nana stepped into her shoes. He relied on the magical power of a necromancer called Dassa Baba and was financed by Raja Golab Singh of Jammu and Seth Lachhmichand of Mathura. The minister of Hyderabad, whose name ended with Chand or Jang, was also in the conspiracy. Dassa Baba had caused a small idol of lotus seeds to be made and then divided it into small fragments. Each fragment was placed in a chapati and as far as the chapatis went Nana's influence was expected to prevail. A simultaneous night attack at all the stations of India was said to have been planned. All the Englishmen were to be put to death but the women and children were not to be harmed. The Raja of Rewa was to occupy Benares and then invade Bengal. According to Sitaram Baba, Dassa Baba, the prime mover in this countrywide conspiracy, was in the Punjab, but one of his disciples, Din Dayal, was to come south in the guise of a Bairagi. The Maharaja of Mysore was accused of being privy to the intrigue and so were many princes of the south. Forjett dismissed this story as a surmise.[10] The Governor-General thought that Sitaram Baba's allegations should be enquired into though the statement was full of lies and inaccuracies. Copies were, accordingly, sent to the Governor-General's Agents, Central India and Hyderabad and the Governments of Bombay and the Punjab for enquiry, but it does not appear to have been seriously treated anywhere.[11] Sitaram Baba's cock-and-bull story, therefore, does not prove the existence of a pre-concerted conspiracy for an India-wide revolt.

Next comes an alleged letter of Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, recently brought to light at Puri. This purports to have been addressed to her family priest at that holy place of pilgrimage. The letter is in Hindi and is dated March 1856. If this document was genuine then the Rani must have been engaged in organising a revolt full one year before the Meerut rising. But the language and script seem to be modern. In her Kharita to Sir Robert Hamilton the Muslim style of dating is followed but this letter, addressed to a Brahman, is dated in the English style. The Rani, contrary to the Indian practice of those times, addressed her priest as "Respected Pandaji" (Mananiya Pandaji) and subscribes herself as "Yours Lakshmi Bai" (apka Lakshmi Bai, which again is incorrect Hindi). The seal is different from that used in authentic letters, and lastly it refers to greased cartridge. The cartridge did not come to India before November 1856 and

[10] Forjett, *op. cit.*, p 50
[11] Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 344-46, 28 May, 1858

the sepoys do not seem to have heard of it until the following January. The letter was apparently written from Meerut but there is no evidence that the Rani had been to that place in March 1856 or at any other time. The document is obviously a clumsy fabrication and the writer, whoever he or she may be, is accustomed to correspond in English.

Cracroft Wilson was convinced that a date and time had been fixed for a simultaneous rising at all the military stations of India but adduced no evidence in support of his conclusion. The known facts, however, contradict his thesis. The rising at Meerut, we have seen, was not pre-meditated. At Lucknow one regiment refused to bite the cartridge early in May, the general Mutiny took place at the end of the month, the police force rose still later. There was a complete lull for a fortnight after the Meerut and Delhi mutiny. Both at Sitapur and Sialkot different regiments behaved differently. As Medley points out, "Regiments that had no chance of escape mutinied, and were cut to pieces; others that might have mutinied at any time without let or hindrance, remained faithful till success was no longer possible, and then broke out, and met with a like fate. In many instances, as is well known, Sepoys shot their officers on parade, or murdered them in their own houses; in others, they protected them and their families, supplied them with money, and parted from them with tears. Nor did this difference of treatment . . . depend on the difference of character in the officers themselves."[12] Nowhere did the sepoys' conduct conform to a common pattern, and the obvious inference is that they had no pre-concerted plan to follow. Most of the writers dismissed this anomaly as unworthy of investigation. The sepoy, they said, was a child and it was futile to expect any consistency from him. Most of the sepoys were, it is true, illiterate and ill-informed, but they had their own logic and the apparently inconsistent behaviour is capable of explanation. The security measures of the Government often drove them to mutiny and they rebelled in self-defence. At Nimach and Nasirabad in Central India, at Jhelam and Sialkot in the Punjab, at Allahabad and Fatehpur in the North-West Provinces, at Faizabad and Sikrora in Oudh it was the advent or the reported approach of the European troops that set the tocsin ringing. As Sir John Lawrence pointed out, disarming and dismounting caused panic and panic caused revolt. When asked why some of the sepoys did not rebel till September and October, an anonymous Indian writer replied in the same strain. "I told you,

[12] Medley, *op. cit.*, pp 200-201

Sir," he writes, "that it was not a concerted plan. Many of them had till late hopes that the Government would feel fully satisfied by disbanding the Regiments already gone, but now they are daily convinced that the Government only waits the arrival of the European soldiers to annihilate and get rid of the Bengal army by disarming them or blowing them up by the cannons".[13]

As Sir Syed Ahmed points out, some correspondence must have been going about the greased cartridge among the sepoys but there was no common plan of resistance. No regiment was prepared to use the obnoxious ammunition first. They were waiting to see what others would do. The deliberate indiscretion of Colonel Carmichael Smyth caused the outbreak at Meerut. The news spread from station to station and the disarming of unoffending, nay, actively loyal, regiments did the rest. If others had been given the chance that was granted to the Nasiri regiment they might have proved themselves equally worthy of confidence. But precautionary and punitive measures and open manifestation of distrust on the part of the officers left the sepoys no alternative but to rise in arms. In the Punjab the sepoys could not possibly have any faith in the sincerity of their officers. Nicholson assured 59th N.I. one day that he was glad he found no reason to disarm them. The next morning they were ordered to pile arms though they had done nothing in the mean time.

Nor were the sepoys or their leaders in league with any foreign power. There is no evidence whatever that the Mutiny was inspired by Russia. In the King's trial it was alleged that he had sent envoys to Persia. The Persians would doubtless have been glad to foment troubles in India when they were at war with England. A proclamation purporting to come from the Shah, it is true, was once displayed at the Jami Masjid, but it was promptly removed and went unnoticed by the general public of Delhi. In so large a country individuals were not wanting who felt the humiliation of the foreign rule, and the paper in question must have come from one of them. In any case, an isolated event does not prove a conspiracy. Mukund Lal, one of the witnesses at the King's trial, deposed that the grandsons of Mirza Sulaiman Sikoh came from Lucknow to bring about an understanding between the King of Delhi and the Shah of Iran. Mirza Sulaiman Shiko, a grandson of Shah Alam II, was a refugee at Lucknow. His descendants had embraced the Shia faith to ingratiate themselves with their Shia patron. It is extremely doubtful that they

[13] *The Thoughts of a Native of Northern India on the Rebellion, its Causes and Remedies,* p 16

could carry on a secret correspondence with a foreign power under the vigilant eyes of the British Resident without being detected, for their visit to Delhi was no secret. According to Mukund Lal, a man called Sidi Kambar went to Iran with letters from the King. But he himself confessed that he was never admitted to the King's secrets and confidential correspondence was entrusted to another secretary of the same name. Hakim Ahsanullah suspected that Mirza Haider (Sulaiman Sikoh's son) had persuaded the King to become a Shia and to open correspondence with the Shah who was the temporal head of that church. This suspicion, however, could not be substantiated and in any case Mirza Haider's visit took place prior to the annexation of Oudh, and at that date the king of Oudh had no grievance against his British friends and could not possibly countenance any such activity on the part of his proteges. It has never been proved that Sidi Kambar really carried any letter for the Shah. The allegation was based on surmise only. Major Herriot argued that while the Shah promised the governorship of the different provinces of India to his courtiers, the crown of Hindustan was reserved for Bahadur Shah. This does not prove that the King of Delhi had any understanding with the Shah of Iran but it was a clever diplomatic move on the part of that ruler to enlist the support of the King of Delhi, and, through him, of those Indians who still regarded him as the rightful emperor of Hindustan. Moreover, it is necessary to establish that Bahadur Shah was in correspondence with the sepoys before the 11th May. Sir John Lawrence rightly points out "that it was hardly possible to suppose that if the Shah had really intended that a violent attempt would be made to subvert the British power in India, he would have made peace with us just at the critical time of our fortunes, thereby releasing for the succour of India the troops which would otherwise be locked up in Persia. Again if the Shah had been really cognisant of such an attempt, would he not have sent his emissaries to Peshawar and into the Punjab? Had he done this some sign of intrigue would have been certainly perceptible, but none whatever was discovered. In fact all that we have learnt regarding the intrigues of the King and the party shows that he did not look to any conspiracy or combination in India itself; Persia or Russia."[14] Mr. Krishnalal counters these arguments by quoting a letter of Murray, the British Ambassador in Persia, to Lord Canning in which he states that a high-ranking Persian officer had admitted writing letters to the Muslim chiefs in

[14] *Selections from Punjab Government Record Office*, Vol. VII, Part II, p 405

Northern India inciting them to insurrection.[15] This confession indicates an intention and nothing more. It requires at least two parties to make a conspiracy. The Sadr-i-Azam refers to a unilateral action on his part and does not say what response his letters evoked. Bahadur Shah sent similar missives to the Raja of Patiala and other princes of North India during the Mutiny but we positively know that they had not espoused his cause. During the First Great War Kaiser William II addressed a number of letters through Raja Mahendra Pratap to the ruling princes of India, but they were not in league with Germany. We do not even know whether the letters mentioned in Murray's despatch ever reached the addressees.

The only foreign power that the rebels ever approached was Nepal and that was after and not before the Mutiny. That fairly disposes of the first question. The movement of 1857 was not pre-planned, it was not engineered by any political party in India or any foreign power hostile to England. It had its origin in sepoy discontent and derived its strength from the widespread disaffection among the civil population. The bulk of the army came to harm by the persistent policy of rendering them harmless.

The movement drew its recruits from many sources. The Chartists in England had in their ranks the currency reformers and other elements that did not subscribe to their political creed. Diverse parties professing diverse views are apt to join hands against the constituted authorities of a state, once active discontent finds an organised channel of expression. The same thing happened in India in 1857. The movement began as a military mutiny but it was not everywhere confined to the army. It should be noted that the army as a whole did not join the revolt but a considerable section actively fought on the side of the Government. Its actual strength is not easy to compute. Every disarmed regiment was not necessarily disloyal and every deserter was not a mutineer.[16] The fidelity of the 4th N.I. at Kangra and Nurpur was never suspected, and the sepoys, disarmed at Agra, were afterwards recalled to service at the instance of Outram.[17] The

[15] Punjab Government Records, Delhi Division Political, 1858, File No. 19 quoted in Krishna Lal's *Persian Intrigue at Delhi* (*1855-57*)

[16] In the early days of the Mutiny every deserter was punished as a rebel. Forjett cites the case of a sepoy accused of desertion who replied, "Where was I to go? All the world said the English Raj had come to an end, and as being a quiet man, I thought the best place to take refuge in was my own home."

[17] Another instance to the point was two or three companies of Sappers and Miners. The Sappers and Miners were summoned from Roorki "and marched cheerfully enough, when an attempt to take away their regimental magazine from them made them break out in open revolt. They fled, were pursued, many cut down, and the rest dispersed to repair to Delhi" and went over to the mutineers there. "Two or three companies, however, had been quietly disarmed in

6th N.I. after their mutiny at Allahabad quietly dispersed and went home. Roughly speaking, about 30,000 men remained loyal up to the end, a like number was either disarmed or deserted; and nearly 70,000 joined the revolt at different times. If they had simultaneously risen the revolt would have assumed a dangerous magnitude.

The rebels came from every section of the population.[18] If there were Sikhs on the ridge at Delhi, there were Sikhs inside the city, if the tribesmen of the frontier were enlisted to fight the Purbiahs, Vilayetis or Afghans predominated in the rebel force at Dhar and Mandisore. It was fashionable to treat the Mutiny as a Muslim movement at one time and a Hindu movement at another, but at all stages both the communities were well represented in the rebel army. Nana had his Azimullah Khan, Bahadur Khan his Sobharam and the Rani of Jhansi her trusty Afghan guards. In the early days of the Mutiny the troubles were attributed to high caste Hindus, and it was decided to enlist men of the lower castes and primitive tribes as a counterpoise. But Pasis swelled the rebel ranks in Oudh and Bhils joined them in Rajputana and Central India, while the Santals once more decided to fight the Government that protected the money-lenders. No community, class, or caste as such was entirely for or against the Government. Even stray Englishmen were found on the rebel side,[19] and like Highland lairds in '15' and '45' aristocratic families were divided in their sympathies and antipathies.[20]

Care should be taken not to confuse cause with effect and revolt with anarchy. A law-breaker was not necessarily a patriot. When the administration collapsed the lawless elements once more took the upper hand. The Gujars robbed both sides with equal impartiality though they were not interested in the politics of the day. Old feuds were revived and one village fought another, irrespective of their political alignment.[21] The rural area witnessed

another part of the station ; and on Brigadier Wilson's force leaving for Delhi, these men were rearmed, and accompanied that small column. They had behaved remarkably well ever since". Medley, *op. cit.*, pp 54-55

[18] The Parsis being an exception

[19] Cooper says, a Sergeant-Major of the rebel 28th N.I. joined the mutineers at Delhi. Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp 197-98. General Gough mentions a European called "Gordon" in the ranks of Delhi mutineers. Gough, *op. cit.*, pp 108-10. Rees refers to some of whom there was a young man whose name he did not like to mention. Rees, *op. cit.*, pp 75-76, 116

[20] Tej Singh, Raja of Mainpuri, joined the revolt. His uncle Rao Bhavani Singh was on the British side. Two Rajput zamindars of Akbarabad fought the British, while the third brother served in the British army. Gough, *op. cit.*, pp 125-26

[21] Edwards refers to such Pukars or attack by one or a group of villages on another. The villagers had to arm themselves and keep watch in self-defence. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p 43

many minor incidents which were only the offshoots of the main movement but did not contribute to its strength. The Banjaras in Shaharanpur set up a king of their own, the Gujars had different Rajas in different areas.[22] There was the strange case of Devi Singh in the district of Mathura. His ancestors possessed a few villages and he proclaimed himself the 'King of fourteen villages' under the impression that the British rule had come to an end. When Thornhill went to arrest the rebel chief he discovered that the redoubtable Raja was an ordinary rustic incapable of doing much harm.[23] The Gujar and Banjara Rajas and the lord of the fourteen villages were the by-products of the revolt. They exploited the opportunities it offered to their personal advantage but did not identify themselves with the cause as such. If the predatory tribes plundered on their own, instances are not wanting of bad characters and needy persons being attracted to the rebel army by prospects of loot. Mahimaji Wadi was a dacoit and he was not inspired by any patriotic impulse when he joined Tatya's troops.[24] A Maharashtra Brahman Belsare left his village home in the south simply to improve his fortunes and he found his way to the rebel camp.[25] Even if we make due allowance for these uncertain elements the revolt commanded popular support in varying degrees in the principal theatre of war, which extended roughly from western Bihar to the eastern confines of the Punjab.[26]

The Presidency of Madras remained unaffected all through, though some slight signs of restlessness were perceived in the army.[27] The educated community unreservedly ranged itself on the side of law and order and condemned the rising in unambiguous terms. In Bengal the sepoys rose in many places but nowhere did they experience any sympathy from the local people.

[22] In the Shaharanpur district a man called Fatua was proclaimed King of the Gujars. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p 120

[23] Thornhill says, "He was a very ordinary-looking man distinguished from other villagers only by his yellow dress." Yet he had assumed the full title of an independent sovereign—"the lord of beneficence, the source of wealth, the foundation of prosperity, the treasury of grace, the supporter of the poor, the illustrious prince, the Rajah, the great Rajah Dayby Singh, monarch of the fourteen villages, the victorious in war." Thornhill, *op. cit.*, pp 102-103

[24] The story of Mahimaji Wadi, a professional dacoit has been told by Y. K. Deshpande in his memoirs

[25] I am indebted to Mahamahopadhyaya D. V. Potdar for the manuscript account of this adventurer

[26] With the exception of Multan area

[27] "On the 11th the city (Hyderabad, Deccan) and Bazars continued to be agitated by rumours one of which was that one regiment at Secundrabad would assuredly join in any rising against the British Government; this was supposed to allude to the 1st, Madras N.I. whose conduct was then under investigation for a refusal to obey orders when directed to march during the late relief." Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 251-54, 18 Dec., 1857

The only evidence to the contrary is furnished by a letter alleged to have emanated from two Dacca notables, Kali Narayan Chaudhury and Moghul Agha Ghulam Ali, in which they have claimed to have financed the rebel regiments. But the Lieutenant-Governor treated it as a cunning fabrication by a designing person with a view to taking "advantage of present troubles to get up false accusations for the satisfaction of enmity or for extortion." The informant, of course, quietly made himself scarce.[28] The educated citizens of Calcutta and the landed aristocracy of Bengal did not lag behind their compatriots of Madras in their open denunciation of the Mutiny and the mutineers. In their opinion it was limited only to the army and it was a mutiny pure and simple which periodically occurs in every country.[29] In Assam Maniram Datta was hanged and Madhu Mallik, a Bengalee, was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for holding treasonable correspondence with Kandarpeshwar Singh, grandson of the last Ahom Raja, and inciting him to recover his ancestral states with the help of the sepoys. Major Halroyd, Deputy Commissioner of Jorhat, was on bad terms with Maniram and the evidence on which he was convicted was insufficient, if not unsatisfactory, particularly as Halroyd acted as both prosecutor and judge.

In Orissa two Sambalpur princes, Surendra Shahi and Udwant Shahi, then in detention, effected their escape but they were prepared to surrender if free pardon was granted. The chiefs of Orissa generally stood by the Government. The Raja of Porhat created trouble because he felt offended at his supersession by the Raja of Seraikela. Bihar deserves a more careful analysis, for Bihar produced Kunwar Singh, one of the foremost leaders of the revolt. Except for Shahabad the province remained loyal. Muzaffarpur, Chapra, Motihari and Barh were actually abandoned by the European officers but the districts remained tranquil. The inhabitants of Saran behaved remarkably well, according to Commissioner Samuells. "In the district of Bihar," he reports, "the great mass of the population believed that our rule was at an end and they must shift for themselves, and they proceeded to loot." The big zamindars not only refrained from lawlessness but helped the Government with men and money.

[28] Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated 25 March, 1858. Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 376-79 and K.W., 30 April, 1858

[29] "The insurrection is essentially a military insurrection. It is the revolt of a lac of sepoys." *The Mutineers, the Government and the People,* p 4. On May 22, 1857 the committee of the British Indian Association passed a resolution condemning the disgraceful and mutinous conduct of the native soldiers at Meerut and Delhi. A loyal address was presented by the Maharaja of Burdwan and 2,500 other signatories after the fall of Delhi recounting the benefit of British rule

The great mela at Sonepur was held in peace and the Lieutenant-Governor observed, "there was no organised conspiracy to rebel, mutineers have been met and defeated by levies actually raised in these districts." In Chotanagpur the risings were confined to a small and discontended section of the primitive tribes and their chiefs, as much from personal animosity as from dislike of the British. It is only in Kunwar Singh's area that the rebels were protected by the fidelity of the people. It is not difficult to guess to what extent the Shahabad peasant was influenced by his personal devotion to the Rajput hero as distinct from the love of the cause.

The Bombay Presidency witnessed risings at Satara, Kolhapur, Nargund and in the district of Sawant Wadi. It is remarkable that at Satara the call to rise came, not from a Maratha noble, but from a Hindustani Chaprasi.[30] A conspiracy at Bombay was discovered by Forjett, the Police Commissioner, and nipped in the bud. Thus Maharashtra relapsed to its accustomed tranquillity after a feeble demonstration of sporadic discontent. It was really strange that the Peshwa's cause should find so little support in his own home province.

It was in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and Rohilkhand that the revolt attained the greatest success. But in Rohilkhand, where the British rule was non-existent for nearly a year, the movement found no solid support in Bijnour and Moradabad. We have seen how the Nawab of Najibabad was ousted from Bijnour by the Hindu zamindars and the district was held for some time by Syed Ahmed, on behalf of the British, practically without any military force. It will not, therefore, be unfair to conclude that the masses in the district were not behind the revolt, and the movement there had degenerated into communal strife. Moradabad, for all practical purposes, was under the control of the loyal Nawab of Rampur. Even in the rest of the province the new regime was not popular despite the sincere effort of Khan Bahadur Khan to conciliate the Hindus. It is true that he had raised an army of forty thousand troops, but Durgadas Bandopadhyaya argues that the recruits were attracted by prospects of employment and had no enthusiasm for any particular cause. Thousands of poor people flocked to the British camp for the same reason. The common folk went wherever they could find

[30] The Hindustani Chaprasi who was hanged for trying to seduce the 22nd Regiment, Bombay N.I. thus addressed the spectators from the scaffold, "If they were the sons of Hindus and Mahomedans they would rise, if offsprings of Christians they would remain quiet" Foreign Secret Consultations, No. 634, 25 Sept, 1857

employment. In the North-Western Provinces many influential landlords made common cause with the mutineers but many of their compeers remained loyal to their foreign masters. If the Raja of Mainpuri, smarting under a sense of injury, joined the revolt, Prithvipal Singh (Pretty Poll of Russell) was equally ready to place his services at the disposal of the Government. The British never lost complete control over the districts of Meerut and Shaharanpur. Two days after Polwhele's defeat the rich citizens of Agra made a demonstration of their good feelings by waiting on the Lieutenant-Governor. They might not have been sincere in their profession of loyalty but it was definite that they were not on the other side. But for Joti Prasad, the leading business-man of the city, it would have been impossible for the Government to procure the necessary supplies. The villages near Delhi were divided in their allegiance. Raikes claimed that he "had positive knowledge of the good feelings of the people (of Mainpuri in May 1857." He adds, "Messrs Phillipps and Bramly, civil officers of considerable position and experience, arrived at Agra on the 10th of June, having traversed the country from Furuckabad and Etah in the Doab, and from Budaon in Rohilcund, with a very small escort of three or four horsemen." "During this same entire month of June, Mr. Arthur Cocks, the Judge of Mynpoorie; Mr. Watson, the Magistrate of Allygurh; Dr. Clark, young Mr. Outram of the Civil Service, Mr. Herbert Harington, and a few others, heroically maintained their position, at or near Allygurh, after the mutiny and destruction of the station. It was because the people of the country were with and not against us, that this handful of volunteer horsemen were enabled to hold the post amidst swarms of mutineers passing up the grand trunk road to Delhi."[31] In the early days of the Mutiny Captain Sanford's journey from Meerut to Ambala and Hodson's ride from Ambala to Meerut with a small retinue proved that the intervening area, as a whole, was not hostile to the English. In the early months of 1858 Medley travelled from Delhi to Kanpur without molestation, "though the road was not over and above safe, as a brother of Nana's, and some 500 of his adherents, were crossing over to get to Calpee." He had also travelled from Delhi to Mussorie and Mussorie to Agra in perfect safety.[32] But it will not be fair to conclude with Raikes that because small parties of Englishmen did not find the countryside unsafe, the inhabitants of the area were necessarily loyal to the Government. All that can be safely concluded is that they were too passive

[31] Raikes, *op. cit*, pp 156-57
[32] Medley, *op. cit.*, pp 120-24, 146

and too indifferent to commit themselves positively to any one side. Even in the undisturbed provinces like Bengal and Madras there was a feeling of impotent disaffection that delighted in every news of British reverse. That is why the news of Crimea and Persia caused so much excitement and interest in India. Dr. Alexander Duff, who had closely associated with educated Indians, correctly analysed their feelings when he wrote, "Numbers of our Bengali population still continue to view the whole business with something like unreasoning indifference. They can scarcely be said to be either loyal or disloyal, while discontent lurks deeply in the hearts of millions. Many, it cannot be doubted, are at the same time well enough disposed towards our rule; though, to talk of *attachment* would only tend to mislead."[33]

In estimating the popularity of the movement of 1857 we must not forget that only a determined minority takes an active part in a revolt or revolution while the overwhelming majority remains passive, and an interested section might openly align itself with the existing order. Nowhere did a revolt command universal support. There was a strong party of loyalists in the United States of America that preferred to migrate to Canada when the country achieved independence. There was no lack of royalists in Revolutionary France. In '15' and '45' the Stuart cause found no inconsiderable support in the British Isles. So long as a substantial majority sympathises with the main object of a movement it can claim a national status though universal active support may be wanting. Outside Oudh and Shahabad there is no evidence of that general sympathy which would invest the Mutiny with the dignity of a national war. At the same time it would be wrong to dismiss it as a mere military rising. The Mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the King of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the King of Delhi was the rightful representative.

In Oudh, however, the revolt assumed a national dimension though the term must be used in a limited sense, for the conception of Indian nationality was yet in embryo. To the Punjabi the Hindustani was still a stranger, very few Bengalees

[33] Duff, *The Indian Rebellion ; its Causes and Results*, p 180

realised that they belonged to the same nation as men from Maharashtra and the people of Central India and Rajputana did not acknowledge any bond of kinship with the people of the South. The unity of a common bondage had, however, ushered in a vague sense of a different kind of unity, though the idea had not yet taken root in the society in general. But in spite of racial, religious, and linguistic differences the people of India felt that they had something in common as against the Englishmen. That is why a Rajput bard found in the Jat victory at Bharatpur a theme worthy of his muse, and the Bundela delighted in the British disaster in Nepal. Religion is the most potent force in the absence of territorial patriotism and in 1857 men from all walks of life joined hands with the sepoys in the defence of religion. The feudal lords of Oudh summoned their tenants not only in the name of religion but also in the name of their king. Their king had been unjustly deposed, their country forcibly annexed, and they had not only a political grievance to redress but a moral wrong to undo. As Muhammad Hasan pointed out, the English were the aggressors in the eyes of the Oudh chiefs and the barons felt they were fighting for their king as well as their faith. Feudal loyalty at one time served for patriotism and the overwhelming majority of the people shared the feelings of their leaders. It is true that there were exceptions, there were chiefs like the Rajas of Balarampur and Shahganj, who, either from a sense of loyalty to their new masters, or from a conviction that they would ultimately win, found it expedient to stand by the Government. They were amply rewarded for their worldly wisdom. The patriotic leaders like Beni Madho and Devi Baksh steadfastly trod on the path of duty though it led to death, and Russell found indubitable evidence of the public esteem they enjoyed "in the beclouded countenance of the villagers around" after the fall of Shankarpur.

The patriots of Oudh fought for their king and country but they were not champions of freedom, for they had no conception of individual liberty. On the contrary they would, if they could, revive the old order and perpetuate everything it stood for. The English Government had imperceptibly effected a social revolution. They had removed some of the disabilities of women, they had tried to establish the equality of men in the eye of law, they had attempted to improve the lot of the peasant and the serf. The Mutiny leaders would have set the clock back, they would have done away with the new reforms, with the new order, and gone back to the good old days when a commoner could not expect equal justice with the noble, when the tenants were at

the mercy of the talukdars, and when theft was punished with mutilation. In short, they wanted a counter-revolution. Whether military success would have ensured it, is another question.

Nor was it a war between the white and the black. All the whites in India were indeed ranged on one side irrespective of their country of origin, but not the black. As Medley points out, "In fact (counting the camp followers), for every white man in camp there were certainly twenty black ones."[34] And but for the camp-followers the white troops would have been ineffective. It was the Indian cook who brought the white soldier his dinner under the heaviest fire, it was the Indian bhisti who brought him his drink in the thickest of the fight, it was the Indian dooly-bearer who carried the wounded out of the danger zone and the Indian servant who looked after his general comfort.[35] But, even if the non-combatants are left out of account, there was a high proportion of Indian soldiers in the army that suppressed the Mutiny. Of 11,200 effective troops before Delhi no less than seven thousand nine hundred were Indians.[36] It was, therefore, a war between the black insurgents and the white rulers supported by other blacks. It was the case of one slave rivetting the fetters of another under the supervision of their common master.

No moral issues were involved in the war of 1857. As in other wars, truth became the first casualty and both sides were guilty of false propaganda. At this distance of time it is not possible to ascertain whether this was deliberately done or the parties responsible were honestly convinced that their information was correct. The struggle may be characterised, as Rees has done, as "a war of fanatic religionists against Christians" but during the Mutiny the moral principle underlying their respective religions had little influence on the combatants. The Scriptures were quoted in palliation of transgressions by both the belligerents. Christians had won but not Christianity. The Hindus and Muslims were worsted but not their respective faiths. Christianity like Western

[34] Medley, *op. cit.*, p 65

[35] Medley says, "The British soldier is a splendid fellow under certain conditions. Feed him well, do not over-work or over-march him, and bring him into the *open* with any number of enemies against him, and he will thrash them, unless the odds are hopeless, and then he will try his best. But on a long and tedious campaign, in a foreign country, and under a trying climate, he is very helpless." Medley, *op. cit*, p 206

[36] Innes, *The Sepoy Revolt*, p 146. In his final campaign Lord Clyde had some 80,000 English troops under his command "but by this time the Punjab levies alone are said to have rivalled them in numbers." Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p 307

science influenced the Indian mind but the missionary had no notable success in his work of proselytisation.

Nor was the war of 1857 a conflict between barbarism and civilisation, for neither side observed a single restriction which humanity had imposed and which oriental and occidental nations had tacitly agreed to honour. It was an inhuman fight between people driven insane by hatred and fear. The non-combatants suffered as badly at the hands of infuriated soldiery as the man in arms; age and sex offered scanty protection against primitive cruelty, and even death brought no immunity from wanton insult. To revive the memory of those evil days may not be desirable but history must record how war debases human character, how thin is the mask of civilisation we wear, how readily the dormant passions are awakened and the Hindu, Muslim, and the Christian alike relapse into the primitive savagery from which religion and civilisation had apparently reclaimed their remote ancestors.

It must be conceded that Englishmen had been driven mad by cruel stories of comrades murdered, children butchered and women dishonoured. They did not pause to examine the sources of these horrid tales, and men of irreproachable character yielded to the impulse of the moment and helped to give them wide publicity. Even men in the holy orders forgot that vengeance was God's and retribution was demanded from the platform and the pulpit. No wonder that the white man thirsted for revenge. Clifford, Assistant Collector of Gurgaon, heard that his sister and Miss Jennings "were stripped naked at the Palace, tied in that condition to the wheels of gun-carriages, dragged up the 'Chandni Chauk', or silver street of Delhi, and there, in the presence of the King's sons, cut to pieces". Clifford "had it on his mind that his sister, before being murdered, was outraged by the rebels." Naturally he thought of nothing but revenge and when Delhi fell he told Griffiths that "he had put to death all he had come across, not excepting women and children".[37] A worse story emanated from Bangalore but it concerned Delhi. Forty-eight females, most of them girls from ten to fourteen, were reported to have been paraded naked in the streets of Delhi, ravished in broad daylight and then cruelly murdered. Later investigations proved that Miss Clifford and Miss Jennings were put to death in their room in the palace but suffered no indignity and Lecky placed the story of forty-eight women among the *Fictions connected with the Indian outbreak*.[38] Wilberforce

[37] Griffiths, *op. cit.*, pp 96-97
[38] Edward Lecky, *Fictions connected with the Indian Outbreak*, p 123 ff.

passed on the story of a lady, a captain's wife, being boiled alive in *ghee* (melted butter) by the Meerut and Delhi mutineers.[39] Majendie writes of children crucified[40] and other stories of more cruel atrocities gained currency in England and the British camp in India.

When the British had the upper hand, burning and hanging expeditions became a matter of routine, and no distinction was made between the innocent and the guilty. Captain Oliver Jones remarked, "It is sad work shooting and killing these miserable peasants, while the more active rascals who have committed the atrocities escape, but such is always a servile war and such its stern necessities."[41] Russell heard of indiscriminate killing by Renaud's men from an officer attached to his column. "The executions of natives in the line of march were indiscriminate to the last degree. The officer in command was emulous of Neill, and thought he could show equal vigour. In two days forty-two men were hanged on the road-side, and a batch of twelve men were executed because their faces were 'turned the wrong way' when they were met on the march. All the villages in his front were burnt when he halted. These 'severities' could not have been justified by the Cawnpore massacre, because they took place before that diabolical act."[42] Russell gives another instance of cold-blooded cruelty which illustrates how war brutalises a man who in normal times would not be wanting in the ordinary virtues of a civilised person. It happened at Lucknow. "After the Fusiliers had got to the gateway, a Cashmere boy came towards the post, leading a blind and aged man, and, throwing himself at the feet of an officer, asked for protection. That officer, as I was informed by his comrades, drew his revolver, and snapped it at the wretched suppliant's head. The men cried 'shame' on him. Again he pulled the trigger—again the cap missed; again he pulled, and once more the weapon refused its task. The fourth time—thrice had he time to relent—the gallant officer succeeded, and the boy's life-blood flowed at his feet, amid the indignation and the outcries of his men!"[43] Majendie records a case of revolting torture probably unprecedented even in the cruel history of the Mutiny. It took place after the capture of the Yellow Bungalow at Lucknow where Anderson, a popular young officer of a Sikh regiment, had lost his life. "Infuriated

[39] Wilberforce, *An Unrecorded Chapter of the Indian Mutiny*, p 23
[40] Majendie, p 225
[41] Jones, *op. cit.*, p 46
[42] Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 402
[43] *Idem*, Vol. I, p 348

beyond measure by the death of their officer, the Sikhs (assisted, I regret to say, by some Englishmen) proceeded to take their revenge on this one wretched man. Seizing him by the two legs, *they attempted to tear him in two!* Failing in this, they dragged him along by the legs, stabbing him in the face with their bayonets as they went. I could see the poor wretch writhing as the blows fell upon him, and could hear his moans as his captors dug the sharp bayonets into his lacerated and trampled body, while his blood, trickling down dyed the white sand over which he was being dragged. But the worst was yet to come: while still alive, though faint and feeble from his many wounds, he was deliberately placed upon a small fire of dry sticks, which had been improvised for the purpose, and there held down, in spite of his dying struggles, which, becoming weaker and more feeble every moment, were, from their very faintness and futile desperation, cruel to behold. Once during this frightful operation, the wretched victim, maddened by pain, managed to break away from his tormentors, and, already horribly burnt, fled a short distance, but he was immediately brought back and placed upon the fire, and there held till life was extinct."[44] The war between the conquered and the conqueror, embittered further by differences of race and religion obliterated all traces of civilisation and humanity both in the Indians and the Englishmen. Russell says that even women were not spared at Lucknow the extreme indignity to which their sex can be subjected.[45] But it is a relief to note that there were men in both camps who abhorred these barbarities. Clyde put a stop to the disgusting toilette which the piety of Neill prescribed for rebels condemned to death. Even a private in the army, Henry Metcalfe, could not defend flogging villagers because they denied all knowledge of where arms were hid.[46] Shahzada Firuz Shah could not countenance the killing of women and children and regarded it as a sin and not merely a crime. Against the inhumanities of this uncivilised war can be recorded many acts of kindness and chivalry, charity and courage, piety and devotion and therein lies our hope for man's future.

When the Mutiny was suppressed and peace was restored Jack Panday and Tom Atkins returned to their normal avocations. But the revolt set more responsible Englishmen and Indians

[44] Majendie, *op. cit.*, pp 186-87

[45] "The poorer sort of people are returning to the city, but we hear with regret that the women are sometimes ill used, and Hindoos commit suicide when they are dishonoured." Russell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p 360

[46] Tuker, *op. cit.*, p 78

thinking. The Mutiny was inevitable. No dependent nation can for ever reconcile itself to foreign domination. A despotic government must ultimately rule by the sword though it might be sheathed in velvet. In India the sword was apparently in the custody of the Sepoy Army. Between the sepoys and his foreign master there was no common tie of race, language, and religion. The Indian could not possibly feel that loyalty for the British crown which the Englishman imbibes with his mother's milk. The traditional obligation of salt had so long held the sepoy and his employers together but it was no substitute for loyalty and patriotism. The sepoy enlisted for the sake of his bread and sooner or later he was bound to recoil against the obvious humiliation of his unnatural position, for as a sepoy it was his duty to hold his country under the foreign heel. He probably did not think in such clear terms but he suffered from a sense of inequality which he could not ignore, for a foreign government may hold the scales even between one individual of the conquered community and another but it cannot be fair to the subject race as against the ruling nation. The Mutiny was not inevitable in 1857 but it was inherent in the constitution of the empire. In 1859 some Englishmen were convinced that India had been reconquered. They were equally convinced that the country could be held by the sword alone and the reorganisation of the army demanded immediate consideration. Ricketts wanted to see India ruled with an African army. Forjett suggested a British colony in India but the colonists under his scheme were not to be reinforced by new arrivals from home. They were to intermarry with the people of the country and raise a new race united with England by ties of blood and culture. Herbert Edwardes was in favour of Christianising India, for the converts alone had thoroughly identified themselves with the ruling nation when the Hindus and Musalmans rose in arms against it. The Englishmen were aware that the people of India had no love for their rulers though individual Englishmen and Indians might be on the most intimate terms of friendship. A suggestion was made that the Indians should be altogether excluded from the army and a purely European force should be maintained in India. From the very beginning it was realised that a European army large enough to meet all emergencies would be too heavy a burden on the Indian revenue and as Medley had pointed out it would be ineffective under certain circumstances unless supplemented by an adequate Indian force. The Indian army was therefore suffered to survive but Indians were excluded from the Artillery. The difference of pay and prospects continued as before and it was not until the

First World War that an Indian could aspire to a commissioned rank in the army. The Englishman could not forget to what straits his people had been reduced in 1857 and he was determined not to betray the least sign of weakness in future. That explains the severities committed after the Kuka rebellion and Dyer's ruthless shooting at Amritsar. The massacre of women and children had not been forgotten.

The educated Indian at first had no faith in armed rebellion, and the failure of the revolt confirmed him in his conviction. He placed his hope in British liberalism and he had no doubt that as soon as he proved himself worthy of it, the countrymen of Hampden, Milton, and Burke would restore to him his birthright. But hope deferred made his heart sick and his faith wavered, and a new generation arose who had more confidence in the violent methods of the Italian Carbonari and the Russian Nihilist than in the discredited method of constitutional agitation. He was also inspired by the memory of the Mutiny and during the two World Wars the Indian revolutionaries did not relax in their efforts to organise another military rising. The British Government in India became more and more convinced that in their political struggle with Nationalist India they could not entirely depend upon the army. The non-violent non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi converted the country to a new philosophy and dealt a further blow at the British bureaucracy in India. England retired from India with good grace and undiminished prestige. India has achieved more than the independence for which the heroes of 1857 fought. She has achieved freedom and liberty.

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complicity with the sepoys and claims to have overheard some mutineers who confessed that before the outbreak at Meerut and the release of the prisoners they had no idea of coming to Delhi. No less valuable is Lord Elphinstone's letter of September 9, 1857 to Jacob in which he counsels moderation. Martineau's letters of May 5, 1857, and October 20, 1864, deserve special notice as the latter throws some light on Azimullah's movements. Extracts from Neill's Diary and correspondence are to be found in Volume III (Home Misc. No. 725). He condemns in unambiguous terms the manner in which the estates of the landed aristocracy had been sold and in his Diary he records that a European family and some women found safe shelters in the city of Kanpur and were saved. Kaye has preserved an account of the siege of Delhi by E. Hare (Vol. III, pp 1377-1457). Hare gives an account of a mass trial in which more than twenty princes were condemned. In Vol. IV (Home Misc. No. 727) we find a pamphlet written after the fall of Delhi in which the English are accused of corrupting Indian women. The original manuscript of Mrs. Germon's *Diary* has been acquired by the India Office Library but a comparison shows that no substantial omission has been made in the printed text. The Library also possesses a rare manuscript of an account of the siege of Delhi by Mubarak Shah, Kotwal of the city during the Mutiny. The narrative was written at the request of Mr. Edwards who later translated and annotated it. The author seeks to prove that he was innocent of anti-British activities and had been forced to associate with the mutineers. According to him, Hakim Ahsanullah always worked in British interest. The translator's notes are not without inaccuracy.

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# GLOSSARY

ADMI—Man.

KALA ADMI—A black man.

ASADH—The third month of the Hindu calendar.

AYAH—A nurse maid or a lady's maid.

BADMASH—A bad character, a ruffian, a rowdy.

BADNAM—Bad name.

BAEE (BAI)—A lady.

BARKANDAZ—An armed retainer or an armed policeman.

BASON—Powdered gram mixed with aromatic substances.

BATTA—Discount or premium.

BHANG—A narcotic, leaves of hemp.

BHISTI—Water carrier.

CHAMAR—A low caste leather worker.

CHAPKAN (CHUPKAN)—A tight fitting long coat that comes down to the knee or below.

CHAPRASI—A peon who bears an inscribed badge-plate of his office.

CHARPOY (CHARPAI)—A light cot or bedstead with bamboo or wooden legs and plaited bed.

DAGHA—Treachery.

DAGHABAZI—Treacherous conduct.

DAL—Pulses, Mashdal—*Phaseolus radiatus*.

DAR (from Sanskrit Daha)—Cremation.

DHOBI—Washerman.

DHOONIYA—(Dhunia) A cotton carder and quilt maker.

DIN—Religion.

DOM—A low caste scavenger.

DOOLI (Doli)—A covered litter.

DUMDAMA—An open space enclosed by a mud wall.

EKKA—A small carriage drawn by one horse.

ELICHI (EILCHI)—An envoy or diplomatic agent.

FAKIR—A Muslim religious mendicant, sometimes applied to Hindu ascetics also.

FARMAN—An order, grant or patent.

FASLI—An era introduced by Akbar commencing from 1555-56 A.D.

FATWA—The decision of a council of Muslim divines.

FIRINGHI—Frank, a European.

GHAT—A landing place, a mountain pass.

GHAZI—A Muslim engaged in a religious war.

GHOOLAIL—A catapult.

GOSSAIN—One who has subdued his passion, a monk.

GURHEE (GARHI)—A minor fortress.

GURU—A religious guide, a spiritual preceptor.

HALLA—A row.

HARKARA—A messenger, a courier.

HAVILDAR—A sepoy non-commissioned officer, corresponding to a Sergeant.

HINDUSTANEE—A native of Hindustan, the area between the Punjab and Bihar.

HOOKA (HUKKAH)—Hubble-bubble, the Indian pipe for smoking through water.

HOLI—The spring festival, a sort of carnival in which people are drenched with coloured water.

IDGAH—The place where Id prayers are offered.

ILLAKA—Jurisdiction.

INAM—A gift, particularly of rent-free land.

IZARADAR—A farmer of land revenue.

JAMA—The total assessment of land revenue, hence an estate in this case.

JEHADI—A Muslim engaged in a Jehad or a holy war against infidels.

KACHARI—A court-house, an office of administration.

KALI—The Iron Age of the Hindus.

KARINDA—An agent.

KHALASI—A tent pitcher, a sailor and also a chainman in survey work.

KHANSAMAUN (KHANSAMAN) — A steward.

KHARITA—The silk bag in which a noble encloses his letter ; hence a letter.

KHIDMATGAR—A servant, a waiter.

KHOOSAMUT (KHUSAMAD) — Flattery.

KHUT (KHAT)—A letter.

KUMMARBAND — (Kamar-band) A girdle, a waist band.

KURTA—An Indian shirt or upper garment.

LAD SAHEB—A corruption of Lord Saheb, a governor or governor-general.

LAHAF—A bed quilt stuffed with cotton.

LASKAR—An army or military camp, hence a soldier.

MLECHCHHA—A term of contempt to denote non-Hindus, corresponding to heathen.

MUFTI—A Muslim officer who expounds the Quranic law.

NAJIB—A militia man.

NALA—A ravine, a small water course.

NAUTCH (NACH)—Dance.

NAZAR—A ceremonial offering made by an inferior to a superior.

NAZIR—A court official who serves processes etc.

PADRE—A Christian clergyman.

PALKI—A box litter with pole projecting before and behind.

PALTAN—Battalion or platoon.

PAGARI—A turban.

PUNKA (PANKHA)—A swinging fan.

PURDAH (PARDA)—A curtain, a screen.

REZAI—A thin cotton quilt.

RISALADAR—Commander of a body of horse.

RIYASAT—A state.

ROTI—Unleavened bread.

SAHEB—Literally master, a term of respect commonly applied to Europeans.

SRAVAN—The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.

SIRKAR—(Sarkar) Government.

SUBADAR—The chief Indian officer of a company of infantry.

TAHSILDAR—A revenue collector.

TAIKHANA—An underground chamber.

TARO—An edible plant of the arum family (here the Indian and not the Polynesian variety is meant).

TATHI—A curtain or mat made of fragrant Khus roots, used against doors and windows in the hot season.

VILAYUTTEE (WILAYATI)—Wilayat literally means a kingdom or a country. As the Afghans specially applied this term to their country they were known in India as Vilayuttee or Bilayati.

VYAVASTHA—A decision given by Brahman scholars on a point of law or social practice.

WAHABI—A puritan sect of the Muslims.

WALI—Governor.

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